

Slang, Identity, and Communication: A Synchronic Analysis of Gen Z's Linguistic Practices Through Wattpad Stories

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Abstract

Slang is shifting so rapidly that it can be challenging for individuals from other generations or those unfamiliar with digital culture to understand and keep up with learning communication gaps and barriers. Gen Z slang is essential to their identity and communication despite these difficulties. The study seeks to identify the unique features of Generation Z language in Wattpad Stories using the three most popular Wattpad stories currently listed on the hot list for the short story category. A heuristic checklist of linguistic and stylistic categories developed by Leech and Short (2007) is used for thorough analysis, enabling a critical evaluation of linguistic descriptions by assessing the lexical, grammatical, figures of speech, context, and cohesion aspects. The findings showed that the authors predominantly utilized Gen Z vocabulary. It possesses compounding, acronyms, conversion, derivation, inflection, and onomatopoeic words. Furthermore, most of the text exhibits a low level of formality and contains only a limited number of idiomatic terms and notable collocations. Finally, most of them consist of simple sentences, utilize figures of speech, such as hyperbole and metaphor, and most of the text in context and cohesion is written from a first-person perspective. This study aids in understanding the communication styles of Gen Z students to see how crucial it is to close the generational divide between students and teachers.

Keywords: gen z, stylistics, wattpad

1. Introduction

Language is fundamental to human survival because it allows us to convey ideas and information to one another. Language is an essential aspect of human conduct. It serves as the primary method of communication among individuals (Bonvillain 1). Language presents a person's status and function in society, eloquently portraying how others perceive them (Monteza and Miralles 1). Language is constantly evolving, altering, and adjusting to meet the demands of its users. It depicts our evolving experience, culture, and way of life (Luhulima et al. 81). Stories of Wattpad are an invaluable data source for researching the creation and evolution of slang phrases. Since language is a vehicle of

expression or communication, it is vital to human existence. Over the past millennium, the English language has undergone significant alteration (Jeresano and Carretero 11).

This research provides a comprehensive insight into how language influences human connections in the digital era as the digital landscape changes (Boylu and Kardas 73). Students commonly employ slang terms throughout their interactions with peers, such as expressing opinions, asking questions, providing answers, or just greeting one another (Prayudha and Pradana 19). Understanding the ever-changing language landscape is vital for developing effective education practices. This highlights the importance of ongoing learning and adjustment to the evolving digital landscape, a fundamental aspect of high-quality education (Sage 9).

Gen Z, the first generation to grow up with social media and the internet, has significantly impacted their language use. Defined as individuals aged 12 to 27, they are the most technologically savvy generation in history (Brunjes; Giray 10). Slang, a dynamic language, has grown in popularity among Gen Z and is used in mobile chats, social media posts, and other online communications (Nuraeni and Pahamzah 314). Wattpad, a platform for experienced and aspiring writers, enables them to post their work, receive feedback, and communicate with other authors and readers (Bold 5; Gunadi 2). Hybrid authors often create popular stories recommended by friends.

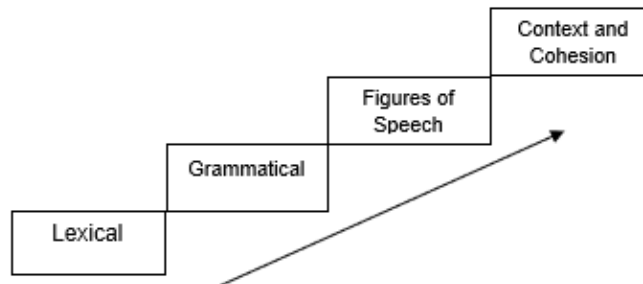
Gen Z's reliance on English slang in everyday communication is a growing concern. A study by Lihawa et al. explores the word formation process of Gen Z slang in Callahan's Generation Z Dictionary (2). We discovered an underlying gap in the newly emerging vocabulary used by Gen Z, which can make it challenging to understand the language. Therefore, this study aims to close this gap by analyzing Wattpad stories to determine the many contexts where slang terms are employed and the meanings the researchers believe to be unexplored in the school context. Some Jargon new to younger generations is used daily (Maghirang 4). Also, Gen Z made up their language, which was influenced by the media they watched. Jeresano and Carretero research the slang terms utilized by Gen Z, explicitly targeting the checklist of slang words (13). Consequently, this study aims to bridge the existing knowledge gap in this area.

The study's findings may benefit multiple stakeholders, including educators, language learners, researchers, and the local community. For instructors, comprehending Gen Z slang terms can enhance their connection with pupils and foster more interesting educational experiences. This research enhances the academic discipline of language studies by offering insights into modern language usage for learners and scholars. This research study can significantly contribute to language studies by exploring Gen Z's identity and communication through their slang. This transcends merely reading proficiently crafted material; it fosters an immersive educational atmosphere where readers are actively engaged with various writing styles and grammatical applications (Nidar and Monteza 561). Gen Z's uniqueness and sense of community are reflected in their use of slang, highlighting the importance of language in fostering their overall language competence. The study could have significant social relevance for the community, particularly for fostering social harmony. It also aims to promote social inclusivity and understanding of their unique slang, thereby reducing stereotypes and misunderstandings. For the researchers, the study helps them by utilizing the study's findings to expand their understanding of slang evolution and its role in communication among Gen Z. This knowledge can inform future research on language and communication, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of how language shapes and is shaped by social, cultural, and generational dynamics. The communication style employed by the author can influence Gen Z. Thus, it is creating somewhat of a trend. Additionally, the study focuses on

the stylistic tools of the selected stories.

2. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Leech and Short Stylistic Category



Stylistics is a field that studies the subtle link between language and meaning. It examines the language selections that define a writer's distinctive style, uncovering the fundamental patterns and frameworks that enhance efficient communication (Imran et al. 21). Writers must perform a comprehensive study to guarantee the precision and quality of their work. By immersing themselves in relevant material, they may better connect with their target audience, such as Gen Z, and develop compelling storylines. Snelgrove underscores that research is crucial for creating well-crafted, instructive, and captivating material. This study performed a stylistic analysis to investigate the author's diction and linguistic expressions (23). The heuristic checklist given by Leech and Short (2007) was applied to examine the text at four levels: lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech, context, and cohesiveness. This methodology facilitated a thorough comprehension of the stylistic devices employed in the text.

3. Research Objectives

This paper helps explore the evolution of Gen Z's slang terms used in three (3) selected Wattpad stories. This study delves explicitly deeper into the following parameters:

1. The lexical categories utilized in the communication styles of Gen Z.
2. The grammatical categories utilized in the communication styles of Gen Z.
3. The figures of speech utilized in the communication styles of Gen Z.
4. The context and cohesion utilized in the communication styles of Gen Z.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design and Procedure

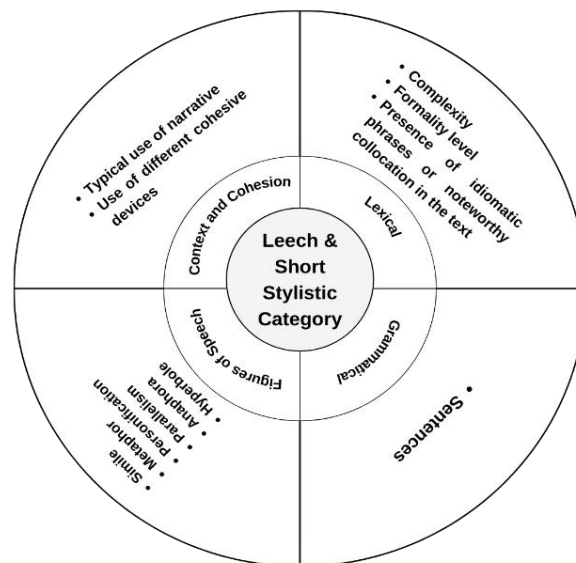
The study utilizes a qualitative approach to analyze language. As per the citation of Jeresano and Carretero, qualitative research aims to comprehensively understand, analyze, and interpret social phenomena within their authentic settings (14). The selected methodology for this study was a textual-based analysis of content. This document outlines a strategy for categorizing verbal or behavioral data for classification, summarization, and tabulation, highlighting the systematic classification process of coding and detecting themes or patterns (Hancock & Shannon 9; Kondracki and Wellman 28; Monteza & Miralles 2). Researchers aim to collect extensive data and deeply comprehend issues, circumstances, or events using a qualitative research methodology (Arora & Stoner, 2009, as cited by Jeresano & Carretero, 17). Concerns regarding validity, reliability, and credibility are allayed by qualitative data analysis, which aids researchers in comprehending and interpreting meanings, behaviors, and social situ-

ations (Brooks et al. 13).

The researcher follows specific progress when surveying to fulfill the study's requirements. First is to pay close attention to the samples of the three chosen Wattpad short stories, gather research-related references, possess knowledge of prior research and relevant publications, determine the objectives and the study's questions, examine the relevant literature, taking into account both theoretical and empirical, use the theoretical framework from the theoretical and analytical method, past research, expert teaching staff's comment and judgments, and other sources to analyze the chosen Wattpad short stories, provide an overview of every short story being examined, supply the appropriate advice, and lastly, put together a reference list in MLA format.

This study looks at how slang is used in a group of data representing Gen Z. It will also look at the grammar, vocabulary, figurative language, context, and cohesive elements of Wattpad stories. The selected stories have been analyzed utilizing Leech and Short's (2007) systematic checklist of linguistic and stylistic criteria. The checklist developed by Leech and Short provides a systematic framework for the stylistic analysis of a text (Ramzan et al. 871). The text reading is evaluated using four levels to measure the style of language choices. These tiers include grammatical categories, figures of speech, context, and cohesiveness.

Figure 2: Leech and Short (2007) Framework of Analysis



The study used a qualitative methodology and textual analysis to analyze three short stories on Wattpad. The Leech and Short (2007) checklist covered all linguistic and stylistic levels, including lexical, grammatical, figures of speech, context, and cohesiveness. The research materials included word complexity, formality level, and idiomatic phrases. Grammatical categories included sentences, clauses, verb phrases, and word classes. Figures of speech, a linguistic pattern, included similes, metaphors, personification, and hyperbole. Context and cohesion were also considered essential aspects of communication. The checklist is deemed valid and reliable for stylistic assessments, providing a theory for prose style.

4.2 Research Corpora

Table 1: Top 3 Wattpad Stories

| Rank | Wattpad Story | Synopsis |
|------|---------------------|---|
| 1 | Knowing Xavier Hunt | Knowing Xavier Hunt" revolves around Haley Rosamond's discovery of the hidden struggles faced by Xavier Hunt, a mysterious and troubled figure at her school. As she peels back the layers of his reality, Haley's perception of family and life is challenged. Fueled by compassion and supported by her father, Haley befriends Xavier, initially through tutoring and kindness. However, as challenges arise, including Haley's dream college admission and further tragedy in Xavier's life, she must decide whether to stand by him or become another fleeting presence in his turbulent world. The story explores themes of friendship, compassion, and the complexities of personal struggles. |
| 2 | Best Served Fake | "Best Served Fake" delves into the intricate dance of deception and self-discovery as two individuals navigate a fake relationship. Fueled by hidden motives and unexpected emotions, the story unfolds the consequences of playing pretend. As the characters grapple with authenticity, the narrative explores themes of identity, genuine connection, and the blurred lines between reality and illusion in relationships. |
| 3 | The Star Seekers | "The Star Seekers" explores a unique world where magic idols reign, with Star One, a non-magic idol group, defying norms. When they unexpectedly gain magical abilities, their rise attracts the attention of the formidable Dragon Slayer Clan. As they confront challenges and unravel their destiny, the story delves into themes of fate, resilience, and pursuing one's true potential in a magical realm where the ordinary clashes with the extraordinary. |

Wattpad stories that are on the hot list for the short story category used to conduct this study are the following: (1) Knowing Xavier Hunt by ScarlettBlackDaisy has garnered 10.1 million readers, (2) Best Served Fake by onceuponabook_has amassed 2.2 million readers, and (3) The Star Seekers by HYBE_STORIES. has accumulated 671,000 readers. In addition to their substantial readership, these three research corpora are indeed classified as teen fiction, primarily characterized by their utilization of Gen Z slang terms. The study’s scope is limited to analyzing Wattpad stories and does not encompass other online writing or communication forms. The scope of this study extends beyond Filipino Wattpad authors to encompass a broader range of international Wattpad authors. Literature substantially impacts our communication by employing various words, narratives, and emotions. Reading broadens

individuals’ exposure to diverse vocabulary and intricate sentence constructions, enhancing their capacity for expression (Nagy et al. 8).

We did not conduct a preliminary selection of the corpus. We gathered data for all the narratives cataloged in Wattpad's sitemap. Subsequently, we established a more concise corpus, determined by linguistic prevalence, to progressively accumulate denser data for thematic analysis and reader reaction evaluation. A further reduction in scale enabled us to delineate a more compact corpus of Teen Fiction categories deemed representative of both popular and esteemed literature following prevailing views in literary studies (Underwood 5; Porter, 15; Pianzola et al. 26).

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1. Lexical Categories of the Wattpad Stories

Table 2: The Slang Terms that are Present in the Three Wattpad Stories

| Title | Slang Terms | Meaning |
|----------------------------|------------------|---|
| Knowing Xavier Hunt | Party-pooper | an individual who lacks the enthusiasm or energy to engage actively in social gatherings, thereby dampening the enjoyment of others; a killjoy. |
| | Dweeb | an individual who exhibits physical and social awkwardness and a notable lack of self-assurance. |
| | Creep | to induce feelings of anxiety or apprehension in someone. |
| | Crap | is a multifunctional term that typically refers to excrement, objects, or waste. |
| | Bumbling Buffoon | individual characterized by absurdity or clumsiness; an imbecile. |
| Best Served Fake | Uno-reverse | a potent comeback that entirely reverses the situation. |
| | Squad | collective of pals with whom an individual feels a strong sense of unity and shared identity. |
| | Thirst traps | a social media post, typically a selfie or snapshot that aims to provoke sexual attention, admiration for one's physical appearance, or other forms of positive feedback. |
| | BRB | it stands for Be Right Back. BRB is an internet slang initialism used online when someone needs to leave a conversation momentarily. |
| | Slay | used to characterize someone who has performed extraordinarily well or made an impression on others. |
| The Star Seekers | Sheesh | to communicate feelings of astonishment, wonder, irritation, or dissatisfaction. |
| | Ghosted | is abruptly cutting off communication with someone, like a disappearing ghost. |
| | Cancelled | to abolish or revoke. |
| | Lit | something or someone who is lighted is remarkable in terms of enjoyment or excellence. |
| | Lowkey | it signifies a state of tranquility and minimal stimulation or |

| Title | Slang Terms | Meaning |
|-------|-------------|----------------|
| | | noticeability. |

The parameters in Lexical Categories include Word Complexity, Formality Level, and the presence of Idiomatic Phrases or Noteworthy Collocations in the Text. As per Cutler, lexical complexity arises when lexical entries are complex. Lexical complexity, on the other hand, happens when a word’s pronunciation corresponds to a single lexical entry that includes only one-word class representation and one semantic representation (45). Word formation processes, such as compounding, acronyms, conversion, derivation, inflection, and onomatopoeia, serve as the foundation for word sorting in Word Complexity. The text has these kinds. However, the level of formality observed in Wattpad Stories is significantly shaped by the concepts of solidarity and status relationships, and the authors employ colloquial language. In casual conversations, individuals typically utilize colloquial language. Idiomatic expressions are expressions, words, or phrases with metaphorical meanings commonly understood by native speakers (Jurniawan 9).

5.1.1. Word Complexity

The word development processes in the Wattpad stories are compounding, acronyms, conversion, derivation, inflection, and onomatopoeia. Compounding occurs when multiple lexemes merge to create a novel word. Compound words can be written as a single word or as two words connected by a hyphen (Zuhri et al. 303). Compound words are created by combining two words through compounding, as explained by (Aronoff 3; Plag 134; Christianto 29). Compounding is the act of merging two words to form a novel term. Compounding is found in the three stories, such as the open words, hyphenated, and closed compound words. Open Compound words are typically recent terminology or are limited to specific fields of expertise. As they gain popularity, words often change and may evolve into hyphenated or closed compounds (Caufield 2; Aarts 12; Garner 204).

a. Compounding

The compound word "bumbling buffoon" refers to an individual characterized by absurdity or clumsiness, an imbecile. A bumbling fool is somebody who aimlessly stumbles about in the morning, lacking any sense of purpose or direction (YourDictionary; Urban Dictionary; Power Thesaurus). The word "squad" refers to a collective of pals with whom an individual feels a strong sense of unity and shared identity. Individuals often refer to their circle of friends as a squad, likely to project an image of well-organized and formidable (MMGuardian; Vocabulary.com; Cambridge Dictionary). "Thirst traps" refer to a social media post, typically a selfie or snapshot, that aims to provoke sexual attention (Dictionary.com; Merriam-Webster Dictionary; Cambridge Dictionary). Garner states that Hyphenated Compounds are commonly noun phrases functioning as adjectives or verbs or verb phrases functioning as nouns or adjectives (205). The lines containing hyphenated compound words are: "party-pooper" refers to an individual who lacks the enthusiasm or energy to engage actively in social gatherings, thereby dampening the enjoyment of others; a killjoy. A person is labeled as a "party-pooper" when they are believed to ruin the joy and merriment of a social gathering (Urban Dictionary; Merriam-Webster Dictionary; Collins Dictionary). The word "uno reverse card" alters the flow of gameplay by reversing the direction and order of turns. The UNO Reverse card, which has gained popularity as a meme in popular culture, functions as a potent comeback that entirely reverses the situation. It is used similarly to the phrase "no u," which is an anagram of "uno" (WikiHow; Urban Dictionary; Slang.org). Garner states

that Closed Compounds can be used in various contexts (206). For example, they can be pronouns like “herself,” nouns like “weekend,” prepositions like “into,” adverbs like “however,” adjectives like “however,” adjectives like “barefoot,” conjunctions like “whereas,” or verbs like “snowball.” Words found in the story, like “lowkey,” signify a state of tranquility and minimal stimulation or noticeability (Dictionary.com; Merriam-Webster; Cambridge Dictionary)

b. Acronyms

According to Sutrisno, acronyms are newly created words that take the beginning letters of a group of existing words. Acronym like “brb” stands for Be Right Back (66). BRB is an acronym commonly used online to indicate a temporary departure from an online conversation (MMGuardian; Cambridge Dictionary; Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

c. Conversion

Conversion is regarded as an unusual method of word construction compared to other formations (Diasti et al. 14). Words like “ghosted” refer to someone who abruptly stops communicating, resembling a ghostly appearance. It is abruptly cutting off communication with someone, like a disappearing ghost. It applies to romantic interests, friends, or family (Gould 1; Verwellmind; Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Another one in the story is “lit,” which means something exceptionally good, intense, enjoyable, or thrilling (Collins Dictionary; Merriam-Webster; MMGuardian).

d. Derivation

Zuhri et al. define derivation as creating a new word or stem originating from another word or stem (302). “Cancelled,” a word found in the story, means to abolish or revoke (Merriam-Webster Dictionary; Cambridge Dictionary; Collins Dictionary)

e. Inflection

As stated by (Zuhri 303), inflection is a linguistic process where additional elements are attached to the base form of a word to convey grammatical meanings. Words like “slay” are frequently used to characterize someone who has performed extraordinarily well or made an impression on others. Although it can be utilized in various situations, it is commonly connected to fashion, music, and artistic performances (Keyhole; Dictionary.com).

f. Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia refers to forming words that imitate or mimic actual sounds in the real world. Onomatopoeic words are words that imitate or mimic the sounds they represent in real life, according to (Kinasih 704). The words found in the stories that contain onomatopoeia are “dweeb,” which refers to an individual who exhibits both physical and social awkwardness, together with a notable lack of self-assurance. It refers to an individual who is unappealing, unimportant, or lacking skill (Merriam-Webster; Cambridge Dictionary; Vocabulary.com). “Crap” is a multifunctional term that typically refers to excrement, objects, or waste. (Dictionary.com; Merriam-Webster Dictionary; Cambridge Dictionary). “Sheesh” is often employed to express astonishment or adoration. It is frequently utilized to convey a sense of being impressed, angry, or incredulous about something (Keyhole; Merriam-Webster Dictionary; Social Media Glossary)

5.1.2. Formality Level

The majority of the lines in the story are casual. This is because the characters are conversing with their friends using colloquial terminology or slang. The choice of a suitable variety or code may also depend on the setting and level of formality (Megah and Susanto 6). Most characters’ perspectives are expressed in conversation with their friends and loved ones. As to the findings of (Erliana and Arbain

9), an individual's conduct can be deliberately altered due to their experiences in interacting with the environment.

There are casual lines, specifically a shared conversation with friends, found in the stories, such as "Way to go, Xav. He's such a party-poop." (Knowing Xavier Hunt, p.19); the level of formality in the phrase is considered low. The extract used the expression "party-poop," which is colloquial terminology for an individual who dampens the enjoyment of others. "Way to sound like a total creep, Haley" (Knowing Xavier Hunt p. 2); the phrase is informal due to the utilization of contractions, such as "Way to" instead of "Way for you too." "Xavier makes me a bumbling buffoon" (Knowing Xavier Hunt, p.9); the word "buffoon" is a vital noun with a lousy meaning that adds to the informal tone. Simple present tense verbs like "makes" are frequently used in casual discourse. The casual adjective "bumbling" is used to characterize clumsiness. Another line found is "Pull and Uno-Reverse Card" (Best Served Fake, p.10). This is probably employed in an informal context, such as a game of Uno. However, the term is used to signify a situation being turned around, which is what the speaker wanted to say. "Kai had left to go buy food, leaving me to face the firing squad alone." (Best Served Fake, p.17). This tends to be more conversational in nature. Since "Kai" is a close buddy or acquaintance, and "firing squad" is a clever metaphor. Another one is "brb I'm going to go change everything about my personality." (Best Served Fake, p.27), which employs the abbreviation "brb," which is an acronym for "be right back." This is a frequently used acronym in casual communication, especially in online chat and text messaging. "Slay, I guess?" (Best Served Fake, p.55) is a colloquial expression used to convey approval or triumph, whereas the phrase "I guess" introduces a casual sense of ambiguity to the statement. "Can you even call them idols? Sheesh" (The Star Seekers, p.1); the sentence's shortening "Can you even" is indicative of informal speaking. Informally expressing frustration or disbelief, one often uses the interjection "Sheesh." "W-we ghosted him!" (The Star Seekers, p.28), another line found in the story. "W- "suggests informality and could suggest stuttering or uneasiness. Despite its growing popularity, "ghosted" is not ideal for highly informal contexts such as academic papers or business presentations. It is regarded as informal. It is mostly employed in online communication and informal conversations. "If they found out, we'd be canceled again for being monsters or whatnot" (The Star Seekers, p.15); the term "we'd," which enhances informality, is used in place of "we would." In addition, the colloquial word "canceled" indicates that the content is even more informal overall. "The room lit up again" (The Star Seekers, p.76). Another definition of "lit up" is a quick burst of activity or energy.

There are also casual lines, specifically a shared conversation with loved ones, found in the stories, such as "I try to speak but fail. I'm such a dweeb" (Knowing Xavier Hunt, p. 24). The word "dweeb" is a colloquial expression used to describe an individual who is socially awkward or not well-liked. The character experiences shyness when attempting to express his feelings to his beloved. "Oh, crap, I wasn't prepared for this" (Knowing Xavier Hunt, p. 9); the formality level in the illustration represents a continuum, with formal language at one extreme and casual language at the other. The extract includes the term "crap," which is regarded as crude and colloquial due to her unconventional actions towards her partner. Another line in the story is, "I think paying you in thirst traps may be a crime" (Best Served Fake, p.17). Utilizing contractions like "maybe" and "I think" and an online attention-grabbing sexually provocative image or video is referred to as "thirst traps" in colloquial language.

5.1.3. Idiomatic Phrases or Noteworthy Collocations in the Text

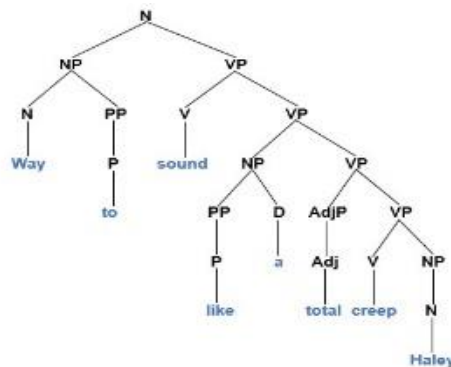
There are idioms found in Wattpad stories. As per Bui, English idioms serve as colloquial expressions (41). Using slang is crucial in a community as it enhances our comprehension of culture and gives us

valuable insights. By learning slang idioms, we may avoid misunderstandings and better understand a culture. (Siringoringo and Marpaung 153). The study conducted by (Popovych & Márk 23) examines the influence of text message slang on the communication growth of English language learners. “Way to go, Xav. He’s such a party-pooper.” (Knowing Xavier Hunt, p.19) is one of the idioms found in the story. “Way to go” is employed in this context to convey disapproval of Xavier’s conduct. The sentences contain notable collocations such as “Party-pooper.” This well-established collocation refers to someone who ruins enjoyment or pleasure. It injects informality and emphasizes the speaker’s view of Xavier’s actions. “Xavier makes me a bumbling buffoon” (Knowing Xavier Hunt, p.9) emphasizes Xavier’s influence on Haley by working as a cohesive whole. “Buffoon” depicts him as someone whose actions make her look dumb, while “bumbling” highlights his awkwardness. Instead of just saying he makes her appear horrible, Haley paints a more compelling picture with the combination of these phrases. The colloquial term “bumbling buffoon” captures Haley’s frustration with Xavier well. It clearly shows what he did and how it affected her negatively. Lastly, “Slay, I guess?” (Best Served Fake, p. 55). “Slay” is a common slang term for approval, triumph, or stylishness. It could be a hesitant or sarcastic way of acknowledging Cole’s comment (perhaps complimenting the narrator’s outfit or actions).

5.2. Grammatical Categories of the Wattpad Stories

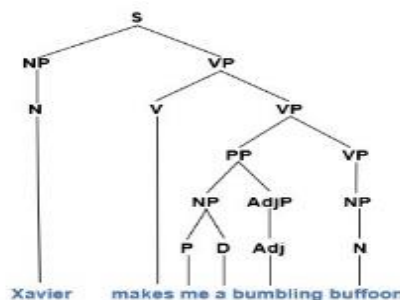
5.2.1. Simple Sentence

In some excerpts, a certain type of sentence structure, particularly a simple sentence, is utilized. A simple sentence is a single independent clause that has a subject and a predicate. A clause that can stand alone makes up a single sentence (Hamraquolova 5; Rasulov and Artikov 13).



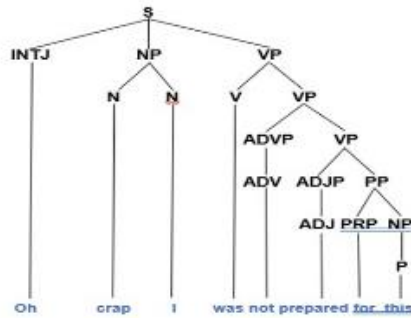
“Way to sound like a total creep, Haley” (Knowing Xavier Hunt, p.2)

This is a simple sentence because it makes sense without the help of any other clauses; it communicates a single, complete idea.



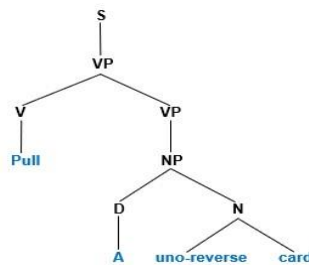
“Xavier makes me a bumbling buffoon” (Knowing Xavier Hunt, p.9)

The sentence has a clear subject (“Xavier”) and a verb (“makes”), and it does not rely on additional clauses to express the whole idea.



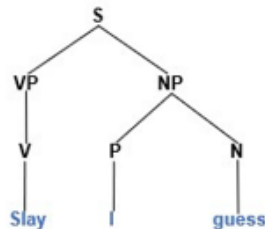
“Oh, crap, I wasn't prepared for this” (Knowing Xavier Hunt, p.9)

The sentence has the subject “I,” the verb “wasn’t prepared,” and the object “for this,” making it a simple sentence. “Oh, crap” is an example of an interjection that conveys annoyance. It does not change the structure of the main clause because it is separate from it.



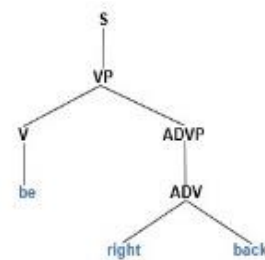
“Pull a uno-reverse card” (Best Served Fake, p.10)

The sentence is simple because it lacks coordinating conjunctions (such as “for,” “and,” or “but”) and most likely contains a verb (“pull”).



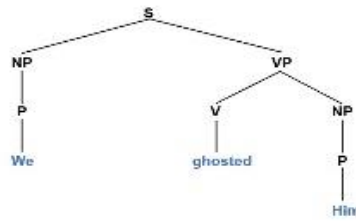
“Slay, I guess?” (Best Served Fake, p.55)

This is a simple sentence since it uses the verb “slay” to express one whole notion.



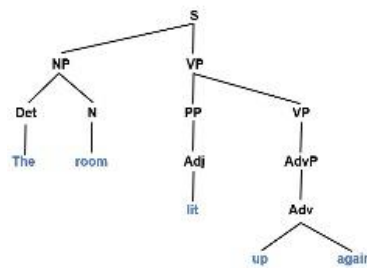
“brb, I’m going to go change everything about my personality” (Best Served Fake, p.27)

The statement is simple because it contains one independent clause and no dependent ones. The acronym “Brb” stands for “be right back,” it is used more as an interjection than a clause.



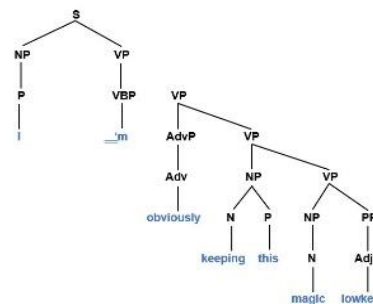
“W-we ghosted him!” (The Star Seekers, p.28)

This is a simple sentence because it follows the subject-verb pattern. The verb “ghosted” is used as the subject, and “we” is used as the verb.



“The room lit up again” (The Star Seekers, p.76)

It constitutes an introductory sentence since it just has one subject, “the room,” the verb “lit up,” and one possible modifier, “again.”

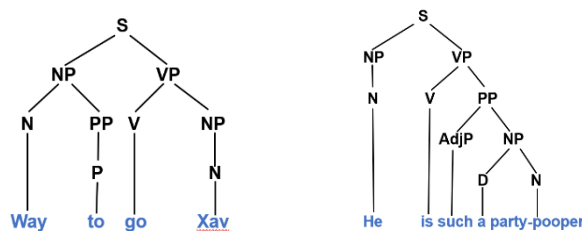


“I’m keeping this magic lowkey” (The Star Seekers, p.55)

The sentence expresses a single thought with a basic subject-verb structure, making it a simple sentence.

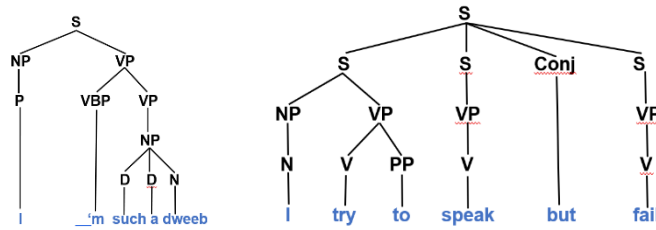
5.2.2. Compound Sentence

The sentences are classified as compound sentences. A compound sentence is a sentence that contains two or more independent clauses united by a coordinating conjunction, a semicolon or comma, or a conjunctive adverb (Fuad 7; Putra et al. 46; Tashpulatova and Salomova 141). Three excerpts containing compound sentences are also found in the Wattpad stories.



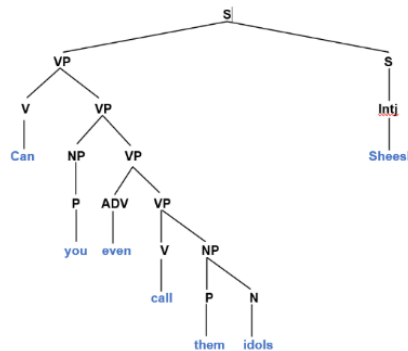
“Way to go, Xav. He’s such a party-pooper” (Knowing Xavier Hunt, p.19)

It is a compound sentence with two independent parts: “Way to go, Xav” and “He’s such a party-pooper.” The coordinating conjunction “also joins the two grammatically independent phrases.



“I try to speak but fail. I’m such a dweeb” (Knowing Xavier Hunt, p.24)

The sentence contains two independent clauses, “I try to speak but fail” and “I’m such a dweeb.” The coordination conjunction also joins it “but.”

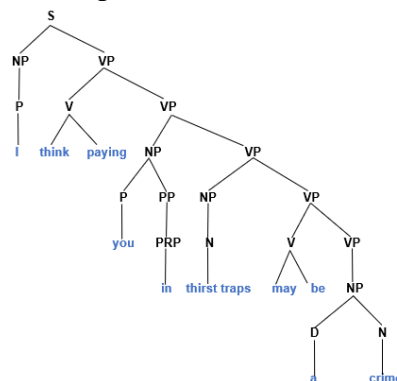


“Can you even call them idols? Sheesh...” (The Star Seekers, p.1)

The sentence contains two independent clauses, “Can you even call them idols?” and “Sheesh,” making it a compound sentence. Despite being a single word, “sheesh” is a complete sentence in this context because it answers the question with a comprehensive idea.

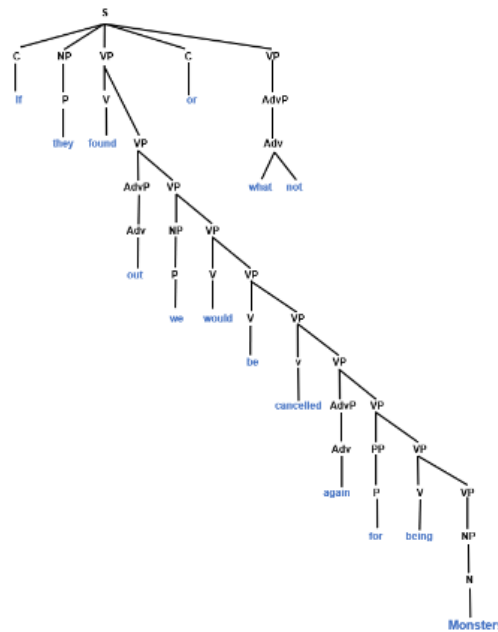
5.2.3. Complex Sentence

Complex sentences are typically defined by many conjunctions-connected clauses (Khalid et al. 23; Mishra 24; Nippold 20). There are two complex sentences found in the Wattpad stories.



“I think paying you in thirst traps may be a crime” (Best Served Fake, p.17)

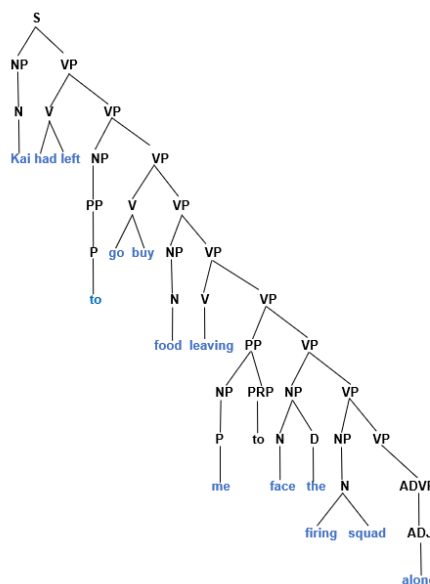
The subordinating conjunction "think" connects the two main clauses in the sentence. "I think" is the first main sentence (independent clause). "Paying you in thirst traps may be a crime" is the second main clause. This dependent phrase serves as an adverbial clause of doubt.



“If they found out, we’d be canceled again for being monsters or whatnot” (The Star Seekers, p.15) The sentence is complex because it has two clauses: an independent clause, “we’d be canceled again for being monsters or whatnot,” and an independent clause, “if they found out,” which are joined by the subordinating conjunction “if.”

5.2.4. Compound-complex Sentence

Only a single compound-complex structure is identified among the Wattpad stories. A compound-complex sentence is another sort of sentence construction. A compound complicated sentence consists of multiple independent clauses and at least one independent clause (Bidyut et al. 59). Complex compound sentences consist of two independent clauses and one or more compound clauses. They are a blend of compound sentences and complex sentences (Maulana et al. 94).



“Kai had left to go buy food, leaving me to face the firing squad alone” (Best Served Fake, p. 17) The sentence has two independent clauses: “Kai had left to go buy food” and “leaving me to face the firing squad alone,” making it a compound sentence. The second clause, “leaving me to face the firing

squad alone,” functions as a complex sentence since it contains an independent clause fragment, “leaving me to face the firing squad,” and a dependent clause, “alone.”

The excerpts suggested that the authors may prefer shorter sentence forms—the traditional simple sentence. Slang terms that stimulate ingenuity in using uncomplicated vocabulary, particularly in formal discourse (Silalahi E. 8-13). Although there are instances of compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences, their frequency appears to be lower than that of simple, single-clause sentences. This observation is consistent with more general Gen Z communication patterns, which frequently increase communication brevity and clarity.

5.3. Figures of Speech of the Wattpad Stories

The Figures of Speech found in the research corpora are hyperbole and metaphor. According to the research conducted by (Ataxojayev 88-93), Hyperbole is a lexical stylistic element that achieves emphasis through intentional exaggeration. Pratama et al. define metaphor as a rhetorical device that uses words with metaphorical linkages to explain an object or concept rather than utilizing literal connections (48). Gen Z slang demonstrates how commonplace figurative language is, especially the use of metaphor and hyperbole. Gen Z can express themselves in a vibrant, imaginative, and frequently hilarious way because of these figures of speech. The author's language style is inherently characterized by using refined vocabulary to articulate emotions, phrases, and thoughts that deviate from the ordinary language style (Maulana et al. 95).

5.3.1. Hyperbole

In hyperbole, the phrase “I try to speak but fail. I’m such a dweeb.” (Knowing Xavier Hunt, p.24), it exaggerates how uncomfortable the speaker is. “I think paying you in thirst traps may be a crime.” (Best Served Fake, p.19); the phrase “may be a crime” is hyperbolic. Although it’s improbable that paying someone with “thirst traps” is an actual crime, the word emphasizes the ridiculousness of the payment technique by exaggerating the circumstances. In the phrase, “brb I’m going to go change everything about my personality.” (Best Served Fake, p.27), the statement “change everything” is an instance of hyperbole. The likelihood of someone undergoing a total personality transformation is extremely low.

5.3.2. Metaphor

In metaphor, in the phrase “Way to go, Xav. He’s such a party-pooper.” (Best Served Fake, p.19), the speaker is insinuating that Xav is a party-pooper, suggesting that he is dampening the enjoyment, just like a loud noise interrupts a party. The primary rhetorical device employed in this context is metaphor. In the phrase “Xavier makes me a bumbling buffoon.” (Knowing Xavier Hunt, p.9), the term “bumbling buffoon” does not accurately describe how Xavier portrays the speaker. Instead, it is a figurative analogy emphasizing the speaker's self-perception as being awkward, silly, and inept in the presence of Xavier. In the phrase “Kai had left to go buy food, leaving me to face the firing squad alone.” (Best Served Fake, p.17), “firing squad” is a metaphor used to describe the group of watchful students at the lunch table. By comparing them to a group of soldiers prepared to execute someone, the metaphor emphasizes the feeling of intense scrutiny and potential judgment the narrator faces. Overall, the text relies more on clear, concise language and evocative imagery than complex figures of speech, effectively conveying the awkward social situation and the narrator's anxiety.

In the phrase, “I think paying you in thirst traps may be a crime.” (Best Served Fake, p.17), the word “thirst traps” is a metaphorical expression referring to something (presumably a photo or video) that is visually enticing and designed to attract attention. It compares the person being paid to something that

creates an intense desire (thirst) but isn't a fundamental form of currency. A case can be presented in favor of using a metaphor. In the phrase "Slay, I guess?" (Best Served Fake, p.55), the term "slay" can function as a metaphor to describe the act of doing very well or attaining significant accomplishment. In this particular situation, the speaker may be insinuating that they have achieved something remarkable, yet with a slight trace of uncertainty, "I guess." In the phrase, "The room lit up again." (The Star Seekers, p.76), the term "lit up" can refer to a sudden and dramatic increase in a source of light other than physical light.

5.4. Context and Cohesion of the Wattpad Stories

The point of view, the context, and the flow of ideas all work together to create an exciting piece of writing. Choosing the correct viewpoint helps structure the writing and make it more cohesive. By meticulously examining these components, authors can construct narratives that are simultaneously profound and impactful (Zamecnik et al. 103). According to Rustamov, using a first-person perspective where the narrator refers to themselves as "I" can promote a connection between the reader and the main character (63-65). This is because the first-person perspective allows for merging the characters and narrator's viewpoints, fostering a sense of closeness and shared experience for the reader and evoking more narrative engagement. The second-person narrative is any form of storytelling that identifies the main characters using second-person pronouns (Prince 43; Catelli 109). Second-person narration is a narrative style where the narrator directly addresses the reader as the main character in the story (Castelli 109). A third narrative is a story told from the perspective of someone outside the story itself. This type of narrator is heterodiegetic, and they do not participate in the events they describe. According to Jahn, a heterodiegetic narrator can use the first-person perspective in their narration but cannot directly experience the events they are recounting (13).

5.4.1. First-person Point of View

In the first-person point of view category, the sentences "I try to speak but fail. I'm such a dweeb" (Knowing Xavier Hunt, p.24), "Xavier makes a bumbling buffoon" (Knowing Xavier Hunt, p.9), the use of self-deprecating humor "dweeb" (p.24) and "buffoon" (p.9) and social anxieties "cancelled" (p.15) contributes to the character development, portraying someone awkward and possibly insecure in social situations. The phrase, "I try to speak but fail" (p.24) illustrates a behavior (trying to speak) and its result (failure). This line employs a common expression used in narratives when a character faces an unforeseen circumstance or obstacle. Words like "dweeb" (p.24), "buffoon" (p.9), and "monsters" (p.15) create a cluster of negative self-perception and social awkwardness, revealing the speaker's emotional state. In the sentence, "Oh, crap, I wasn't prepared for this" (Knowing Xavier Hunt, p.9), the casualness of "crap" (p.9) alludes to a start and possibly even a hint of fear. The word "this" alludes to the unexpected circumstance, and the reader's excitement is increased by its ambiguity. The suggested antagonism between Xavier and Haley is central to the story. In the sentence, "I think paying you in thirst traps may be a crime" (Best Served Fake, p.17), "thirst traps" (p. 17) likely replaces a more vulgar term, maintaining a certain level of formality within the informality of online communication.

In the phrase, "brb I'm going to change everything about my personality" (Best Served Fake, p.27), the utilization of abbreviations "brb" (p.27) and contractions "I'm" generates a perception of promptness and casualness. This casualness is frequently observed in first-person narratives where the narrator addresses the listener directly. In the sentence, "W-we ghosted him" (The Star Seekers, p.28), the exchange suggests that Eugene and Viken had similar experiences. They appear to be talking about the

video that shows them changing, which is probably something they do not want other people to see. If people or their fans learn they can change, they can assume that they may experience unfavorable outcomes such as being “canceled” (p.15). In the sentence, “I’m keeping this magic lowkey” (The Star Seekers, p.55), the speaker's use of the word “magic” (p.55) suggests a magical world. Both the speaker and the listener have a basic knowledge of magic. It is most likely the speaker’s talking to himself “I’m” and behavior “keeping.” The magic seems to be hidden in mystery “lowkey”.

5.4.2. Second-person Point of View

In the second-person point of view category, the sentence “Way to sound like a total creep, Haley” (Knowing Xavier Hunt, p.2), the terms “creep” and “Haley” (p.2) reveal details about the individual’s personality and type of relationship. The word “creep” (p.2) suggests that the speaker and the audience share a knowledge of who the “creep” is in this situation. This is only one of the cohesive strategies employed in the phrase to generate a coherent and cohesive message. “Haley” (p.2) directly alludes to a particular character in the story. In words, “Slay, I guess?” (Best Served Fake, p.55), the colloquial phrase “slay” (p.2) for “succeeding” or “doing well” implies a conversational tone, which is typical in stories that try to convey a sense of immediacy or portray characters’ everyday speech. “I guess?” (p.55) assumes that the speaker’s success has already been mentioned in some other statement or context.

The passage manages to maintain cohesiveness despite its informal style. In the phrase “Can you even call them idols? Sheesh” (The Star Seekers, p.1), the question mark indicates that the statement is interrogative, implying that the speaker is unsure of something or needs further information. The phrase “Can you even call them idols? Sheesh...” (p.1). Two group members, Eugene and Soule, talk about the backlash they had for not utilizing magic tricks in their performance. Important terms like “idols” (p.1), used in the paragraph, highlight the speaker’s emphasis on these topics and provide a clear relationship between the questions. The ellipsis that appears after “Sheesh...” (p.1) suggests a lapse in concentration. It also makes sense cohesively because it expresses the same level of disbelief or frustration as the inquiries that came before it.

5.4.3. Third-person Point of View

In the third-person point of view category, in the sentence “Way to go, Xav. He’s such a party-poopers.” (Knowing Xavier Hunt, p.19), There are two instances in which the paragraph slightly departs from the standard narrative usage. Firstly, it uses the moniker “Xav” (p.19), probably a contraction for Xavier, to establish a feeling of closeness and familiarity between the speaker and the character. The pronoun “He” (p.19) alludes to Xavier’s aggressive stepfather, providing a clear connection between the characters, and is one of the passage’s many cogent elements that work together to generate a coherent and coherent message. “Way to go” (p.19) establishes a shared context between the speaker and the figure and suggests an addressee, likely Xavier. In the phrase, “Pull an uno-reverse card” (Best Served Fake, p.10), the conversation centers around a plan to reverse the cheating situation related to feelings or relationships (p.10).

In the phrase, “The room lit up again” (The Star Seekers, p.76), the text describes a band discussing their work, most likely an album, in a meeting or rehearsal room (p.76). It appears to be a cooperative and upbeat environment. Soule suggests something, and everybody agrees. Everyone agrees with Soule’s idea, and the atmosphere becomes cheerful. In the sentence, “Kai had left to go buy food, leaving me to face the firing squad alone” (Best Served Fake, p.17), the phrase establishes a social setting at school during lunchtime (p.17). The phrase establishes a social setting at school during lunchtime (p.17). The

narrator (Valerie) arrives at a new lunch table, suggesting a recent change in social circles or a new school year.

6. Implication and Concluding Remarks

6.1 Implication

This study enhances our comprehension of how digital communication influences the utilization and evolution of language. Analyzing the linguistic characteristics of Wattpad tales can provide valuable insights for educational methods in language and communication instruction. Additionally, it gives insight into the cultural norms and interpersonal relationships of Generation Z. The significance of our study in line with SDG no. 4 – Quality Education lies in its ability to recognize and comprehend the variety of linguistic practices employed by Gen Z. By doing so, policymakers and educational institutions will be better equipped to remove language barriers and guarantee inclusive education. These findings emphasize the significance of considering generational and cultural factors in language studies. An in-depth comprehension of the evolution of language in reaction to social and technological changes can be achieved by analyzing the linguistic choices made by Wattpad authors. This study not only enhances linguistic research but also offers valuable insights for educators and cultural observers interested in Generation Z's communication patterns.

It is essential to acknowledge that this study has limitations. The focus on Wattpad stories as a data source restricts the generalizability of findings to other digital platforms and modes of communication. Future research could expand on this study by examining the linguistic practices of Gen Z across different social media platforms and comparing trends between different countries. Future studies could consider including at least ten Wattpad stories for examination to achieve a more profound and comprehensive analysis. Future studies can contribute significantly to the ongoing exploration of language change by addressing these limitations and exploring new research avenues. This knowledge can inform future research on language and communication, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of how language shapes and is shaped by social, cultural, and generational dynamics.

6.2 Concluding Remark

Overall, the study offers valuable insights into the linguistic practices employed by Gen Z to articulate their identity and engage in peer communication. The study employed a qualitative approach and stylistic analysis using Leech and Short's (2007) framework to examine lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech, and context and cohesion. The study provides a comprehensive analysis of the linguistic features employed in Gen Z slang terms within the context of Wattpad stories in the following: the successful analysis of lexical categories in the various lexical features such as word complexity, formality level, and idiomatic phrases. The analysis reveals that the language used in Wattpad short stories is primarily informal, marked by the frequent usage of colloquialisms and slang—the successful analysis of grammatical categories identified and analyzed into the different sentence structures. The majority of the sentences of the analysis are simple sentences. The types of figures of speech found to be present are metaphor and hyperbole. In context and cohesion, there are many first-person points of view among the three, which is the basis for classifying the three based on the point of view, along with cohesive devices in the analysis of context and cohesion to understand how the text creates meaning and coherence. As a result, we discovered that Gen Z slang phrases are predominantly informal and primarily consist of simple sentences.

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