

## **GEN Z INTERNET SLANG AS A NEW LANGUAGE OF COMMUNICATION**

The aim of this study was to investigate the role of internet slang in modern digital communication, with a particular focus on the influence of Generation Z on its development and dissemination. The analysis of the main types of internet slang, including abbreviations, acronyms, and meme-based expressions, was conducted. On the basis of this research, the key linguistic features and functions of internet slang, as well as its impact on everyday communication, were identified.

Nowadays, social media has become a part of our daily lives, giving us opportunities to communicate with people all over the world. At the same time, the features of online communication, particularly the restriction on the number of symbols in messages or comments and the need for rapid information exchange, influence the way users express their thoughts. That is why the necessity for more concise and comfortable forms of texting has arisen, which has contributed to the emergence of internet slang. It includes abbreviations, acronyms, neologisms, and other linguistic means that allow users to convey information and emotions effectively in the digital environment.

The concept of slang has existed for a long time and traditionally has been developed within a specific, separate social group. Moreover, its occurrence stems from the need to express specific emotions, attitudes, or opinions that cannot always be conveyed in standard language. The main aspects of its existence are spreading towards other members of the group, so that means the new expression becomes established only when it's picked and actively used in everyday communication. [1]

Consequently, internet slang has evolved along similar lines. However, its distinctive feature is that it originates in a virtual environment and gradually spreads beyond it, becoming part of everyday speech.

Every generation has its specific internet slang, which isn't always understood by the other members of the older generation. That is because digital environment is rapidly evolving with more flexible and speed solutions. Today, Gen Z plays a key role in shaping internet slang, actively creating and spreading new words and expressions. That is why it is important to investigate their influence on the development of modern communication.

Special attention should be paid to Gen Z slang, which has moved beyond simple shortcuts (fr – for real, sus – suspicious) to more meaningful expressions. In fact, much of today's slang, such as «slay» or «ate», which is used as a compliment and can mean admiration, actually comes from AAVE (African American Vernacular English) and queer culture. Other popular phrases include «let him cook» (letting someone show their potential), «we are cooked» (meaning a situation is hopeless), and «spill the tea» (share juicy gossip). [2; 3] A perfect example of purely Gen Z slang is «passenger princess». First appearing in a Twitter in 2020 and going viral on TikTok in 2023, the term describes a woman chivalrously chauffeured by her partner. [4] This shows how modern slang quickly moves from a single tweet to a global cultural trend.

In addition, TikTok-driven slang continues to expand rapidly, introducing highly expressive and often humorous phrases that quickly become part of everyday communication. For example, the word «delulu» (from “delusional”) is widely used in

a playful way to describe unrealistic but optimistic thinking, often accompanied by the phrase «delulu is the solulu». Another popular term is «rizz» (short for charisma), referring to someone's ability to attract or impress others, especially in romantic contexts. Expressions like «mid» are used to describe something average or disappointing, while «no cap» means “no lie” or “seriously”. Phrases such as «understood the assignment» indicate that someone has performed a task exceptionally well, whereas «it's not that deep» is used to downplay a situation and suggest that it should not be overanalyzed. The term «vibe check» refers to assessing someone's mood or attitude, and «era» (as in “my villain era” or “healing era”) reflects the tendency of Gen Z to frame life stages as aesthetic or narrative phases. [5]

Another notable trend is the use of ironic or exaggerated expressions like «I'm screaming», «I'm dead», or «this sent me», which convey strong emotional reactions without literal meaning. Similarly, «beige flag» has recently emerged to describe neutral or mildly quirky traits in a person, positioned between «red flags» and «green flags». These examples highlight how Gen Z slang is deeply tied to humor, irony, and cultural context, making it both highly dynamic and sometimes difficult for outsiders to interpret. Meme-based terms are also very common. For example, «get krissed» works similarly to the famous «rickrolling» and refers to pranking someone with a clickbait video. Beyond just text, users also rely on visual tools like emojis. These can carry multiple meanings depending on the context, allowing people to add emotional tone to their messages.

In conclusion, internet slang has evolved into a significant and dynamic component of modern communication, reflecting the need for fast, concise interaction in digital environments. It is no longer just a digital feature; it has become a key tool for self-expression and identity. The study has shown that Generation Z plays a crucial role in shaping and popularizing new linguistic forms, often drawing from diverse cultural sources and online communities. Internet slang not only simplifies communication but also serves as a powerful tool for self-expression, identity formation, and social belonging. Therefore, rather than undermining traditional language, it complements and transforms it, adapting linguistic practices to the realities of the digital age.

## REFERENCES

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