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## **THE DYNAMICS OF INTERNET SLANG: MORPHOLOGICAL STRUCTURES AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC IMPLICATIONS IN GLOBAL AND LOCAL CONTEXTS**

Language is a valuable human faculty that is constantly changing due to internal linguistic factors and external societal, cultural, and technological influences. Throughout history, lexical norms have evolved as speakers and writers create new words and expressions to describe emerging concepts, inventions, and cultural phenomena. In the modern era, the internet has become a primary catalyst for language change, providing a platform for fast communication and global interaction. Limitations of digital interfaces — such as character limits, technical restrictions on small screens, and the need for immediate communication — have led to the emergence of “internet slang,” a colloquial linguistic subsystem that prioritizes brevity, efficiency, and clarity over formal grammatical norms [4, p. 53–57].

This study explores the mechanisms of internet slang formation and its sociolinguistic consequences. By analyzing both the morphological processes involved in word formation and the social motivations for slang use, the research provides a comprehensive overview of how digital communication is reshaping language. Internet slang should not be viewed merely as a collection of short words or informal expressions; it represents a systematic adaptation to the needs of modern communicative environments.

The evidence presented in this study comes from two primary methodological approaches. First, a morphological analysis examined examples of English internet slang, using frameworks proposed by Katamba and Booij to classify abbreviation types. Second, a quantitative survey was conducted among 154 randomly selected youth aged 18-36 in Selangor, Malaysia, to investigate the types of slang used, sources of slang, and its impact on verbal and written communication. Together, these approaches provide a multifaceted understanding of both structural and social dynamics of slang [2, p. 357].

Morphologically, internet slang demonstrates a high level of organization and creativity. Words are constructed from morphemes, the smallest meaningful units of language, and manipulated to produce concise and expressive forms. Abbreviation is the primary strategy, driven by linguistic economy, which refers to the effort to convey maximum meaning with minimal effort. Common processes include blends, in which parts of two words are combined to create a new word; acronyms, in which the initial letters of a phrase form a new word; alphabetism, where letters of a phrase are spelled individually; and clipping, where parts of a word are removed while retaining the core meaning [1, pp. 78-75].

Examples of blends include words like “infomercial” (information + commercial). Acronyms such as “LOL” (laughing out loud) and “BRB” (be right back) simplify longer expressions. Alphabetisms like “FYI” (for your information) allow rapid reference to common phrases. Clipping examples include “app” (application) and “doc” (document). These strategies demonstrate the creativity of younger generations,

who often modify language to distinguish themselves and to increase communication speed.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, slang serves multiple functions. It reflects contemporary life and youth culture while facilitating efficient communication. In Malaysia, English-based slang has been widely adopted among urban youth, particularly in Selangor, where it helps reinforce personal and group identity, promotes social acceptance, and sometimes functions as a counter-language challenging formal norms. Over time, slang has shifted from a niche or informal register to a normalized form of daily communication.

Social media platforms have accelerated these changes by creating environments where traditional grammatical rules are often simplified or bypassed. The widespread use of abbreviations, phonetic spellings, and non-standard syntax indicates that language adaptation is not a decline in proficiency but a response to new communicative needs. Younger generations increasingly carry these patterns into academic and professional settings, suggesting that slang may have a long-term influence on linguistic norms worldwide [3, p. 519–558].

Nevertheless, some limitations remain in current research. Morphological analyses often rely on relatively small datasets, while sociolinguistic surveys are sometimes geographically limited. Furthermore, the long-term effects of internet slang on formal language and education require expanded studies. Despite these gaps, it is clear that internet slang is a creative, adaptive, and functional response to the demands of modern communication.

In conclusion, internet slang exemplifies the dynamic nature of language in the digital age. Through processes such as blending, acronymization, alphabetism, and clipping, speakers achieve efficiency and expressiveness across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. Sociolinguistically, slang provides tools for identity construction, social cohesion, and rapid communication. As informal registers increasingly influence formal domains, language continues to evolve, maintaining relevance and vitality in an interconnected, fast-paced world.

## REFERENCES

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