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EXPLORING GEN Z SLANG IN SNL's 'GEN Z HOSPITAL' YOUTUBE SKETCH: A SEMANTIC STUDY

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Abstract

Amidst the rapidly developing digital era, especially among younger generation, Gen Z has developed a variety of slang terms that reflect their perspectives on life, humor, and online culture. This study examines the use of Gen Z slang in the "Gen Z Hospital" sketch aired by Saturday Night Live on YouTube. Using qualitative method, the study evaluates how these slang expressions represent the varied characteristics featured on Gen Z linguistic communication. Data were collected by transcribing dialogues in the sketch. As a theoretical basis, Chapman's (1988) primary slang theory was used, which views slang as a form of informal language that develops naturally in subcultural groups. Semantic analysis was applied to comprehend the meaning, function, and contextual use of the identified slang. The researcher found and separated several types of slang, including clipping is found 3 data, compounding is found 2 data, imitative is found 1 data, fresh and creative is found 12 data, and flippant is found 19 data. This investigation provides valuable insights aimed educators, linguists, and media analysts understanding the influential language patterns of today's youth popular culture that are constantly changing and have a strong cultural influence.

Keywords: gen z, slang, Youtube.

Abstrak

Di tengah pesatnya perkembangan era digital, khususnya di kalangan generasi muda, Generasi Z telah menciptakan beragam istilah bahasa gaul yang mencerminkan sudut pandang mereka terhadap kehidupan, humor, dan budaya daring. Penelitian ini mengkaji penggunaan bahasa gaul Gen Z dalam sketsa "Gen Z Hospital" yang ditayangkan oleh Saturday Night Live di kanal YouTube resminya. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif, studi ini mengevaluasi bagaimana ekspresi bahasa gaul tersebut merepresentasikan karakteristik linguistik yang beragam dalam komunikasi Gen Z. Data dikumpulkan melalui transkripsi dialog dalam sketsa tersebut. Sebagai landasan teori, digunakan teori primary slang dari Chapman (1988) yang memandang slang sebagai bentuk bahasa informal yang berkembang secara alami di dalam kelompok subkultural. Analisis semantik diterapkan untuk memahami makna, fungsi, dan penggunaan kontekstual dari slang yang teridentifikasi. Peneliti menemukan dan mengelompokkan beberapa jenis slang, antara lain: clipping sebanyak 3 data, compounding 2 data, imitative 1 data, fresh and creative 12 data, dan flippant 19

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data. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan yang berharga bagi pendidik, ahli linguistik, dan analis media dalam memahami pola bahasa populer anak muda masa kini yang bersifat dinamis dan memiliki pengaruh budaya yang kuat.

Kata kunci: gen z, gaul, slang, Youtube.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a crucial tool for shaping global narratives in this era, and this research undertakes a detailed linguistic analysis. Language is a system of meaningful sounds used for communication within human groups (Kridalaksana, 1985:12). According to the Great Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI, 2004: 88), language is an arbitrary system of sounds utilized by society members to collaborate, interact, and establish identity. The Linguistic Dictionary (2001: 21) defines language as an arbitrary system of symbolic sounds used for cooperation, interaction, and self-identification within a community. Keraf (1991: 2) describes language as a form of communication between community members, consisting of speech sounds produced by the human vocal apparatus.

Language is a dynamic and ever-evolving system, shaped by cultural influences, technological advances, and the characteristics of the generations that use it. As explained by Zadeh (1975) and Tseng (2018), language is a systematic means of conveying ideas or feelings through symbols, sounds, or gestures that have agreed upon meanings. Gómez (2009) and Chambers (1997) also emphasized that language is a sound medium used by society to express their thoughts. From these expert definitions, it can be concluded that language serves as a tool for communication and interaction among members of a society to express thoughts and emotions as social beings.

In the current context, Generation Z, individuals born between 1996 and 2009 (Sladek & Grabinger, 2014), has brought new patterns to the use of language, especially through slang terms that reflect their digital identity, social values, and distinctive communication styles. These terms often appear and spread massively through platforms such as TikTok, Twitter, and Instagram. Slang in this case not only functions as a means of expression, but also as a symbol of membership in a particular social group. Richards and Schmidt (2013) define slang as non-standard vocabulary used informally, both spoken and written, by a particular group. Masua and Masasi (2020) added that the use of slang is intended to distinguish oneself from the use of formal language, facilitate internal group communication, or simply form a separate identity.

One popular representation of the use of Gen Z slang can be found in a sketch titled "Gen Z Hospital", a Saturday Night Live production that was broadcast on their official YouTube channel. This sketch combines a parody of a medical drama with Gen Z slang used hyperbolically to present a comedic effect. Although humorous, this content reflects the linguistic reality that is developing among the younger generation and is a real example of the penetration of informal language into mainstream culture.

This study aims to identify and analyze Gen Z slang terms in the "Gen Z Hospital" sketch using a qualitative semantic approach. The researcher refers to Chapman's (1988) primary slang theory, which views slang as an informal expression that grows organically in a particular subcultural community. Through this analysis, it is hoped that it can be seen how Gen Z forms social identity and builds group solidarity through the use of language.

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METHODS

This research utilizes a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the usage and significance of Generation Z slang featured in the "Gen Z Hospital" sketch from Saturday Night Live's official YouTube channel. The descriptive qualitative method is intended to portray a phenomenon as it naturally occurs, rather than to establish causal relationships (Ayton, 2023). As stated by Sugiyono (2010), qualitative research is descriptive because it gathers data in the form of words or narratives rather than numerical figures. Conversely, the descriptive quantitative method focuses on objective data that is statistically analyzed to interpret meaning (Creswell, 2003). The primary objective of this study is to identify, categorize, and analyze slang expressions based on their semantic properties and social roles within the context of the sketch's dialogue.

The primary data in this research was obtained from the official "Gen Z Hospital" sketch video published on the Saturday Night Live YouTube channel. All spoken dialogues were transcribed manually to extract and identify the slang expressions used throughout the sketch. As stated by Rezeki et al. (2019), slang refers to a type of informal language that consists of specific words, phrases, or usage patterns typically employed by certain social groups, such as teenagers, musicians, or exclusive communities to express group identity. Furthermore, Siringoringo et al. (2022) highlights that slang is often used in casual settings and is primarily utilized for communication among peers or within everyday social interactions.

The data collection process was carried out through detailed observation and repeated viewing of the video to ensure an accurate interpretation of context and a comprehensive understanding of each slang expression. The analysis draws on Chapman's (1988) theory of primary slang, which focuses on informal lexical items that emerge organically within peer groups or specific subcultures. Each identified slang term was analyzed semantically using Lyons' (1995) distinction between lexical and contextual meaning. Initial meanings were established based on common or dictionary definitions, followed by an interpretation of their contextual use within the sketch.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Language is a constantly evolving system shaped by various factors, including geography, social context, and historical periods. It undergoes changes not only across different regions and social groups but also over time. In analyzing linguistic data from the "Gen Z Hospital" sketch on Saturday Night Live's YouTube channel, the researcher identified a total of 37 slang expressions used throughout the dialogue.

The identified slang expressions were categorized into five dominant types of English slang: clipping, compounding, imitative, fresh and creative usage, and flippant expressions. Among these, 19 were found to occur frequently as flippant, reflecting the inventive and adaptive nature of Gen Z's linguistic behavior, strongly influenced by digital environments, internet culture, and social media trends. The analysis explores how these types of slang are employed in casual, conversational settings, as exemplified in the sketch, highlighting the expressive and social functions of language innovation among Gen Z within digital media discourse.

Clipping

Yule (1986, p. 55) explains that the clipping process shows a clear form of reduction. Clipping involves shortening a polysyllabic word by removing one or more syllables, resulting in a more concise form. This reduction can occur at the beginning or at the end of the original word. The analysis reveals three following examples of clipping slang in the data:



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Table 1. The Meaning of Clipping Slang Terms

No	Slang Terms	Original Form	Meaning
1	Bro	Brother	A short for "Brother". It was used to greet or call a
			close male friend or someone in a friendly way.
2	Sus	Suspicious	A short for "Suspicious". The term "Sus" became popular through the game Among Us, where players often accuse others of being suspicious even though they appear normal. The word is used to refer to someone or something that seems untrustworthy, behaves strangely, or raises suspicion.
3	Gram	Instagram	A short and casual way to refer the social media
			platform, Instagram, or a post on it.

Compounding

Another morphological process identified in the data is compounding, which refers to the formation of new lexical items by combining two independent words into a single unit to convey a new meaning (Rahayu, 2014). In this process, each constituent word retains its individual meaning, but when combined, they create a different lexical form. This study revealed two types of slang-based compound words:

Table 2. The Meaning of Compounding Slang Terms

No	Slang	Original	Meaning or compounding stang rerms
	Terms	Form	Medinis
1	Deadass	Dead + Ass	"Dead" and "Ass" are each stand-alone words with literal meanings; "Dead" refers to the state of being no longer alive, while "Ass" refers to a part of the
			human anatomy. However, when these words are combined to form the slang expression "Deadass," a new meaning emerges. "Deadass" conveys a strong sense of seriousness or agreement, often serving as an intensifier to emphasize the sincerity or
			truthfulness of a statement.
2	Highkey	High + Key	"High" and "Key" each referring to a high degree of intensity, quantity, or size and the metal tool used to open or close a lock. And when combined into the slang term "Highkey.", it has completely different meaning from the original two words. This expression is used to indicate overt or deliberate emphasis, indicating that something is stated with complete honesty, intensity, or deliberate clarity. "Highkey" is usually contrasted with its counterpart "Lowkey," which implies subtlety or understatement.

Imitative

According to Nuraeni et al. (2021), imitative slang refers to expressions that are either adapted from Standard English, utilize standard vocabulary with altered meanings, or are formed by blending two existing words. Within the dataset analyzed in this study, only a single slang term was identified that falls under this category:

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Table 3. The Meaning of Imitative Slang Terms

No	Slang Terms	Original Form	Meaning
1	Gonna	Going to	"Gonna" is an informal abbreviation of "Going to", which is commonly used to express intentions, plans, or future predictions that are supported by evidence. The term is mostly used in informal speech and casual social interactions, especially among peers or close acquaintances.

Fresh and Creative

Darma Putra (2018) explains that fresh and creative slang is characterized by completely new vocabulary, inventive language use, and informal linguistic forms. In essence, this category of slang shows originality, informality, and linguistic creativity, which often reflects current trends. Based on this definition, the twelve slang expressions identified in this study fall into the classification of fresh and creative slang, as detailed below:

Table 4. The Meaning of Fresh and Creative Slang Terms

No	Slang Terms	Meaning Meaning
1	,	5
	Bestie	The term "Bestie" is an informal phrase commonly used by Generation Z to refer to a close friend or best friend. The term reflects a strong interpersonal bond characterized by trust, loyalty, and emotional closeness.
2	Bruh	The term "Bruh" is an informal variation of "Bro" or "Brother" in Gen Z, commonly used as an expression of familiarity or friendship among male peers. In addition to being used as a greeting or term of endearment, the term also functions as a reactionary phrase to convey surprise, disbelief, or slight frustration, as in the example: "Bruh, are you sure?"
3	Сар	In Gen Z slang, the term "Cap" is used to indicate a lie or dishonesty. The term is generally used to point out or challenge statements that are considered untrue or deceptive.
4	Vibes	"Vibe" (originated in the 1960s) is derived from the word "Vibration," refers to the emotional tone or mood associated with a particular context, individual, or environment. It conveys the overall sentiment or atmosphere felt at a given moment, describing how a person experiences and interprets their environment. For example, someone might say, "The vibes in math class are great today," to express a positive emotional mood during the lesson.
5	Salty	"Salty" is often used to describe an individual who is displaying bitter, irritated, or resentful emotions. The term usually indicates that the person is reacting negatively or with hostility. For example, in the sentence, "Why does he seem so salty today towards everyone?", the term highlights the speaker's perception of the subject's highly irritable behavior.
6	Cuh	Among Mexican-American youth, particularly in Texas and Southern California, the slang term "Cuh" is shortened form of the word "Cousin", commonly used to refer to or address a close friend. Functionally, its usage parallels informal expressions such as "Bro" or "Brother", which serve as markers of familiarity and social bonding within a peer group.

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7	Flop	"Flop" usually used to describe an event or outcome that falls far short of expectations. It refers to a situation in which someone or something experiences a sharp decline or complete failure. For example, the sentence "His new movie was a total flop, people didn't like it" illustrates a term used to express the negative public reception of a movie that failed commercially or critically.
8	Yikes	The slang word "Yikes" commonly appears on platforms like Twitter and TikTok, it's a quick way to say "Oh no!" or to show mild shock. It is a popular online expression used to react to a surprising, awkward, or uncomfortable situation.
9	Simp	The term "Simp," derived from "Simpleton," appeared in 1903 (The New Partridge Dictionary of Slang). In modern internet slang, it refers to someone (usually male) who shows excessive admiration, attention, or devotion to someone they like. For instance, "He is such a simp for his college crush" describes a guy who goes out of his way to impress someone, often to an excessive degree.
10	Extra	In Gen Z slang, the term "Extra" refers to an individual who displays behavior or style that is considered overly dramatic or exaggerated.
11	Iconic	The "Iconic" term is generally used to describe a particularly influential individual or cultural product that defines or has had a significant impact on a cultural era. The term can refer to figures or works, such as films or music, that remain widely known and celebrated over time. E.g. "The Harry Potter franchise is so iconic. Everyone still talks about it to this day!"
12	Fire	The slang term "Fire" is widely used both on social media and in everyday conversation to indicate something that is incredibly cool, awesome, or impressive. In social media comment sections, it is often accompanied by the fire emoji, and the term emphasizes a strong positive sentiment. The word usually describes great music, fashion, performances, or experiences. For example, saying "The new Leo Dicaprio's movie is fire!" indicates high approval or favoritism at the moment.

Flippant

According to Devi et al. (2022), flippant slang refers to expressions formed from two or more words whose individual components are not directly related to the denotative meaning of the entire phrase. This combination produces a meaning that deviates from its literal interpretation. In this study, a total of nineteen phrases were identified and classified into the flippant category, including:

Table 5. The Meaning of Flippant Slang Terms

No	Slang Terms	Meaning
1	I'm so pressed	The phrase "I'm so pressed" is generally used to convey feelings of being stressed due to various challenges or struggles. This phrase usually refers to a situation where someone is limited by a lack of time, financial resources, space, or similar limitations, indicating that they are experiencing significant stress or difficulty.
2	Leaving us on read	In the context of internet slang, the phrase "Left on read" refers to a situation where the recipient sees a message but does not respond. This expression usually conveys the impression of being ignored or neglected by someone.

3	Catch hands	In slang, the phrase "Catch hands" refers to receiving a
		physical punch or hit, usually with the hand or fist. Among
		Generation Z, the phrase "You're going to catch these hands"
		is often used in everyday conversation to convey frustration or
		anger, indicating a threat to physically confront someone who
		has caused annoyance.
4	Big facts	In Gen Z slang, the expression "Big facts" is used to convey
		strong agreement, such as "Totally true" or "I agree". This
		slang term is commonly used to respond to a statement or news
		content.
5	Give us the tea	There's a phrase that's famous in Gen Z slang, "Spill the tea."
		This is an expression used to mean sharing gossip or revealing
		confidential information. The word "Tea" or "T" refers to
		"Truth." So, when someone says, "Tell me the tea," it means
		they're asking to be told the truth or the actual story.
6	Major L	The phrase "Big L" or "Major L," as used by Generation Z,
		signifies a major loss or failure. This slang term is often used
		by younger individuals to articulate a personal setback or
7	I'll pull up	defeat in various areas of life. The slang expressions "Pull up", "Pulling up" (also written as
/	i ii puii up	"Pullin' up"), and "Pulled up" are phrasal verbs commonly
		used in informal communication. These terms typically
		function as invitations for someone to come to a particular
		location, or as a way to indicate that the speaker is arrived at
		the listener's location.
8	Say less	The slang expression "Say less," when used by teenagers,
	5 47 (555	generally serves as an affirmation of understanding, similar in
		meaning to phrases like "Say no more" or "Gotcha." This
		expression indicates that the speaker has fully understood the
		message and does not require further explanation.
		Additionally, in certain contexts, this expression can also
		indicate agreement or consent.
9	You're a real	The term "You're a real one" refers to an individual who is
	one	considered to be highly reliable and trustworthy.
10	We stan you	On social media platforms, the term "Stan", as well as
		expressions such as "I stan you" or "We stan you," are
		commonly used to describe individuals who feel deep
		admiration or strong dedication towards someone, often
		reflecting enthusiasm and deep respect for that particular
11	Hit different	person. Sometimes, an experience or object has a profound emotional
' '	וווג מווופופווג	or psychological impact that resonates with an individual in a
		particularly powerful way. In contemporary Gen Z slang, this
		phenomenon is expressed through the phrase "Hits different."
		The term "Hit" in this context refers to a significant emotional
		or cognitive effect. For example, the statement "I like the way
		my new English teacher teaches the class, her words just hit
		different" suggests that the work elicited an unusually deep or
		personally moving response compared to similar experiences.
12	Go off, king	The phrase "Go off, king" is a slang term used to convey
		enthusiastic encouragement or support, especially when
		someone expresses themselves boldly or performs

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		outstandingly. It often signifies approval of someone's assertive behavior, emotional outbursts, or significant accomplishments, especially in informal interactions.
13	Take several seats	The phrase "Take several seats" is believed to have emerged in early 2010s internet culture, particularly in social media discourse. It is commonly used to instruct someone to back off, calm down, or stop talking, especially when the person is perceived as being overly dramatic or behaving inappropriately.
14	Chopping it up	The slang expression "Chop it up," commonly used among Gen Z, refers to the act of catching up in conversation, typically to reconnect with someone after a period of separation or to discuss a particular topic with someone or people.
15	You capping	In Gen Z slang, the term "Cap" is used to indicate a lie or dishonesty. Therefore, when someone is described as "Capping," it implies that the individual is not telling the truth or is engaging in lying.
16	I am so done	The phrase "I am so done" serves as an expression of withdrawal or resignation, indicating a decision to detach from a situation or emotional burden. It reflects a psychological state that goes beyond mere frustration or exhaustion, as it signals not a strong emotion such as anger or fear but rather a deliberate shifting of focus and energy away from the source of distress.
17	I am so dead	The slang phrase "I'm dead" is a hyperbolic expression used to convey a strong reaction such as intense amusement, astonishment, or an outburst of emotion in response to a particular situation or statement. Commonly found in online interactions and social media, the expression signifies an outburst of laughter or disbelief in response to humorous or shocking content or situation.
18	It's the for me	The phrase "It's the for me" is a popular slang expression among Gen Z. This term is used to emphasize a specific characteristic or feature in someone or something, either in a positive or negative way. Functionally, this expression parallels phrases like "I like that," "I relate to that," or "I hate that," as a way to refer to a particular trait in a person, object, or situation.
19	Crowd in	The slang phrase "Crowd in" refers to the act of gathering a large number of people into a confined space. For example, the saying, "I'm going to take a group selfie. Come on, let's crowd in, guys!" is used to encourage people to move closer together to fit into the camera frame.

CONCLUSION

Following data analysis, the researchers identified 37 slang terms present in the YouTube sketch "Gen Z Hospital" by Saturday Night Live that were suitable for examination. Among these, the most frequently occurring category was flippant slang, comprising 19 examples. This predominance illustrates the fluid and adaptive nature of Generation Z's linguistic style, which is significantly shaped by digital culture, internet memes, and social media discourse.

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In summary, the study involved categorizing the identified slang terms, classifying their types, and analyzing their semantic meanings. This analysis offers valuable insight into the lexical patterns and functions of Gen Z slang, demonstrating how such language forms operate as a means of social interaction, cultural identity, and community bonding among its users.

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