

## THE USE OF SLANG WORDS BY GENERATION ALPHA ON SOCIAL MEDIA: A SEMANTIC STUDY

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### Abstract

This study examines the use of slang words by Generation Alpha in communication, with a focus on semantic analysis. The research findings reveal several key characteristics of slang usage among Generation Alpha, including the use of unconventional acronyms, the adoption of internet-based slang terms, linguistic creativity in coining new slang words, and grammatical errors. The semantic functions of slang words in this generation include expressing group identity, linguistic creativity, communication efficiency, and creating a more casual and enjoyable interaction. However, the semantic differences and grammatical issues in slang usage can pose challenges in effective communication between Generation Alpha and other generations. The study suggests the need for increased understanding and awareness of slang phenomena among Generation Alpha to bridge the communication gap and enrich linguistic knowledge.

**Keywords:** Slang, Generation Alpha, Semantics, Communication, Linguistic Creativity

### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini mengkaji penggunaan kata slang di kalangan generasi Alfa dalam komunikasi, dengan fokus pada analisis semantik. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan beberapa karakteristik utama penggunaan kata slang di kalangan generasi Alfa, seperti penggunaan akronim tidak standar, adopsi istilah slang berbasis internet, kreativitas linguistik dalam menciptakan kata slang baru, serta kesalahan tata bahasa. Fungsi semantik kata slang di generasi ini meliputi ekspresi identitas kelompok, kreativitas linguistik, efisiensi komunikasi, serta penciptaan suasana yang lebih santai dan menyenangkan. Namun, perbedaan semantik dan isu tata bahasa dalam penggunaan kata slang dapat menimbulkan tantangan dalam komunikasi yang efektif antara generasi Alfa dan generasi lainnya. Studi ini menyarankan perlunya peningkatan pemahaman dan kesadaran terhadap fenomena kata slang di kalangan generasi Alfa untuk menjembatani kesenjangan komunikasi dan memperkaya pengetahuan linguistik.*

**Keywords:** Kata Slang, Generasi Alfa, Semantik, Komunikasi, Kreativitas Linguistik

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a constantly evolving communication tool influenced by social and cultural changes. Its dynamic nature allows it to adapt to various contexts, reflecting the nuances of human

interaction and societal shifts. Generational differences often manifest significantly in linguistic practices. Generation Alpha, born between the years 2010 and 2025, represents a cohort that has grown up entirely within the digital age, heavily influenced by the pervasive presence of technology and social

media. This immersive digital environment profoundly shapes their communication patterns, leading to unique linguistic phenomena.

The prevalence and characteristics of slang words used among this generation present a compelling area for linguistic investigation. These informal linguistic expressions not only serve practical communicative functions but also intricately reflect the identity, creativity, and shared experiences of this specific demographic. Therefore, this research is driven by a fundamental inquiry: to identify the specific types of slang words adopted and created by Generation Alpha, and to meticulously analyze their semantic functions within their daily digital interactions.

The significance of this research extends beyond mere linguistic description. It lies in contributing a deeper, more nuanced understanding of language evolution in the rapidly advancing digital era. By examining the semantic intricacies of Generation Alpha's slang, we gain insights into broader linguistic trends and how digital platforms influence lexicon and meaning. Existing literature broadly supports the notion that slang is frequently employed to express group identity and foster linguistic creativity, serving as a powerful tool for in-group cohesion and individual expression. However, the specific manifestations of these functions within Generation Alpha's digital landscape warrant further empirical investigation.

The widespread adoption of communication technologies, particularly the proliferation of diverse social media platforms, has undeniably amplified the use of slang among Generation Alpha. Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter serve as fertile grounds for the rapid propagation and evolution of new slang terms. This dynamic linguistic environment, while fostering creativity, also introduces complexities, particularly in the interpretation of words within various sentences and texts. The rapid semantic shifts and context-dependent meanings of slang can lead to significant communication barriers. In everyday communication, a clear and shared understanding of semantic meaning is paramount to ensuring that the intended message is accurately conveyed and received by the recipient. Misinterpretations can arise when individuals from

different linguistic or generational backgrounds encounter these novel slang terms.

Consequently, this study endeavors to thoroughly investigate the diversity and variety of slang language utilized by Generation Alpha across social media platforms, paying particular attention to the potential semantic ambiguities and communicative errors that may arise. The overarching objective is to deepen our understanding of the ongoing linguistic and cultural transformations occurring within the digital social environment, thereby contributing valuable insights to the fields of sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and communication studies.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach, utilizing content analysis as its primary method. This methodological choice is particularly suitable for exploring the nuances and complexities of language use in a natural setting, allowing for an in-depth examination of the meanings and functions embedded within the textual data. The research design is descriptive, aiming to provide a comprehensive account of the phenomenon under investigation.

The scope of this research is specifically defined to examine the usage of slang words by Generation Alpha within their digital communication on social media platforms, and to meticulously analyze the semantic functions that these words perform within these contexts. This focused scope ensures that the study remains manageable and provides a detailed analysis of the chosen linguistic phenomenon.

### Data Collection

The primary data for this research comprises a substantial collection of social media posts that explicitly contain slang words, originating from Generation Alpha users. These posts represent authentic linguistic expressions within their natural communication environment. Data were systematically collected through direct observation and careful recording of posts across several highly popular and influential social media platforms widely used by Generation Alpha, including Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter. The selection of these platforms

was based on their significant user base among the target demographic and their prominent role in shaping contemporary digital communication. The observation period was sufficiently extensive to capture a representative sample of slang usage, ensuring the richness and diversity of the collected data.

#### Data Analysis

The collected data underwent a rigorous process of content analysis, employing the following systematic techniques:

**Identification and Classification of Slang Words:** The initial step involved carefully identifying all instances of slang words present in the collected social media posts. These identified slang terms were then systematically classified based on their linguistic characteristics, such as their formation (e.g., acronyms, blends, neologisms), their grammatical function, and their general semantic category. This classification provided a structured overview of the types of slang employed.

**Semantic Analysis:** Following classification, a detailed semantic analysis was conducted for each identified slang word. This involved examining the literal and connotative meanings of the slang terms, their contextual interpretations, and their specific communicative functions within the larger discourse of the social media posts. This step aimed to uncover what these slang words mean and how they are used to convey particular messages or create specific effects.

**Interpretation and Discussion of Results:** The final stage involved a comprehensive interpretation and discussion of the findings derived from the identification, classification, and semantic analysis. This involved synthesizing the patterns and trends observed in slang usage, explaining the underlying reasons for their adoption, and exploring the broader implications of these linguistic phenomena within the communication practices of Generation Alpha. The analysis specifically focused on revealing the consistent patterns and prevailing tendencies in the use of slang words, as well as their semantic implications for effective communication. This in-depth analysis

aimed to provide a holistic understanding of the role of slang in this generation's digital interactions.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section elaborates upon the research findings and provides a detailed discussion of the semantic implications and communicative functions of slang words used by Generation Alpha. The findings are presented systematically, categorized by the characteristics of slang and their semantic functions, followed by an analysis of the broader implications for communication.

#### 3.1 Characteristics of Generation Alpha Slang Words

Based on the thorough analysis of collected social media data, several key and distinctive characteristics regarding the use of slang words among Generation Alpha in their digital communication were identified. These characteristics highlight the unique linguistic landscape cultivated by this digitally native generation.

##### 3.1.1 Unconventional Acronyms

A prominent feature of Generation Alpha's slang is their propensity to utilize acronyms that deviate significantly from standard, conventional language rules and formal orthography. Examples include "srsly" for "seriously," "tbh" for "to be honest," and "lol" for "laugh out loud". These acronyms are not merely phonetic abbreviations; rather, they are intentionally crafted for conciseness. The primary motivation behind the widespread adoption of these unconventional acronyms is to enhance communication efficiency within the fast-paced and character-limited environments of digital media. They allow for rapid message delivery, reducing typing effort and maximizing the informational content within short bursts of communication. This reflects a pragmatic approach to language use in digital contexts.

##### 3.1.2 Internet-Based Slang Terms

Generation Alpha extensively adopts and integrates slang terms that have originated directly

from the vibrant and evolving cultures of the internet and social media. These terms often emerge organically from online communities, viral content, and trending discussions. Notable examples include "sus" (a truncation of "suspicious"), "cap" (meaning "lie"), and "sheesh" (an exclamation conveying admiration or exasperation). The widespread use of such terms unequivocally demonstrates the deep acculturation of Generation Alpha with the ongoing linguistic developments and cultural norms prevalent in the digital world. These terms serve as markers of digital literacy and an understanding of online cultural references, fostering a sense of shared identity among users.

### 3.1.3 Linguistic Creativity

Beyond simply adopting existing terms, Generation Alpha exhibits remarkable linguistic creativity in actively coining and disseminating new slang words. This innovative capacity highlights their role as active shapers of language rather than passive recipients. Examples include the creative repurposing of words like "yeet" as an enthusiastic exclamation or a verb indicating forceful throwing, and "slay" to denote achieving something exceptionally well or looking outstandingly fashionable. This phenomenon of word creation serves as a clear reflection of Generation Alpha's ongoing efforts to express their distinct identity, embody their unique communication style, and differentiate themselves linguistically from older generations. It is a testament to their dynamic and adaptable approach to language.

### 3.1.4 Grammatical Errors

While displaying significant linguistic creativity, the pervasive use of slang words by Generation Alpha is also occasionally accompanied by certain grammatical errors. These observed inaccuracies include inconsistencies in verb tense and agreement, imprecise or non-standard sentence structures, and the unconventional or erroneous application of standard phrases. For instance, sentences might lack proper subject-verb agreement or exhibit fragmented structures that would be considered grammatically incorrect in formal language. This observation suggests that, while Generation Alpha excels in innovative communication, their mastery of standard,

formal grammatical rules may still require further reinforcement and development. These grammatical deviations can sometimes impede clarity, especially in intergenerational communication.

## 3.2 Function Semantics of Generation Alpha Slang Words

The application of slang words by Generation Alpha is not merely an incidental linguistic feature but serves several significant semantic functions that deeply influence their communication dynamics. These functions go beyond simple expression, playing crucial roles in social bonding and communicative efficiency.

### 3.2.1 Expression of Group Identity

One of the most prominent semantic functions of slang is its role as a powerful tool for expressing group identity. Slang words are strategically utilized by Generation Alpha as a means to signal familiarity, cultivate solidarity, and solidify a distinct sense of identity among members of their peer group. The shared knowledge and appropriate use of specific slang terms act as an unspoken code, effectively strengthening the sense of togetherness and actively building social cohesion within the group. This linguistic in-group marker allows them to distinguish themselves and reinforce their collective persona.

### 3.2.2 Linguistic Creativity

Generation Alpha actively leverages slang words as a dynamic avenue for self-expression and to demonstrate their inherent creativity in language use. The continuous creation of novel slang terms, along with the innovative application of existing or repurposed terms, serves as a testament to their desire to push linguistic boundaries. This consistent effort to enrich and expand the existing linguistic repertoire reflects their experimental and playful approach to language, contributing new layers of meaning and expression. It highlights slang as a living, evolving aspect of their communication.

### 3.2.3 Communication Efficiency

In the context of digital media, the strategic use of slang words, particularly acronyms and condensed terms, enables communication to be significantly shorter, more informal, and ultimately more efficient. Slang terms often convey complex ideas or emotions with minimal words. The rapid deployment of acronyms and other shortened slang terms effectively accelerates message delivery and substantially reduces the time required for interaction, aligning perfectly with the fast-paced nature of online communication. This efficiency is crucial for maintaining flow and engagement in digital conversations.

### 3.2.4 Humor and Enjoyment

Slang words are frequently employed by Generation Alpha to cultivate a more relaxed, humorous, and enjoyable atmosphere within their social media interactions. The playful and often quirky nature of slang terms can inject levity into conversations. The strategic integration of unique and creatively coined slang terms can significantly enhance the sense of familiarity, add an element of lightheartedness, and amplify the overall enjoyment experienced during communication. This function underscores the social and affective dimensions of slang use, making interactions more engaging and personable.

### 3.3 Semantic Implications and Communication Challenges

While slang usage offers distinct advantages for Generation Alpha, it simultaneously introduces notable challenges in communication, particularly concerning semantic understanding across generational divides.

The fundamental difference in understanding the nuanced meanings of slang words between Generation Alpha and older generations can frequently lead to significant misunderstandings and considerable barriers in effective interaction. For instance, a common example includes the use of "sus" (meaning "suspicious") or "cap" (meaning "lie"), terms that can cause considerable confusion and misinterpretation for individuals who are not intimately familiar with these specific slang terms. This semantic gap necessitates increased awareness.

Furthermore, the occasional grammatical and spelling errors inherent in some slang usage can further impede effective communication, especially in contexts where clarity and precision are paramount. These errors, while perhaps informal for the in-group, can make messages difficult to decode for those outside the immediate linguistic community.

Consequently, there is a clear and pressing need for concerted efforts to enhance understanding and awareness regarding the complex phenomenon of slang word usage among Generation Alpha. This critical objective can be effectively pursued through various pedagogical and communicative strategies, including targeted socialization campaigns, structured educational initiatives aimed at fostering intergenerational linguistic empathy, and the initiation of further, more in-depth research studies specifically focusing on this dynamic linguistic phenomenon. Ultimately, a more comprehensive and shared understanding of the semantic nuances of slang words will play a pivotal role in significantly improving effective communication between Generation Alpha and other generations, fostering greater linguistic harmony and reducing instances of misunderstanding.

Table 1. Findings of Slang Word Variations on Social Media

No	Slang Term	Meaning
1.	Bae	Boyfriend/girlfriend or someone you have a close relationship with
2.	Bet	An affirmative response, like "Okay, sure"
3.	Bruh	An informal way to address a male friend
4.	Cap	Lie or exaggerate
5.	Extra	Excessive or over-the-top
6.	Fam	Close friends or family
7.	Finesse	To obtain something in a skillful or cunning way
8.	Gucci	Something that is good, cool, or desirable

9.	Lowkey	Quietly, discreetly, or without drawing attention
10.	No Cap	Truthfully, without lying
11.	Slay	To do something exceptionally well or with great skill
12.	Snatched	To look very stylish and put-together
13.	Sus	Suspicious or questionable
14.	Thirsty	Desperate for attention or affection
15.	Vibes	The atmosphere or mood of a situation

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This research meticulously examined the pervasive use of slang words among Generation Alpha within their diverse communication patterns, with a dedicated focus on conducting a thorough semantic analysis. Based on the comprehensive findings and detailed discussion presented herein, several key conclusions can be drawn:

##### Characteristics of Generation Alpha Slang Words:

A defining characteristic is the widespread utilization of unconventional acronyms, a linguistic strategy primarily employed to enhance communication efficiency in digital environments.

There is a significant adoption of internet-based slang terms, which clearly reflects Generation Alpha's profound acculturation with the dynamic digital culture and its evolving linguistic landscape.

Generation Alpha consistently demonstrates remarkable linguistic creativity, evidenced by their capacity to coin and propagate entirely new slang words, enriching the contemporary lexicon.

However, the analysis also revealed the presence of certain grammatical errors within their slang usage, notably inconsistencies in verb usage and the formation of non-standard sentence structures.

##### Semantic Functions of Generation Alpha Slang Words:

Slang serves as a potent vehicle for the expression of group identity, fostering a sense of familiarity and solidarity among peers.

It functions as a critical means of linguistic creativity, allowing for novel forms of self-expression and contributing to the enrichment of language.

Slang significantly contributes to communication efficiency, enabling more concise, informal, and rapid exchanges within digital media platforms.

Furthermore, slang is strategically employed to cultivate a more relaxed, humorous, and enjoyable atmosphere during digital interactions, enhancing the social dimension of communication.

##### Semantic Implications and Communication Challenges:

The inherent differences in understanding the specific meanings of slang words between Generation Alpha and other generations frequently lead to significant misinterpretations and communication breakdowns.

Grammatical and spelling errors occasionally present in slang usage can also serve as substantial impediments to effective and clear communication.

Consequently, there is an urgent and discernible need for intensified efforts to bolster understanding of slang word usage among Generation Alpha, which can be strategically achieved through ongoing socialization, targeted educational programs, and the initiation of further, more comprehensive research studies on this phenomenon.

Overall, this research robustly demonstrates that the extensive use of slang words by Generation Alpha carries significant semantic implications that demand careful consideration to foster and improve effective intergenerational communication. A more profound and shared understanding of this evolving linguistic phenomenon can undoubtedly aid in bridging existing

comprehension gaps and simultaneously enrich broader linguistic knowledge.

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