

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE USE OF 'SLANG WORDS' AMONG ALPHA GENERATION

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Abstract. The rapid development of social media can influence the way of communicating, especially for the Alpha generation who were born and grew up in a fairly sophisticated digital era. This research aims to examine the influence of social media on the use of "slang words" among the alpha generation. This research uses a qualitative approach with phenomenological methods. This research explores the role of social media in facilitating the adoption and spread of slang among the alpha generation. The Diffusion of Innovation Theory by Everett Rogers and the Social Learning theory by Albert Bandura are used as theoretical foundations to explain the process of slang adoption. This research found that social media functions as the main channel for the spread of slang, starting from the knowledge stage to the confirmation stage. The alpha generation often adopts slang they encounter on social media, assessing its suitability for the new communication style, which they then implement in their daily lives. This research shows that social media not only influences the way of communication, but also influences the acceleration of language development, creates space for linguistic creativity, and shapes digital identity. However, the accelerated development of slang language creates challenges for the use of standard or formal language. This research concludes that social media has a crucial role in the evolution of language in the alpha generation, making social media platforms dynamic for language development in a short and innovative time.

Keywords: *gen alpha, social media, slang words, diffusion of innovation and social learning*

Introduction

The increasingly rapid development of the digital world has had diverse influences on society throughout the world. This development allows all groups, both adults and children, to be able to access social media, such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube and X. Social media itself can be defined as a computer or software-based service that allows users to share information and ideas by building a network virtual (Dandekar et al., 2018). The ease of accessing various information's has made social media a platform that is popular with various generations, including generations X, Y, Z to the Alpha generation. This generation was born in the early years of technological developments, such as the use of computers, cable TV and video games. Furthermore, generation Y (Millennials) are people born from the Baby Boomers generation with a birth range from 1980 to 1995 (Luntung et al., 2014). Generation Y is the generation that experienced the beginnings of internet development, so they have personal characteristics that are creative, informative, passionate, and productive compared to previous generations (Arif, 2021). Meanwhile, Generation Z is the generation born from 1996 to 2010 (Atika et al., 2020). This generation is known as the generation that grew up with the internet, so it has characteristics that are sensitive to social issues and the surrounding environment. Meanwhile, the Alpha generation is the generation born from 2010 to the present (Atika et al., 2020). The Alpha generation is a generation that was

born and grew up with technology, so it has the characteristic of being highly dependent on the use of gadgets.

In the last decade, the development of social media has been quite rapid. This also has an impact on the way individuals communicate with each other, especially the Alpha generation as the generation most exposed to technology from birth. Saman and Hidayati (2023) stated that the Alpha generation is a generation that grew up amidst the rapid development of digital technology, with social media being one of the main components that plays a role as a communication medium in everyday life. Through social media, language development in the Alpha generation is significantly influenced by their exposure to various digital platforms. Social media can introduce new vocabulary, communication styles, and form abbreviations that reflect fast and efficient communication (Fitriani, 2024). The social media platforms used by the Alpha generation are not only a means of entertainment, but also a place to form identity and express themselves, as well as becoming part of the culture of the Alpha generation (Damayanti et al., 2024). Social media platforms currently allow users to connect with each other through various content, both written content and video content, such as the TikTok and YouTube platforms. These two platforms are able to create new environments, languages and trends that develop very quickly. The language used between content creators and their audiences often reflects pop culture and viral phenomena that are widespread on social media. These raises concerns that the current generation, especially the Alpha generation, will be influenced by using informal language and language that has different properties or meanings in everyday life, Bangun et al. (2024) provide an explanation that language is produced because humans always look for ways to communicate with each other, using hand gestures and facial gestures to communicate which over time is replaced by the use of language. The YouTube and TikTok platforms provide free space for each user to access various content. In the context of the Alpha generation, if they do not receive special supervision from their parents, children will easily be exposed to various types of content that appear on social media homepages, thereby acquiring new terms or vocabulary obtained through video content.

There are many previous studies that have analyzed the process of language development in the Alpha generation, such as research which focuses on discussing the emergence of new vocabulary used by the Alpha generation among children in Cempedak Lobang Dusun IV Village, Indonesia. The conclusion of this research shows that the Alpha generation only uses a variety of new vocabulary in their friendship environment, while at home and school, they will use Indonesian. Apart from that, in Maulida (2022) research, the research discussion focuses on the use of pejoration and amelioration by the Alpha generation, while the discussion regarding the process of developing new terms for the Alpha generation when communicating using sociolinguistic theory has not been studied and discussed much. In understanding this phenomenon, sociolinguistic theory provides a strong basis for analyzing how language develops in certain social contexts, including in digital environments such as social media because it examines the properties of language, language variations, language functions, and the use of language in interacting in society.

Almost similar previous research was also conducted by Muharni et al. (2024) regarding the formation of generation Z slang on social media, with the title "Phonology of Slang Used on Social Media in the Era of Generation Z", it was found that the difference in this research lies in the subject studied, namely generation Z and the

phonology of the language used. Previous research suggests that future researchers investigate further the development of language used on social media to stay connected with the next generation. The research conducted in this paper has a dependent variable, namely the use of 'Slang Words' among the Alpha generation with an independent variable, namely the influence of social media. This research aims to find out more about how 'Slang Words' are used among the Alpha generation, which is caused by the influence of social media. This research is important to research because there is a lack of literature regarding the influence of social media on the use of 'Slang Words'. Especially what happened to the Alpha generation with birth years ranging from 2010 to now. Based on previous research statements, it can be seen that social media has a big influence on language development from generation to generation, especially in the current generation, namely the Alpha generation. So, based on previous phenomena and research, a problem formulation can be drawn, namely how can the use of social media influence the use of 'Slang Words' among the Alpha Generation?

Materials and Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach. According to Moleong (2022), basic qualitative research in phenomenological analysis, the analysis carried out does not only focus on reality, but also focuses on problems that have been discovered. This research relies on researchers as the main instrument, and uses triangulation data collection techniques and inductive analysis. In this research, researchers use the phenomenological method which aims to investigate and study an event experienced by an individual or group of living creatures (Yen, 2018). In addition, Nuryana et al. (2019) stated that phenomenology is the best way to explain a problem. Through this method, researchers can understand thoroughly and deepen an object they want to study or know based on what is shown. Based on the understanding above, this research uses qualitative methods with a focus on understanding natural phenomena by emphasizing meaning rather than generalizations. In this research, the researcher was the main instrument by analyzing the data inductively. Data collection in this research uses secondary data, as well as phenomena to investigate and understand events experienced by groups of people to research "The Influence of Social Media on the Use of 'Slang Words' Among the Alpha Generation".

Concepts and theories

The Diffusion of Innovation Theory proposed by Everett Rogers is also very relevant to this research. Rogers stated that innovations, ideas, or advanced technologies that exist today, can spread through certain populations or communities. Rogers said that innovation can be disseminated through certain channels over time to a group of members of a social system. Diffusion of innovation is basically a special form of spreading information in the form of new ideas (Muntaha and Amin, 2023). The Diffusion of Innovation Theory explains that the process of adaptation to innovation goes through a series of stages, starting from the knowledge, decision, implementation to confirmation stages. The results of this research are explained through the following stages.

Knowledge stage (Knowledge)

Previous studies defines the knowledge stage as the stage when individuals gain knowledge about how innovation functions. In this stage, Gen Alpha will begin to know slang through interactions on social media, either through posts, comments or online interactions with friends. At this stage too, the Alpha generation begins to understand the meaning of slang language obtained from social media.

Persuasion stage (Persuasion)

The persuasion stage is a further stage after the knowledge stage. At this stage, occurs when someone forms an attitude of acceptance or rejection of an innovation. Accordingly, the attitude of accepting or rejecting an innovation is based on a person's psychology, where an individual will begin to collect and search for information related to an innovation, determine what messages are received, and how the information will be interpreted. After getting to know slang, the Alpha generation will assess whether or not the vocabulary is suitable for use and if it is deemed suitable, they will begin to influence other people by providing opinions on the assessment of the slang language.

Decision stages (Decision)

Past studies explained that this stage is a continuation of the persuasion stage, which is when an individual begins to recognize an innovation and has made a decision to accept or reject the innovation. This decision is determined by several characteristics consisting of compatibility with the innovation, level of difficulty, relative advantage, trial, and ease of observation. At this stage, the Alpha generation tends to use slang if the words are easy to learn, and provide increased social interaction or acceptance with their friends.

Implementation stage (Implementation)

The implementation stage occurs when individuals have actively used the innovation, both in action and mentally. The Alpha Generation will use slang in their daily lives, slang will feel more natural and become part of their vocabulary. Slang is not only used on social media but also in direct interactions with peers.

Confirmation stage (Confirmation)

At this stage, Generation Alpha will seek validation for the slang they use. They will continue to use slang if they feel the benefits in their daily lives and are comfortable using the slang. They can also reduce or even stop using slang if they feel it is hindering their social interactions. Apart from that, the social learning theory put forward by Albert Bandura is relevant to be used as a supporting theory in this research. According to Bandura, who is an expert psychologist in the social field, individuals, especially children and teenagers, can learn through observation and imitation of behavior they see in their surrounding environment, especially from models who are considered to be influential or who have high social status. Albert Bandura's theory states that people can pay attention to other people through observation, reinforcement, and modeling to learn new information and behavior (Ilmiani et al., 2021).

Results and Discussion

Slang or slang is a form of informal vocabulary that has developed along with modernization and is often used by teenagers. According to the definition, slang is a form of language that is used informally, often among teenagers and certain social groups. Holmes and Wilson (2022) himself categorizes slang as part of informal vocabulary and is used in casual contexts by certain communities. However, the use of slang is considered inappropriate for formal communication because it tends to be considered strange, rude and impolite. However, slang is often found in oral and written communication among teenagers. Each country has its own slang, such as in English there are terms such as "bussin", "cap", "drip", "fax", "lowkey", and others.

Many slang terms like this have emerged due to the influence of technological developments, especially social media, such as the YouTube and TikTok platforms, which have had a big influence on the emergence and use of slang language. A study argues that this slang phenomenon reflects the social and cultural dynamics of its users, and is often influenced by trends and technology, such as social media. YouTube and Tiktok are currently quite well-known social media platforms and are widely used by all groups, not just teenagers. This is not surprising because of the many conveniences and excitement that this application offers in getting new information that can be obtained through video shows. With the YouTube and Tiktok applications, the current generation of teenagers are getting a lot of information and getting to know languages they didn't know before and with the convenience offered by Youtube and Tiktok, it has sparked their interest in learning languages. Not only that, the existence of YouTube and Tiktok also gave rise to the creativity of teenagers to use the languages they acquired from these platforms in new and more effective ways, resulting in the emergence of slang as it is today.

Social media is an online digital platform that functions as a forum for active individual participation, as a forum for sharing, interacting and creating content dynamically and collaboratively. Agustin et al. (2024) stated that social media is online-based media that allows individuals to share, participate and create content through various platforms such as blogs, social networks, wikis, forums and virtual worlds. Social media was formed in 1978 by Ward Christensen and Randy Suess, initially in the form of the invention of a bulletin board system (Ma'ruf et al., 2023). Then in 1997, the first social networking site called Six Degrees was created, which was discovered by Andrew Weinreich. Six Degrees is a social network that makes it easy for users to interact with new users, such as sending messages and sharing content in the form of videos and photos. However, Six Degrees experienced problems in generating opinions so that in 2001 Six Degrees finally closed after operating for 4 years (Putra, 2024).

Furthermore, in 2002, social media began to develop rapidly with the emergence of Friendster. Friendster was very popular with young people at that time because its users could share photos, videos, and connect virtually with people all over the world. Then 2 social media appeared, namely LinkedIn and Myspace in 2003. LinkedIn is not only useful for socializing but is also used to find work so that the function of social media develops (Pahlephi, 2022). Meanwhile, Myspace has much more complete features compared to Friendster because it can not only send messages, videos and photos but can also send music. Anwar (2022) states that in 2004, Mark Zuckerberg launched Facebook, which later became the dominant social network in 2008, replacing Friendster and Myspace thanks to innovative features, including game applications. In 2005, YouTube was introduced as a video sharing platform that attracted the attention

of users. Twitter, launched in 2006, offers a simpler social networking concept with a focus on status timelines. Instagram, released in 2010, allows interaction through editable photos and videos. In 2019, Threads was introduced as a Snapchat-like Instagram feature, and officially launched in 2023 as a platform that allows users to create text posts of up to 500 characters, share images or videos, and interact through comments, likes, reposts, or sharing content.

Data about the use of social media from generation to generation

Gen X has a high intensity in using social media, and especially the Facebook platform is one of the most popular among generation Facebook is the preferred platform with 81% of Gen X. Based on the data above issued, there are various reasons why Generation X uses social media, the reasons that Generation X often uses are to stay updated with current news and events, and other reasons that increase the intensity of social media use among Generation X. Apart from that, in 2023 generation Y will show more intensity than the previous generation where internet use is more than three hours. Gen Y spends around 3.5 hours a day accessing the internet via mobile devices, and also 2.55 hours a day via laptop or PC device. Facebook is the preferred platform that 88% of Gen Y have and 76% have visited in the last month. In terms of attitudes and satisfaction towards online social media use, Generations For Generation Y, they understand best that online social media has positive and negative aspects. The online social media literacy level of Generations X, Y, and Z is relatively high. This is supported by the results of reports provided by Data Reportal which presents comprehensive data on digital trends, as well as the use of the internet, social media, mobile devices and e-commerce throughout the world, which is presented in *Figure 1*, *Figure 2* and *Figure 3*.

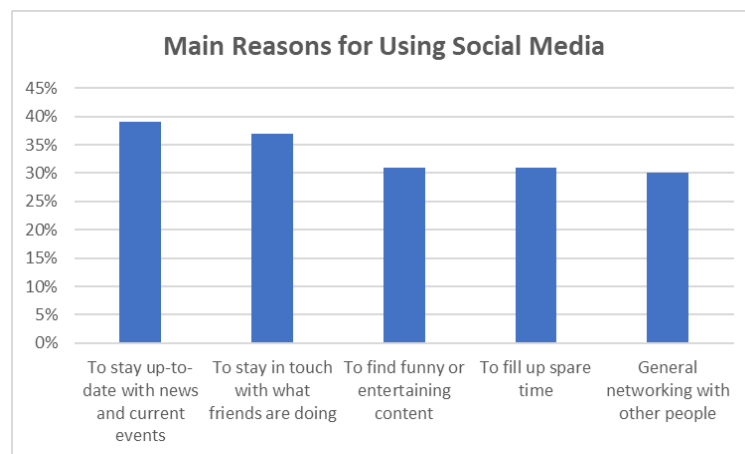


Figure 1. Gen X's main reasons for using social media.

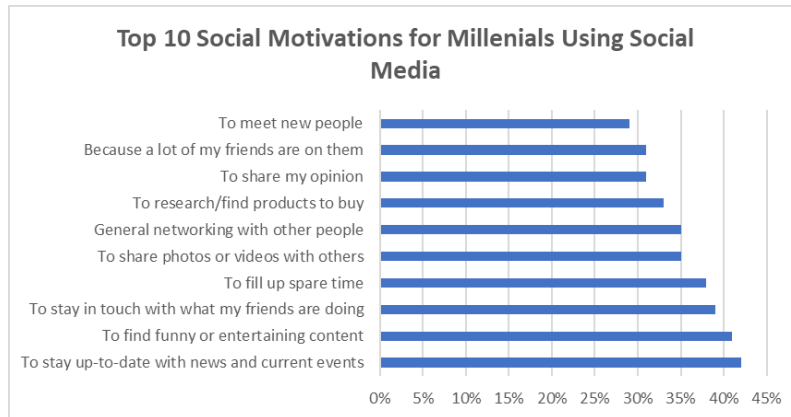


Figure 2. Gen Y's main reasons for using social media.

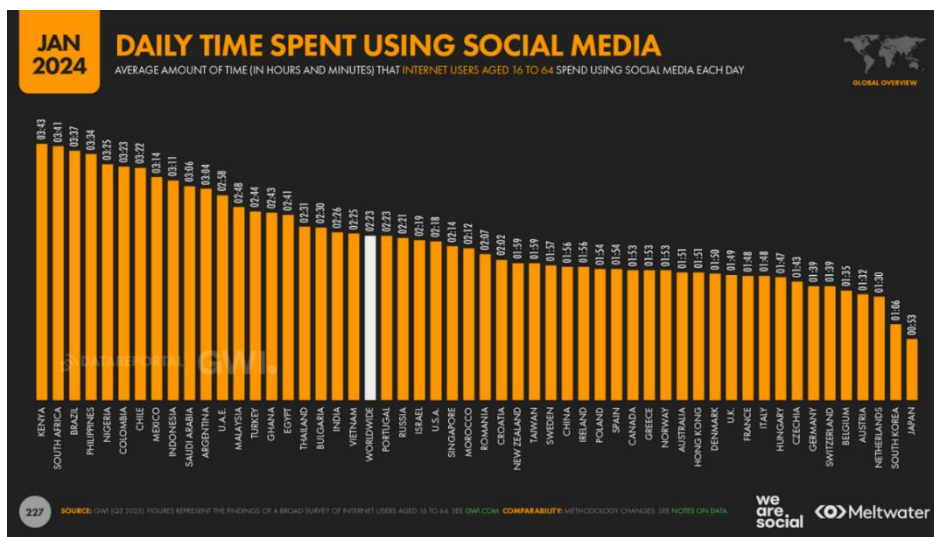


Figure 3. Daily use of social media around the world.

Based on the bar chart above, it shows that social media usage time throughout the world is currently quite high, namely in Kenya with an average usage duration of three hours and forty-three minutes per day. Apart from the highest number of social media users throughout the world, there are 10 social media that are often used by Gen Alpha with the Instagram platform being quite popular with the highest percentage, namely 16%. So, social media has quite an important aspect of life in communication. In addition, high-intensity use of social media platforms creates patterns of social interaction and digital culture for the alpha generation (Figure 4).

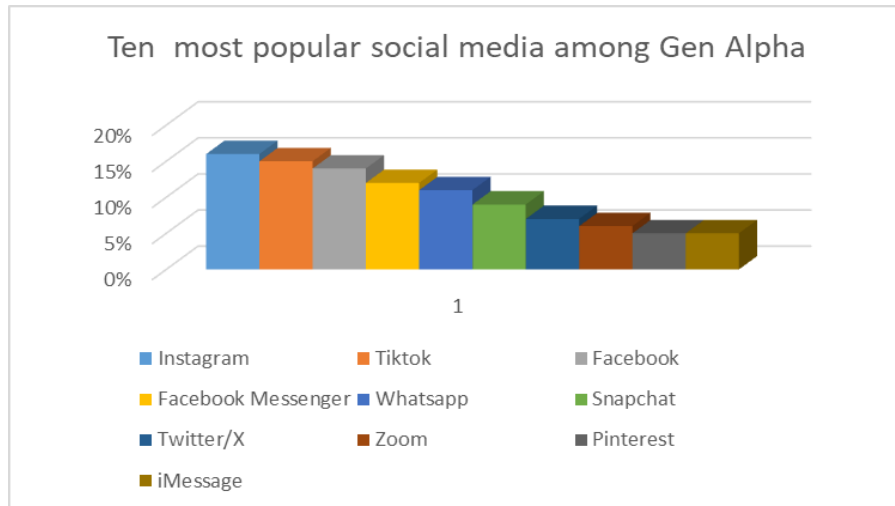


Figure 4. Ten most popular social media among Gen Alpha.

Results of the influence of social media on the use of 'Slang Words' among the alpha generation

The use of 'slang words' can be seen as a linguistic innovation that spread among Generation Alpha via social media. Generation Alpha, which is highly connected to technology and social media, tends to quickly adopt new languages, including 'slang words', due to exposure to trends and culture spread through social networks. The Diffusion of Innovation Theory can help explain the process of adoption and spread of 'slang words' among this generation, as well as the factors that influence the speed and manner in which they adopt these words. According to the Diffusion of Innovation Theory proposed by Rogers, social media in the context of the Alpha Generation functions as the main channel for the spread of language innovation, especially in terms of the introduction and dissemination of slang. The stages outlined in this theory, such as knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation, explain the process by which Generation Alpha not only acquires an understanding of the meaning and use of slang through repeated exposure on social media platforms, but also how they then adopt and spread it in their social environment. After gaining initial knowledge about slang, Generation Alpha goes through a persuasion stage where they assess the suitability of the slang for their communication style. The decision stage then leads to making a decision to accept or reject the use of the slang in daily interactions. If the slang is deemed capable of improving the quality of social interactions and gaining acceptance from peer groups, it will be implemented consistently in both online and offline communications. In the confirmation stage, Generation Alpha tends to maintain the use of slang that is felt to provide significant social benefits, while slang that is no longer relevant or less popular is likely to be abandoned. Thus, social media plays a very crucial role in facilitating the process of adoption and spread of slang among Generation Alpha (Gulo, 2023).

In the context of social media, the Alpha generation is exposed to various content from influencers, peers and other public figures who create content through various social media platforms using slang as an identity and resulting communication. through the observation process, the Alpha generation not only learned to understand but also began to adopt these slang words in their daily interactions, making this part of their own language as a form of expression and social conformity, this is in accordance with

the social learning theory put forward by Albert Bandura. Apart from that, there are several examples of the implementation of the influence of social media on slang vocabulary in Gen Alpha. The influence of social media on language development is very significant. Interaction patterns that occur on social media tend to be shorter, full of emojis, slang, and the use of mixed language. Generation Alpha often uses different sentences compared to previous generations (Maulida, 2022). The interactions that occur in today's digital space not only influence the way of speaking, but also accelerate the evolution of language, with Alpha genes often being the pioneers in the adoption and spread of new terms. The influence of social media on language development in the Alpha generation is not only negative. Social media also forms a platform for creativity and innovation. This generation not only adopts language from social media but is also active in creating and spreading new forms of language. Thus, social media functions as a place where language continues to develop from generation to generation. Apart from social media, the development of language and communication in the Alpha generation is also influenced by previous generations. The Alpha generation's use of language and vocabulary is heavily influenced by generation Z, where the Alpha generation uses a lot of slang or slang abbreviations created by generation Z to communicate both in the real world and in cyberspace (*Table 1*).

Table 1. *Implementation of slang language in Gen Alpha.*

Number	Slang	Definition
1	Aura	An expression to describe the charisma possessed or gained by an individual, positive/gaining charisma is expressed as (+) aura while negative/losing is expressed as (-) aura.
2	Based	Being unique and independent from others view of you.
3	Cap	A lie or falsehood
4	Cringe	An embarrassing or awkward moment
5	Drip	Describing someone's fashion sense and style as cool
6	Fanum Tax	Taking a piece of other people's food
7	Mewing	A tongue exercise in which the tongue is rested against the roof of the mouth in order to change the jawline shape.
8	NPC	An abbreviation for "Non-Playable Character", used to describe someone who lacks independent thought and blindly follows opinions of others.
9	Opp	An abbreviation for "Opponent", used to describe someone viewed as an opposition or viewed by one as having conflict or disagreement.
10	Rizz	An abbreviation for "Charisma", an ability to attract or charm other people.
11	Sigma	A person who acts independently and prefers being alone rather than accompanied by a group of friends.
12	Skibidi	Has no particular meaning and mainly used as a reference or parody to a viral YouTube video.
13	Yeet	Throwing an object with a lack of concern of the object.

Conclusion

The use of new vocabulary or terms in the Alpha generation is influenced by several technological factors, one of which is social media which plays an important role in the process of adopting new terms among the Alpha generation. This research found that social media has a significant influence on the acceleration of the development of language terms. New terms often arise from culture or the words of a content creator. The Alpha Generation who was born and grew up with technology has a faster adaptability so they are able to adopt this vocabulary. Social media allows the Alpha generation to create language that reflects identity and culture, while building relationships among digital communities. This has an impact on language development that is relatively more dynamic and faster than previous generations. However, this phenomenon is considered to be able to pose new challenges to the standard and informal language used, because new languages often do not use grammar as standard

and this can affect the alpha generation's way of communicating in a more formal context.

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Conflict of interest

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest involve with any parties in this research study.

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