

Know Your Skibidi: Navigating Gen Alpha's Slang Types and Trend on Social Media X

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Abstract. Language evolves as society and technology progress, with each generation developing its own unique forms of expression. Gen Alpha, the cohort born after 2013, is no exception, using distinct slang that reflects its digital upbringing. As a demographic that has emerged in a period of advanced technology, Gen Alpha has its own slang that set themselves apart from different generations and known as “*brain rot*” (Dispatch, 2024). This study explores the types of slang used by Gen Alpha in videos shared on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter) and determines which types are most dominant in their everyday language. Employing a Descriptive Qualitative method and employing a Non-Participant Observer, the data were gathered from 10 selected videos, uncovering 46 instances of Gen Alpha slang. The findings categorize the slang into five types adapted from Partridge (Partridge, 2015) and Puspita and Ardianto (Puspita & Ardianto, 2024) slang category: Fresh and creative, Flippant, Imitative, Acronyms, and Clipping, which demonstrate the creativity and flexibility of Gen Alpha's linguistic expressions. Furthermore, the study reveals broader implications for understanding generational shifts in communication, the influence of digital media on language, how slang serves as a bridge between subcultures, and crucial future research.

Keywords: Gen Alpha; Slang; Language; Social Media X

INTRODUCTION

Each generation is marked not just by the technology they use, but also by how they communicate. Language, especially informal language like slang, evolves with each passing generation. Slang is described as “the special vocabulary or phraseology of a particular calling or profession” and as a “language of highly colloquial type, considered as below the level of standard educated speech and consisting either of new words or current words employed in some special sense (Matitiello, 2008). Slang represents a part of language that reflects social and psychological transformation within society. Slang demonstrates different elements of experience exploration, empathy and effective communication. Slang functions not also merely as a form of communication, but also act as a symbol of social and cultural transformations and grasping the context and significant of these slang application aids in comprehending social standards (Fauziah, Pebriano, & Murtiningsih, 2023).

For example, what one generation might call a “*good friend*” became “*best friend*” for another, then “*bestie*,” and more recently, “*pookie*” for Gen Alpha. These shifts in language reflect broader societal changes and the constant evolution of communication. As time progresses, each generation introduces new slang, lingo, and expressions that distinguish them, creating a unique linguistic identity.

Language is more than just a medium of communication; it is a reflection of thought, culture, and social interaction. As Halliday (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) points out, language serves as a powerful tool for expressing thoughts, emotions, and social identities. From a sociolinguistic perspective, language is context-bound and varies according to the

speakers, listeners, and the subject of discussion (Chaer & Agustina, 1995). The context in which language is used-whether it's casual conversation, formal discourse, or the rapidly evolving space of social media-shapes how it functions. This means that as society changes, so does language, constantly adapting to meet the needs of its speakers.

Generational shifts, especially in the digital age, accelerate this linguistic evolution. Sociologists and marketers often categorize generations to better understand social behaviour and preferences: the Greatest Generation (1901–1924), Silent Generation (1925–1945), Baby Boomers (1946–1964), Generation X (1965–1979), Millennials (1980–1994), Generation Z (1995–2012), and now, Generation Alpha (2013–2025). Among these, Gen Alpha, born in the age of smartphones and constant connectivity, has created its own slang, largely influenced by digital media platforms like X (formerly Twitter). Generation Z is a demographic that has emerged in a period of advanced technology, where they gather more information not from their immediate surroundings but from online platforms. Gen Alpha, as their previous generations, employ slangs to set themselves apart from earlier generations, articulate their perspectives on various issues and communicate more openly. The advancement of technology and social media has hastened the dissemination of slang among Gen Alpha (Siagian, Sinaga, & Lestari, 2024). The aim of this research is to decode and analyse these slang terms in order to understand how Gen Alpha's language both reflects and influences broader generational changes. By examining the specific functions of this slang in social media videos, we can better grasp the dynamic ways in which language evolves across generations and responds to new technological environments.

Sociolinguistics is the study of how language interacts with society, focusing on how individuals use language in their daily lives and how these interactions reflect broader social structures. As stated by Wardhaugh (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021) that language is not static but continuously evolves in response to the changing needs and identities of different social groups. This evolution is particularly noticeable in the slang used by younger generations, where language mirrors societal trends and developments. In the case of Gen Alpha, their use of slang on digital platforms highlights both the creation of solidarity within peer groups and the construction of boundaries between different generations. This dual role of slang-fostering unity and division-underscores the importance of sociolinguistics in understanding how language shapes and is shaped by social interactions, especially in the digital age. Sociolinguistics provides a critical framework for analysing Gen Alpha's language use on platforms like X. It examines how linguistic choices are influenced by social context, revealing the underlying social norms, values, and power dynamics that govern communication. For example, the informal and playful nature of Gen Alpha's slang not only fosters in-group solidarity but also acts as a linguistic marker that differentiates them from older generations. Through this lens, sociolinguistics helps to uncover the deeper meanings behind slang use, showing how language can both unite and divide different social groups.

Halliday's (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) theory of language functions provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the various purposes language serves. He identifies seven key functions: emotive, directive, phatic, referential, metalinguistic, poetic, and contextual. These functions facilitate different forms of communication, from expressing emotions to initiating social interactions. In the context of Gen Alpha's slang, these functions often overlap, as slang terms can simultaneously express identity, convey humour, and strengthen group cohesion. For example, a slang term might serve an emotive

function by conveying excitement or frustration, while also fulfilling a phatic function by maintaining social bonds through casual conversation.

From an educational perspective, understanding these language functions is crucial for engaging with Gen Alpha students. Teachers can use this knowledge to create content that resonates with students' modes of expression, making lessons more relatable and effective. The use of slang in the classroom, for instance, can help bridge the gap between formal education and the informal language students use in their daily lives, fostering a more inclusive learning environment.

Slang is an informal, often transient form of language that reflects the cultural and societal shifts of its time. In society, the individuals who frequently utilize slang tend to be young people or younger generations. The present trend significantly influences the evolution of slang, particularly in the digital realm (Siagian, Sinaga, & Lestari, 2024). Slang evolves rapidly, shaped by contemporary trends and social dynamics. For Gen Alpha, whose language is heavily influenced by digital culture, slang is not just a means of communication but a way to assert identity within online spaces like X. The fluid nature of slang allows it to adapt quickly to the fast-paced environment of social media, where new terms are created, disseminated, and replaced in a matter of weeks or months (Jingzi, 2023).

Slang can be categorized into various kinds, such as innovative and inventive, mimicking, casual, abbreviated and shortened. Concerning the employment of slang, it can be differentiated from these categories. While there are justifiable causes for utilizing slang, conversation is also changing due to Generation Z's progressively intricate social connections. The purpose of using slang expressions is to engage, interact, humiliate, foster a closer environment, convey feelings, articulate frustration and demonstrate closeness (Syafaah & Haryanto, 2023). Building on the typology of slang by Puspita and Ardianto (Puspita & Ardianto, 2024), this study identifies five primary types of slang used by Gen Alpha:

- a. *Fresh and Creative Slang*: This category includes imaginative and innovative slang terms that often feature clever wordplay or informal styles. These terms reflect the fast-paced, meme-driven nature of online communication.
- b. *Flippant Slang*: It involves creating new meanings from familiar words or phrases. It often involves humour or irony, repurposing language in unexpected ways.
- c. *Imitative Slang*: Imitative slang takes existing words and expands or alters their meaning, often in ways that are significantly different from the original.
- d. *Acronyms*: It is abbreviations formed from the first letters of words and pronounced as full words. This type of slang is particularly prevalent in digital communication, where brevity is valued.
- e. *Clipping*: It involves shortening longer words to create more casual or informal versions of the original term.

These types of slang reflect the broader social changes occurring in digital communication, where speed, humour, and informality are prioritized. Partridge's (Partridge, 2015) historical categories of slang-such as Cockney, Public House, Workmen's, and Soldier's slang-provide a broader context for understanding how slang evolves within specific social environments. However, the slang used by Gen Alpha is primarily shaped by digital culture and the platforms they frequent, such as X. The digital nature of Gen Alpha's slang presents both opportunities and challenges for linguists, educators, and content creators. On one

hand, it offers a rich area for exploration, revealing how language evolves in response to technological advancements. On the other hand, the transient nature of slang means that researchers must be constantly attuned to new developments, as terms can quickly fall out of use. By analysing the types of slang used by Gen Alpha, this research aims to provide insights into the ways in which language continues to evolve in the digital age, offering a glimpse into the future of linguistic change.

METHOD

This research employs a Descriptive Qualitative method to analyse the slang terms used by Generation Alpha in videos found on X. Qualitative research, as defined by Creswell (Creswell & Poth, 2016), allows for an in-depth exploration and understanding of social phenomena, focusing on the specific contexts and circumstances in which human interactions occur. In this study, the emphasis is placed on understanding how Gen Alpha utilizes slang in digital spaces, particularly through the content shared on X, a prominent social media platform.

The data collection for this study involved a Non-Participant Observation of 10 videos that prominently featured Gen Alpha language. These videos spanned a range of genres, including humorous skits, everyday conversations, and educational content, offering a comprehensive view of slang usage in diverse contexts. The selection of these videos was based on targeted keyword searches using "Gen Alpha language" as the primary search term on the X platform, ensuring that the sample was representative of the group's linguistic tendencies.

The study's primary data consist of the slang terms identified in the selected videos. In addition, secondary data were drawn from key literature on slang, particularly the works of Partridge (Partridge, 2015) and Puspita and Ardianto (Puspita & Ardianto, 2024) which provided theoretical frameworks for categorizing and analysing the types and functions of slang. These sources were invaluable in comparing contemporary Gen Alpha slang with historical and theoretical perspectives on informal language use.

The data being analysed is the terminology that was found on the videos on social media X which used gen alpha language and terminology, also known as "*brain rot*". *Brainrot* itself refers to the state of mind of someone who is online and consuming poor-quality content. The "*brain rot*" created into slang has a logical explanation, but others are just surrealistic bent or characterized by popular online influencers (Dispatch, 2024). Another explanation for the "*brain rot*" terminology is to represent a person's brain turning to mush or rot when obsessing over something (Sammywise, 2021) . The primary data for this research consists of slang terms extracted from 10 videos on X, specifically focused on Gen Alpha language. The selection of videos was guided by the search term "Gen Alpha language," which led to a diverse range of content, including humorous skits, educational clips, and marketing advertisements. The videos analysed include:

1. Piano playing uploaded by @bhthecat
2. Advertorial uploaded by @shitpostGateway
3. Educational Gen Alpha slang uploaded by @Rjudicata
4. Gen Alpha slang quiz uploaded by @TSN_Sports
5. Gen Alpha slang uploaded by @charise_lee
6. Curry's marketing advertorial uploaded by @supertanskii
7. Gen Alpha education and sample uploaded by @peachyslen

8. Parody uploaded by @wiuindonesia
9. Father using Gen Alpha language slang uploaded by @more_meat_loaf
10. John Cena trying Gen Alpha slang uploaded by @DiscussingFilm
11. Another educational Gen Alpha language video uploaded by @starsandcow

The data collection involved non-participant observation of these videos, documenting and noting the usage of slang terms. The analysis employed documentation, note-taking, and thematic analysis to categorize and interpret the slang terms based on their function and context. To systematically analyse the data, the research employed techniques of documentation, note-taking, and thematic analysis. These methods facilitated the identification, categorization, and interpretation of slang terms, focusing on their function within specific conversational and social contexts. The analysis process involved three key steps: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing, as outlined by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (Miles, Huberman, & Sadalna, 2014). This process ensured a rigorous and structured approach to understanding the nuances of slang use among Gen Alpha.

Non-participant observation was the primary method of data collection, enabling the researchers to observe the natural use of slang without influencing the content or context of the videos. This method was complemented by documentation and note-taking techniques, ensuring that all relevant slang terms and their usage were accurately recorded for subsequent analysis. The research was supported by digital tools such as smartphones and laptops, which facilitated the collection and organization of data from the X platform.

The study aimed to identify the types of slang commonly used by Gen Alpha and to determine which types are most dominant in their everyday language. Drawing on the frameworks provided by Partridge (Partridge, 2015) and Puspita and Ardianto (Puspita & Ardianto, 2024) the analysis focused on categorizing slang into distinct types, including fresh and creative slang, flippant slang, imitative slang, acronyms, and clipping. These categories helped to highlight the innovative and dynamic ways in which Gen Alpha engages with language in digital environments. In summary, this research provides a detailed investigation into the slang used by Gen Alpha on X, utilizing a descriptive qualitative approach to capture the richness and diversity of their linguistic practices. By combining primary data from digital content with secondary data from established linguistic theories, this study contributes to the understanding of how language evolves in response to changing social and technological landscapes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sociolinguistics examines the interplay between language and society, highlighting how language evolves to reflect and shape social structures (Wardough & Fuller, 2021). Slang is an informal form of communication that is frequently utilized by individuals in everyday discussions across different areas. Slang might first be restricted to specific things, but can also evolve into a component of broader language in contemporary culture and trends. This study reflects on how Gen Alpha's slang usage mirrors contemporary societal trends, creating both in-group solidarity and generational boundaries. Language, as noted by Halliday (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) serves multiple functions : emotive, directive, phatic, referential, metalinguistic, poetic, and contextual ; each contributing to the way Gen Alpha communicates and expresses identity.

The data analyzed based on the type of slang of gen alpha “*brainrot*” is presented in the following table:

No	Gen alpha slang	Meaning	Slang type
1	“Gyatt”	Girl your ass thick / god damn	Acronym
2	“The rizzler”	Charisma	Society slang
3	Skibidi	Humorous words with no meaning / bad	Fresh and creative slang
4	Fanum tax	Theft of food between friends	Slang in public school and university
5	Sigma	A cool dude / good	Society slang
6	Ohio	Weird or cringe	Fresh and creative slang
7	What the @	What is your name	Society slang
8	Cap	Fake or dishonest	Society slang
9	W in the chat	To win, showing success	Slang in public school and university
10	Goon	Stupid, foolish or awkward	Fresh and creative slang
11	Munting	To vomit while being drunk	Fresh and creative slang
12	Aura	vibe	Fresh and creative slang
13	Ghosting	Cutting off contact with someone	Society slang
14	Salty	Being resentful or bitter	Fresh and creative slang
15	Receipts	Proof or evidence	Imitative slang
16	Grass	To be in touch with reality	Imitative slang
17	Extra	A tendency to be dramatic or attention seeker	Society slang
18	Shady	Dishonest, unethical	Imitative slang
19	Mewing	To make jaw more square / to change appearances	Slang in medicine
20	Delulu	Delusional	Acronym
21	Ate	Something impressive	Fresh and creative
22	Shook	shock	Imitative slang
23	Finna	Getting ready to do something	Fresh and creative
24	Vibing	Enjoying the atmosphere	Fresh and creative
25	Thirsty	Desperate for attention	Fresh and creative
26	Snack	Someone who looks good	Imitative slang
27	Clout	Social media popularity	Imitative slang
28	Tea	Gossip	Fresh and creative
29	Gucci	Good or cool	Fresh and creative
30	Cringe	Feeling of embarrassment	Fresh and creative
31	GOAT	Greatest of All Time	Acronym
32	Sus	Suspicious	Acronym
33	Yeet	Excitement	Fresh and creative
34	Mid	average	Imitative slang

35	Lowkey	In secret / secretly	Flippant slang
36	Sheesh	Wow	Fresh and creative
32	Snatched	Looking amazing	Fresh and creative
33	A.F	As fuck	Acronym
34	Slay	Someone who is done exceptionally well	Fresh and creative
35	Edging	Cool by being tough	Imitative slang
36	Maxxing	Working or doing something to the maximum	Imitative slang
37	Yapping	Talk a lot without nothing important	Fresh and creative
38	Red flag	Negative qualities	Fresh and creative
39	Pookies	Someone you love	Fresh and creative
40	IRL	In real life	Acronym
41	Bussing	delicious	Fresh and creative
42	Gritty	Rough and tough	Fresh and creative
43	Flex	To show off	Acronym slang
44	Big L	Loser	Flippant slang
45	Serving	Someone wearing a trendy outfit	Imitative slang
46	Beta	Someone who appear weak	Fresh and creative

The analysis revealed 46 distinct slang terms used by Gen Alpha, categorized into several types:

1. *Fresh and Creative Slang*: Dominated the findings, accounting for 23 of the 46 terms. Examples include "Skibidi," a humorous term without a fixed meaning, and "Gyatt," an acronym with multiple interpretations.
2. *Acronyms*: Represented a significant portion of the slang, including terms like "GOAT" (Greatest of All Time) and "Sus" (Suspicious).
3. *Imitative Slang*: Involving repurposed words with expanded meanings, such as "Receipts" (proof) and "Clout" (social media popularity).
4. *Society Slang*: Reflecting broader social contexts, such as "Rizzler" (charisma) and "Cap" (fake or dishonest).
5. *Flippant Slang*: Words formed by shortening or altering existing terms, like "Lowkey" (secretly) and "Big L" (loser).
6. *Slang in Specific Contexts*: Includes "Mewing" (changing jaw appearance) in medical contexts and "Fanum tax" (theft of food among friends) in educational settings.
7. Based on the data it was found 46 total of gen alpha slang language from 10 videos. There are 7 acronyms, 6 society slang, 23 fresh and creative slang, 2 slang in public school, 2 flippant slang and 1 slang in medicine. Each slang has its own nuance and spread out through social media and then used daily in everyday conversation.

Therefore, these findings offer several implications:

1. **Educational Context**: Educators can enhance engagement by incorporating informal or digital-native terms into curricula, aligning with Gen Alpha's modes of expression.
2. **Marketing and Content Creation**: Understanding Gen Alpha slang enables marketers and content creators to better connect with this audience, essential for digital engagement.

3. Sociological Insights: The study highlights how slang serves as a marker of generational identity, fostering inclusivity within peer groups while creating barriers to older generations.
4. Future Research: This research opens avenues for exploring the evolution of slang within digital ecosystems and the role of social media in shaping linguistic trends.
5. By analyzing the slang used by Gen Alpha in diverse video content, this study provides valuable insights into the dynamic and evolving nature of contemporary language, influenced by digital culture and social media interactions.

CONCLUSION

The study of Gen Alpha slang on social media platform X reveals the dynamic nature of contemporary language and its adaptation within digital environments. The “*brain rot*” as it is elaborate found to be a state of informal language also known as slang, to signify a person’s mind while being preoccupied and hence creating an absurd language and dialogue coined by Gen Alpha to set them apart with other generations. By analyzing 46 distinct slang terms, categorized into fresh and creative, flippant, imitative, acronyms, and clipping types, the research highlights the generation's inventive and flexible use of language. This diverse slang usage reflects broader societal and technological shifts, with fresh and creative slang dominating and acronyms emphasizing brevity. The findings underscore the importance of integrating such informal language into educational settings to engage students, and offer valuable insights for marketers and content creators aiming to connect with Gen Alpha. Overall, the study provides a snapshot of how digital culture influences linguistic evolution, showcasing the vibrant and ever-changing landscape of modern communication.

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