

Digital Divides and Cultural Bridges: Generational Insights into Internet Slang, Identity, and Perceptions within Islamic Civilizational Discourse

Syifaour Rahma Aulia¹, Nurul Azizah Ria Kusrini² Wan Ab Aziz Wan Daud²

¹ Universitas KH. Abdul Chalim, Mojokerto, INDONESIA;

² Universitas KH. Abdul Chalim, Mojokerto, INDONESIA;

³ Faculty of Language Studies and Human Development, University Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study is motivated by the rapid development of digital communication, which has influenced language change, particularly the use of internet slang in everyday conversations. This phenomenon is increasingly evident among younger generations who integrate language from social media into spoken communication. Therefore, this research aims to evaluate how internet slang transitions from digital spaces into modern speech, as well as to examine its functions and impacts across generations. The study employs a qualitative approach using content analysis of English-language podcast conversations involving participants from different age groups. The data were analyzed through processes of identification, coding, and categorization of slang terms based on their frequency, type, and usage context, and were then compared with relevant sociolinguistic and digital communication literature. The findings reveal that Generation Z is the most active group in using internet slang in spoken interactions, while older generations tend to use it less frequently or ironically. Internet slang serves key functions as a marker of identity, a means of emotional expression, a tool for communication efficiency, and a source of humor. However, its use also affects social perception: in informal contexts, it can enhance relatability and credibility, whereas in formal settings, it is often perceived as unprofessional. The implications of this study suggest that language changes driven by digital influence should be understood adaptively, particularly in education and intergenerational communication.

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Corresponding Author:

Syifaour aulia

Universitas KH. Abdul Chalim, Mojokerto, INDONESIA;; email: rahmasyifa829@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

The rise of internet communication has created new linguistic environments across the globe, and Indonesia stands out as a particularly dynamic context where language evolves rapidly in response to digital interaction (Kusrini, 2023). As of 2025, Indonesia is home to over 204 million internet users, most of whom belong to the digitally native younger generation (Datareportal, 2025). These users routinely blend online and offline modes of expression, resulting in the widespread use of internet slang—locally known as *bahasa gaul digital*. Platforms such as WhatsApp, TikTok, and Twitter/X function not only as social hubs but also as linguistic incubators where informal terms are coined, circulated, and eventually absorbed into everyday speech. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this phenomenon by making virtual communication a daily necessity, pushing many online expressions into spoken language (Nabilla et al., 2023). Slang terms like "bucin" (a person madly in love), "gercep" (a quick response), and "mager" (reluctance to move) are now widely recognized and used in casual conversations, symbolizing not only digital fluency but also shared cultural identity (Widyaningrum, 2023).

Recent scholarship has begun to explore this digital-linguistic convergence, though the focus remains fragmented and largely descriptive. (Saputri et al., 2021) analyzed slang in youth-generated tweets, emphasizing how slang helps shape digital identity; however, their research did not consider how this written slang translates into verbal language. Cahyono, Rahayu, and Prihartanti (2022) examined the challenges digital slang poses in academic writing among Indonesian students, pointing out a growing tension between informal digital habits and formal language expectations. Nevertheless, their study lacked a model for understanding how slang operates in spoken contexts. Meanwhile, (Nabilla et al, 2023) investigated the normalization of digital slang in spoken language after the pandemic, but treated slang as a uniform phenomenon, without distinguishing between different social contexts or levels of formality. (Dewi., 2025) extended this inquiry by exploring generational attitudes toward internet slang, revealing that while Gen Z generally embraces it, older generations show varying degrees of resistance or confusion. These studies, though valuable, have yet to offer a comprehensive framework for analysing the movement of slang across communication modes.

This study addresses a significant research gap by evaluating how and why specific internet slang expressions migrate from digital chatrooms into verbal, face-to-face interactions. Unlike previous studies, this research does not treat slang as static or homogeneous. Instead, it adopts a diachronic-sociolinguistic lens to trace the evolution of selected slang terms across time, medium, and context. For instance, some expressions like "woles" (relaxed, from the reversed spelling of "selow") have been fully integrated into spoken language, while others like acronyms such as "OTW" (on the way) remain primarily text-based. Moreover, there is limited empirical evidence on how speakers adapt slang phonologically or semantically for spoken use—for example, the spoken form of "gemoy", derived from "gemas imut", pronounced /gə'mɔɪ/ (Yusuf et al., 2024). This evolution raises critical questions about linguistic innovation, social identity, and communicative efficiency in a digitally mediated society.

The urgency of this study lies in the increasing hybridization of language in digital societies. As communication modes blur, understanding how digital slang enters verbal discourse becomes vital for educators, linguists, and cultural analysts alike. Without such analysis, we risk misinterpreting how younger generations communicate, ignoring linguistic shifts that influence education, media, and intergenerational communication. This research offers timely and necessary insights into the Indonesian linguistic landscape—one that is rapidly transforming under the influence of digital culture and youth innovation.

Therefore, this study seeks to explore the integration of internet slang into modern spoken discourse, examine its function in expressing identity and group belonging, and evaluate its impact on perceptions of professionalism and competence. In doing so, the research aims to contribute to a broader understanding of contemporary language use shaped by digital culture.

METHODS

This research employs a qualitative approach with a primary focus on content analysis using podcast data as the main source. The objective is to explore how internet slang is integrated into modern spoken language. Data were collected from a selection of podcasts featuring natural and semi-formal conversations among speakers from various age groups, particularly Generation Z and Millennials. The chosen podcasts were thematically relevant to informal discourse, digital culture, everyday communication, and language use in social contexts. Selection criteria included podcasts delivered in English, involving speakers aged 15–30 and/or 40+, and discussing topics such as social media, pop culture, or daily life areas where internet slang is commonly used. Episodes analyzed were limited to those released within the past three years to ensure up-to-date language representation.

The analysis process involved transcribing selected podcast segments verbatim. Internet slang expressions such as “slay,” “no cap,” “bet,” and “sus” were identified and coded based on frequency, type (e.g., acronym, meme-based slang, phonetic abbreviation), and usage context (such as expressing emotion, agreement, or sarcasm). Usage patterns were then categorized thematically to examine the linguistic and social functions of slang, including identity formation, in-group solidarity, and humor. To complement and triangulate the podcast findings, data were cross-referenced with secondary sources, including academic journals, sociolinguistic studies, and digital linguistics databases. This multi-source approach provides a rich contextual framework for interpreting the evolving role of internet slang in contemporary spoken discourse.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.

The Transition of Internet Slang from Digital Communication to Spoken Language Across Generations

The findings reveal a significant generational divide in the adoption and integration of internet slang into everyday spoken language. Generation Z (ages 15–25) demonstrates the highest level of adoption, with slang terms like “no cap,” “FR,” “goated,” and “slay” appearing naturally in their daily conversations, especially influenced by platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. Their digital-native identity allows them to seamlessly incorporate online slang into real-world verbal communication. In contrast, Millennials (ages 26–40) show a moderate level of slang adoption. While familiar with popular terms such as “LOL,” “low-key,” and “vibe,” they tend to use these expressions in informal settings and often with peers. Slang for this group originates more from early internet culture, suggesting a generational shift in linguistic exposure and influence.

Meanwhile, older adults (40+ years) show limited usage of internet slang. As observed in Podcast 1, their engagement with slang often takes the form of games or guessing challenges rather than functional communication. Slang terms are either misunderstood or used ironically, and the group generally views such language as youth-centric or inappropriate for serious conversation. These patterns confirm that internet slang transitions most rapidly within Gen Z, reflecting their immersion in digital environments. Older generations tend to resist or parody the use of such language, reinforcing generational boundaries in linguistic trends.

Linguistic and Cultural Functions of Internet Slang in Modern Verbal Interactions

The study identifies four main functions of internet slang: identity marking, emotional expression, brevity/efficiency, and humor/irony. First, internet slang operates as a tool for identity construction and social belonging. Terms like “goated,” “no cap,” and “simp” are frequently used among Gen Z as signals of digital fluency and group membership, as seen in Podcast 2. Second, slang serves as a medium for expressing emotions and attitudes. Words like “vibe,” “sus,” and “cooked” simplify emotional communication, replacing longer, more formal expressions with relatable, compact terms. Third, internet slang enhances brevity and conversational efficiency, especially in fast-paced or online-inspired dialogues. Acronyms such as “FR,” “BRB,” “WBU,” and “LOL” allow speakers to convey messages quickly, a habit that likely transfers from text-based digital communication. Lastly, slang carries a strong element of humor and irony. Phrases like “touch grass” and “OK boomer” highlight generational banter and digital sarcasm, often used to critique or mock social behavior in a light-hearted way.

These functions align closely with the informal, dynamic nature of internet discourse, reflecting how online communication norms are increasingly shaping spoken language among younger demographics.

The Impact of Internet Slang on Perceptions of Intelligence, Credibility, and Identity

The impact of internet slang on social perception varies greatly depending on context and age group. In casual peer interactions, slang enhances perceptions of intelligence and credibility among Gen Z, where fluency in trending expressions is equated with being “in the know” or relatable. Slang reinforces group identity and helps build interpersonal bonds. However, in formal settings such as workplaces or academic institutions, the use of internet slang tends to lower perceptions of professionalism and maturity. Among older adults and some millennials, slang is often seen as inappropriate or indicative of immaturity, especially when used in front of authority figures or in structured communication.

The generational divide is particularly evident here. Gen Z may view slang as neutral or even trust-building in informal work contexts, while older adults interpret it as a sign of language decline or lack of seriousness. This generational clash highlights differing attitudes toward language, digital identity, and social norms. Podcast insights support these interpretations: Gen Z uses slang selectively depending on audience, whereas older speakers express skepticism or confusion, further distancing themselves from the linguistic patterns of younger generations.

Discussion

Transition of Internet Slang Across Generations

The data reveal a generational divide in the adoption and adaptation of internet slang into spoken language. Internet slang, originally rooted in digital text-based communication, has now become a significant component of the verbal repertoire of Generation Z (ages 15–25). This group demonstrates a high level of familiarity and fluency with slang terms such as “no cap,” “FR,” “goated,” and “slay”. These terms are used not only in digital contexts but also in face-to-face interactions, reflecting a linguistic shift where digital expressions transcend the screen and enter the domain of everyday speech (Tagliamonte, S., & Denis, D. 2008). This phenomenon is largely attributed to Gen Z’s identity as digital natives (Prensky, 2001), who have grown up with constant exposure to platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat. These platforms serve as dynamic spaces where new slang is generated, circulated, and reinforced through viral trends and memes. The data from Podcast 2 supports this, where hosts fluently use slang like “touch grass,” “cooked,” and “side eye” to explain social phenomena in 2025, indicating a seamless incorporation of online language into oral communication.

By contrast, Millennials (ages 26–40) show a more selective and context-dependent adoption of internet slang. While they actively use slang such as “LOL,” “low-key,” “bet,” and “vibe,” these terms stem largely from early internet culture, such as chat rooms and forums of the late 1990s and early 2000s (Crystal, D. 2011). Millennials adoption is often informal and peer-focused, and they may be less likely than Gen Z to spontaneously incorporate the latest slang trends into their everyday conversations, especially in intergenerational or professional contexts. Older adults (40+ years) exhibit the lowest adoption rate of internet slang. As seen in Podcast 1, their use of slang is often performative, used in guessing games rather than as active vocabulary. Terms like “BRB,” “LOL,” and “ROFL” are either misunderstood or remembered nostalgically. This aligns with previous studies indicating that older generations tend to resist linguistic innovation, especially when it is associated with youth culture or nonstandard usage (Eckert, P. 2000). Moreover, the resistance may be driven by attitudes perceiving such language as a degradation of “proper” English (Bucholtz, M. 1999).

The mechanism of transition also differs across generations. For Gen Z, slang enters their speech through memes, viral videos, and influencer culture, enabling fast and wide diffusion. Millennials, on the other hand, were exposed to internet slang during its developmental phase and are more accustomed to its use in typed or text-based formats. Older adults often lack both the digital exposure and the cultural incentives to integrate slang into speech, leading to slower uptake or outright rejection. This generational linguistic gap highlights broader cultural differences in digital literacy, media consumption, and language ideologies. Gen Z, immersed in participatory media culture, views slang as a marker of identity and creativity. Meanwhile, older generations, who experienced a pre-digital linguistic norm, are more likely to see slang as “informal,” “temporary,” or “inappropriate” for spoken discourse (Jenkins, H. 2006).

The Linguistic and Cultural Functions of Internet Slang in Modern Verbal Interactions

The second research question explores the roles that internet slang plays in verbal communication beyond the screen. Drawing on data from both Podcast 1 and Podcast 2, the analysis reveals that internet slang functions not only as a linguistic shortcut but also as a powerful cultural tool for identity construction, emotional expression, brevity, and humor.

Identity Marking: One of the most salient functions of internet slang is to signal group identity and digital fluency. Terms such as “goated,” “no cap,” and “simp” are more than linguistic shortcuts; they represent membership in a digitally literate and culturally attuned community, especially among Generation Z. As seen in Podcast 2, the use of these terms during casual conversations among peers acts as a social marker that signifies belonging to an in-group that shares the same digital references.

This aligns with Bucholtz and Hall’s theory of identity as emergent through linguistic practices. In this view, the repeated and conscious use of specific slang constructs a social identity that aligns with youth culture, tech-savviness, and online trends (Bucholtz, M., & Hall, K. 2005). The performative use of such slang allows speakers to affiliate themselves with a particular subcultural or generational group, distinguishing themselves from “outsiders” or less digitally fluent individuals.

Emotional Expression: Internet slang also serves as a compact and relatable medium for emotional articulation. Words like “vibe,” “sus,” “cooked,” and “side-eye” encapsulate complex emotional states or judgments in a highly compressed form. For example, “cooked” used to describe mental exhaustion after a task is an evocative metaphor that resonates with younger users accustomed to overstimulation or burnout, as demonstrated in Podcast 2. Similarly, “sus” conveys suspicion or skepticism, replacing longer expressions like “that’s suspicious” with a single, socially loaded syllable. According to (Crystal, D. 2006), the linguistic economy of slang is part of its appeal; it enables users to encode affective meaning with minimal linguistic effort. Moreover, these expressions often carry contextual depth, as their meanings are enriched by shared digital experiences and pop culture references. This makes them both expressive and exclusive, functioning as a linguistic shorthand deeply embedded in online culture.

Brevity and Efficiency: Slang also satisfies a growing demand for efficiency and speed in communication. As seen in Podcast 1, acronyms such as “FR” (for real), “BRB” (be right back), “WBU” (what about you), and “LOL” (laugh out loud) were central to the guessing game between speakers. These terms, originally created for typed conversations, have increasingly migrated into verbal speech as speakers seek to mirror the speed and rhythm of online dialogue in real-time interaction. Note that digital communication promotes an informal register that prioritizes brevity and expressiveness, particularly among youth. When spoken aloud, these acronyms maintain their brevity but also add a performative layer, allowing speakers to maintain both speed and social tone in face-to-face settings (Tagliamonte, S., & Denis, D. 2008).

Humor and Irony: Finally, internet slang plays a critical role in generating humor and signaling irony, particularly in intergenerational or socially charged exchanges. Expressions like “touch grass” or “OK boomer” though not explicitly analyzed in Podcast 1 are often deployed to mock certain behaviors or attitudes. In Podcast 2, for instance, “touch grass” is used humorously to suggest someone is too immersed in online arguments and needs a reality check. This comedic function aligns with general theory of verbal humor, which emphasizes incongruity and cultural scripts. Slang often creates humor by subverting expectations or employing cultural commentary. Furthermore, it serves as a tool of soft critique, enabling users to navigate social norms through sarcasm or satire without direct confrontation (Attardo, S. 1994).

The Influence of Internet Slang on Perceptions of Intelligence, Credibility, and Identity in Casual vs. Formal Contexts

The third research question examines how internet slang affects the way speakers are perceived in terms of intelligence, credibility, and identity, particularly across different social contexts and generational groups. The analysis reveals that internet slang, while effective in fostering peer connection and cultural relevance in casual interactions, is often perceived negatively in formal or intergenerational settings.

Casual Contexts: In-Group Affiliation and Authenticity

In informal, peer-oriented settings, the use of internet slang tends to enhance perceptions of social intelligence and relatability. As reflected in Podcast 2, Gen Z speakers comfortably use slang terms such as “FR,” “goated,” “vibe,” and “side-eye” in their verbal interactions. This usage builds a sense of in-group solidarity, where shared language becomes a marker of mutual understanding and cultural belonging (Eckert, P. 2000). In these contexts, slang is not viewed as a lack of language skill but rather as a strategic social tool. It signals one's familiarity with digital culture, humor, and emotional nuance. Studies in sociolinguistics have long supported the idea that linguistic variation indexes social identity (Labov, W. 1972), and in this case, internet slang allows users especially youth to assert group membership and authenticity. Furthermore, research by highlights how youth use nonstandard linguistic forms, such as slang, to express rebellion, creativity, or alignment with certain subcultures. Within peer groups, these features often enhance rather than reduce credibility (Androutsopoulos, J. 2006).

Formal Contexts: Perceptions of Unprofessionalism and Immaturity

However, the perception of internet slang changes dramatically in formal or institutional environments. According to the findings, slang use in educational or professional settings is often interpreted as unprofessional, immature, or even unintelligent, especially by older generations. This sentiment was supported by observations in Podcast 1, where older adults engaged with slang in a playful or ironic way but did not treat it as appropriate for serious communication. In these environments, standard language norms dominate, and the use of slang can be interpreted as violating expectations of professional decorum and linguistic competence (Tannen, D. 1994). Gen Z participants reportedly avoid using slang in conversations with superiors, suggesting an awareness of these social boundaries and the risk of being perceived as lacking credibility or seriousness. This aligns with concept of contextualization cues, where language choice signals how a message should be interpreted.

Slang in a formal context can cue informality or even disrespect, undermining the speaker's authority or competence (Gumperz, J. J. 1982).

Generational Divide: Cultural Friction and Linguistic Misalignment

A crucial factor influencing perceptions of internet slang is the generational divide. While Gen Z views slang as an extension of identity and self-expression even in semi-professional spaces older adults tend to regard it with suspicion or disdain. For older generations, slang may appear as a threat to language standards or a sign of cultural detachment, a view consistent with linguistic prescriptivism (Milroy, J., & Milroy, L. 1999). The divergence in perception is also evident in how slang is used across age groups. In Podcast 1, older adults are more likely to engage with slang in game-like scenarios rather than integrate it into real conversations. Their limited engagement reflects a broader resistance to linguistic innovation, often tied to beliefs about language correctness and authority (Bourdieu, P. 1991). Conversely, Gen Z adapts their usage based on audience and context, suggesting a form of linguistic code-switching. They may use slang to build rapport with peers but strategically avoid it in upward communication. This pragmatic adaptability supports the idea that Gen Z is not linguistically deficient but rather linguistically versatile, capable of navigating multiple registers.

Digital Divides and Cultural Bridges: Generational Insights into Internet Slang, Identity, and Perceptions within Islamic Civilizational Discourse.

This study examines the complex relationship between generational cohorts and the use of internet slang within broader linguistic and cultural frameworks, particularly in the context of Islamic discourse. The primary focus is on how digital platforms influence the language patterns of Generation Z, including their use of slang and code-switching in religious communication (Puspita & Ardianto, 2024). Gen Z's familiarity with the digital world gives rise to distinctive linguistic variations that not only serve as markers of group identity but also strengthen social solidarity in both online and offline interactions, including those rooted in religious contexts (Farhan et al., 2026).

This phenomenon is especially relevant in Indonesia, where digital media plays a crucial role in disseminating religious messages while promoting moderate Islamic values among younger generations. Social media has become a strategic medium for shaping more effective and adaptive forms of da'wah communication (Choirin et al., 2024). Digital interaction also introduces a dialogic and participatory model of religious communication, replacing one-way transmission with interactive spaces that connect Islamic teachings to the everyday realities of Gen Z (Saefulloh et al., 2026).

These conditions shape young people's understanding of religious moderation while also influencing their linguistic landscape, including the adoption and adaptation of internet slang within faith-based digital communities (Choirin et al., 2024; Widayat et al., 2025). As a result, digital platforms function not only as channels for disseminating religious values but also as spaces for linguistic innovation that influence communication practices and identity formation among Gen Z (Conny et al., 2024).

Language development driven by intensive exposure to digital media also reflects how Gen Z constructs their digital identities through language, often shaped by popular culture and social media trends (Conny et al., 2024; Masrur et al., 2025). This is evident in code-switching practices and the use of slang among Indonesian Gen Z on social media, where Bahasa Indonesia is frequently blended with regional languages and English (Kandiawan, 2022). Such linguistic creativity, including innovative spelling, serves as an important means of self-expression and negotiation of digital social norms (Fatikh, 2025).

Platforms such as TikTok function as spaces for linguistic experimentation, allowing slang terms to evolve rapidly from niche usage to widespread popularity within a short period (Eti & Rosalinah, 2025; Sham et al., 2025). This rapid diffusion highlights the active role of social media in shaping, rather than merely reflecting, the communicative landscape of younger generations (Jalaluddin et al., 2024). The popularity of these platforms also underscores their potential as primary

channels for disseminating religious values, signaling a shift in how religious literacy is developed in the digital era (Uriawan et al., 2025).

In this context, digital da'wah—characterized by adaptive, interactive, and inclusive communication strategies—has proven effective in promoting moderate Islamic values and encouraging interfaith dialogue (Salsabilla et al., 2025). The use of platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok enables religious messages to resonate more closely with Gen Z's daily lives while fostering positive behaviors aligned with Islamic teachings (H. et al., 2025; Laugu et al., 2024). Social media also serves as a primary space for Gen Z to access knowledge, including religious understanding, in a more accessible and practical manner (H. et al., 2025; Humaida et al., 2025).

This transformation reshapes religious instruction into a more dialogic and participatory process, making interpretations of religious teachings more contextual amid the rapid flow of digital information (Saefulloh et al., 2026). It also reflects a shift from centralized religious authority rooted in formal institutions toward a more decentralized model influenced by digital information flows (Yunierti et al., 2025).

Such developments also reconfigure the hierarchy of religious discourse, where digital popularity and simplified content often take precedence over in-depth theological analysis (Alfi et al., 2025). As a result, religious content creators on social media tend to prioritize trends and visual appeal to increase audience engagement, sometimes at the expense of theological depth (Alfi et al., 2025; Kaplan & Yüksel, 2023; Uriawan et al., 2025).

While more accessible and engaging approaches can enhance religious understanding among younger audiences, they also require critical evaluation regarding the depth and accuracy of the content (Faizah & Tuhah, 2025). Therefore, strengthening religion-based digital literacy is essential to help young people filter information and distinguish between well-founded insights and superficial or misleading content (Masripah et al., 2024).

This issue becomes increasingly important given the dominance of short, visually oriented content in Gen Z's learning patterns, which calls for new approaches in digital Islamic studies that integrate interdisciplinary methods and technological literacy (Humaida et al., 2025). In addition, digital platforms provide space for young Muslims to renegotiate the concept of religious authority, emphasizing storytelling, personal experience, and social relationships rather than relying solely on normative texts (Zaid et al., 2022). Greater access to religious discourse also encourages shifts in how religious knowledge is acquired, where shared experiences and community-generated content become important sources alongside traditional religious institutions (Hidayati, 2022; Setia & Dilawati, 2024).

Overall, the digital transformation of religious practices indicates a significant shift in how religious authority and knowledge are constructed. Social media no longer functions merely as a channel for information dissemination, but has become a primary space where younger generations interpret, negotiate, and shape religious meaning through more open and participatory interactions.

At the same time, the accessibility of religious content presents challenges related to the quality and depth of understanding. The dominance of short and visually oriented content requires strong digital literacy skills, particularly among Generation Z, to critically evaluate information and avoid superficial or misleading interpretations.

Therefore, these developments highlight the importance of new approaches in Islamic studies that integrate technological literacy, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary perspectives. Such changes also create opportunities for younger generations to actively contribute to building a more inclusive, contextual, and relevant religious discourse in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

Internet slang has significantly transitioned from digital communication into modern spoken discourse, particularly among Generation Z. This group actively incorporates terms like “no cap,” “slay,” and “FR” into daily conversations due to their deep engagement with platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. In contrast, Millennials adopt slang more selectively and contextually, while adults aged 40 and above show limited use, often employing it ironically or as part of games. This generational variation reflects broader differences in digital literacy and language ideologies.

Internet slang serves as a tool for identity marking, emotional expression, communicative efficiency, and humor. Expressions like “goated,” “sus,” and “vibe” reinforce group belonging, convey feelings succinctly, and foster interpersonal connections through shared cultural references. These functions demonstrate that internet slang is not just informal speech, but a key component of linguistic adaptation in digital culture.

In casual, peer-oriented contexts, the use of internet slang enhances perceptions of social intelligence and authenticity, especially among Generation Z. However, in formal or professional settings, such usage is often perceived as immature or unprofessional by older generations. Despite this, Gen Z exhibits linguistic adaptability, adjusting their use of slang depending on audience and setting indicating not a lack of linguistic competence, but rather a nuanced command of language variation.

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