



**Computer Mediated Communication:
The Students' Language on Social Media**

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Abstract

The study investigated the language used by the students who are considered part of Generation Z who were born after millennials through computer-mediated communication (CMC). The study was also conducted to know the frequency of students' use of social media. The language investigated in the study were derived from social media posts and messenger. It employed qualitative analysis to analyze the language used by the students on social media and the connotative meaning of the words they utter. It was found out that majority of the students used social media on a daily basis. Further, it was also found out that the 45 most commonly used words by the students on social media were 1) combinations of letters which were used to save time and shorten utterances; 2) borrowed words from the Filipino/Tagalog language and some were from English movies and online games and from the LGBTQ community which were utilized to maintain friendship; and 3) other creative expressions to add more color to the language used which were mostly used as interjections. Additionally, it was found out that majority of the words used were positive and neutral in connotations which showed that the students were conscious of their language on social media.

Key words: Generation Z, computer-mediated communication, language on social media

Introduction

Change is constant. This statement seems to be a cliché but remains to be a fact. All aspects about the world, culture, and life in general have been affected by this phenomenon. Nowadays, technology has been very dynamic that it has pushed many to adapt to the changes and to live at the present.

One of the many crucial outcomes of technology is the rise of gadgets. With the help of internet, it has become one of the means to communicate to people both near and far. In 2008, 71.4% of the United States was using the Internet, as well as 21.9% of the world (Brenner, 2008

by Turnbull (2010). In addition, Amisola et.al. (2019) finds out that the number of social media users increased to 13 percent which made it to 3.196 billion and 4 percent year-on-year to mobile phone users with a 5.135 billion in 2018. Alongside with this fast growing phenomenon, changes have taken place not just in the way which people locate information, but also in the way which people communicate with one another. Different generations utilize the internet in diverse ways and because of this, gaps between and among generations have become more apparent.

In the previous years, much of the communication that occurs face-to-face has shifted to computer-mediated communication. A number of studies believe that this kind of communication is just as important, with many of internet users relying on email to communicate on a day to day basis (Adler, et al. 2010). Parke, Marsden & Connolly (2017) define computer-mediated communication as the study of how human behaviors are maintained or altered by exchange of information through machines. Additionally, McQuail (2005) defines it as communicative transactions happening with the use of two or more networked computers. Though email is recognized as the most prevalent form of computer-mediated communication, text messaging, social networking, and instant messaging, are all ways that family, relatives, friends, acquaintances, or unfamiliar persons can all use to communicate (Lenhart, Madden, Caccill, and Smith 2007).

With the beginning of social media sites, different communication strategies—or at least adaptations of old ones—have started to form in order to serve the varying behaviors and habits of communicators. They have constructed a new environment for linking individuals together, permitting them to link with one another and communicate in ways that were never acceptable in former years as they were subjected mostly to face-to-face environments. These sites, though—with Facebook being the most important to this review—have begun to breed not only a new communicative environment, but also a new type of communicator altogether (Watson, n.d.) These new breed of communicators, however, are not to be considered a new breed of human: they possess the same personalities and the same communicative dispositions that people have carried, for better or worse, since formal languages began to emerge in early civilization. Some people tend to be as shy as they have ever been, some are apprehensive, and some, conversely, are extroverted. Nevertheless with a new medium to communicate through, these personality traits may transform to fit the new molds offered by such. So to speak, shy individuals may view themselves as capable to communicate more openly via social media as they would normally allow themselves to in face-to-face environments. Concerns like this have unlocked the door to vast new research opportunities, which have begun shedding light on

unanswered questions about personality and the problems associated with communication in these virtual environments.

One of the generations who have been enjoying what internet has to offer is known to be the "Generation Z. Guld and Maksa (2014) define Generation Z as the " fifth age group living today, preceded by the Quiet Generation, the Baby Boomers, Generation X and Y". They will be followed by Generation Alpha (Pais, 2013; Pal, 2013). According to Amisola et.al (2019), second largest users next to Generation Y is the generation Z with 9 million users. They were born in 1997-2014. "Esquire (2018) cited that millennials (Generation Y) headed the charge into social media and the political context that it formed, but it influenced Generation Z grew up fully entrenched. Generation Z possess the values liberal, inclusive and egalitarian. These formed them further in ways that millennials may not understand—yet. Generation Z is also thought to be more private and personal than Generation Y towards its usage of social media. They tend to understand social media better than millennials did. They are more selective and calculative for what they share that basically explains the persistence of the 24-hour Stories features on Instagram and Facebook. According to The Center for Generational Kinetics' article "Generation Z are still adolescents, which makes them still a kid, the early signs are being innovative, self-aware, goal oriented and self-reliant. However, their adult traits are yet to be appraised. But they tend to appear to be more hardheaded compared to their predecessors which is the millennial predecessors.

With the foregoing statements, a study on the utilization of social media and the language used by Generation Z was carried out. This was instrumental in identifying the kind of language and the culture that they present in social media.

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study was essentially qualitative in nature. It utilized 45 most commonly used expressions in social media post, comments, and messages to analyze the kind of language used.

Locale of the Study

This study was conducted in one of the Science High Schools governed by the Department of Science and Technology.

Samples and Sampling Procedure

The respondents were 15 grade 8 scholars. Data were gathered by compiling social media posts, comments, and messages containing commonly used expressions. The language was analyzed by considering its meaning and its connotation. An interview through a focus group discussion was also done to further analyze the language and the reasons behind using it.

Discussion

Table 1: Frequency on Using the Internet

0	1-2 days	3-4 days	5-6 days	7 days
0	1	2	2	10
N=15				

It could be seen from the table that almost half of the students, nearly 67 % used the internet for digital communication for 7 days. There were about 27 % who used it for 3-4 and 5-6 days. While only about 7% used digital communication for 1-2 days.

It could be concluded that majority of the students really go online every day. This maybe the reason why Hutchinson (2015) emphasizes that “we’re seeing the first generation of digital natives”. He suggests that this generation is more experienced in displaying more about their lives online compared to the generations that are ahead of them, particularly through social networks.

Guld and Maksa (2014) emphasize that the most crucial feature of Generation Z is that its members are “born into” the world of digital revolution which makes them responsive towards technological inventions. Szijarto (2014) agree with this by illustrating it with the names given to this generation such as “Net Generation”, “Digital Natives” or “Wired Generation”. Further, according to Manago and Vaughn (2015), the role of network communication has major importance; so, it could be ambitiously said that they live their lives online.

Language Used

Since there are no studies about the categories of the language used by the young generation nowadays, the researcher with the scholars came up with classifications. These were purely based on the scholars output and perception as to where they originated or as to how they are formed.

Letter Combination

Table 2: Expressions used Using Letter Combination

Expression	Meaning
WDYM	What do you mean?
LOL	Laughing out loud
OMG	Oh my Gosh!
Lmao	Laughing my ass off
Rofl	Rolling on the floor laughing
FTW	"for the win"
Sk1	Share ko lang
Sml	Share mo lang
Tysm	Thank you so much
Brb	Be right back
Wc	Welcome

From the media posts, there were 9 expressions using combinations of letters. These expressions were normally used as single utterances. According to the respondents, they used these expressions to shorten the words especially when they were quite busy with other things. When asked where these words originated, the respondents answered that these expressions have been circulating over social media and text, so to be "in" in the society they have adopted them.

Borrowed Words

Table 3: Expressions from Borrowing

Term/Expression	Meaning
Cassie	A character from "Kadenang Ginto" which is used to refer to someone considered a close friend
Sis	Short term for "sister" but is used for boys as well; when someone calls you "sis" that means you are someone dear to the speaker
"Gusto ka ba?"	An expression used to tease someone who expresses something he/she wants
Press F	To pay respect
Yo, chief	A way of saying hi to a friend or a person you respect
Hey, fam	A way of saying hi to a friend considered to be part of the family
You alive? U alive?	A question asked to someone if he/she is active online
"Sana all"	An expression of wish that something good which happened to someone will also be experienced by others
Im Gucci	"I am good!"
Char/charot	Used as an expression when someone just mentioned something that should not be; when someone explains something that he/she cannot understand as well
Igop	"pogi"/handsome
Lodi	"idol" /an expression of admiration
Werpa	"Power"; an expression used for something striking; an expression used to express good luck
Squadgoals	Expression used by group of friends who would like to achieve the same thing
Petmalu	"malupet"; something/someone that is great/ outstanding

It is noted from the table below that majority of the words were derived from the Filipino/ Tagalog language and are inverted. Those that use the English language were borrowed from movies and from online games. It could also be noted that a few of these expressions were from the language of the LGBT. According to the students, most of these terms were used to maintain friendship. Additionally, some of the terms seemed to be offensive but according to them, these words were uttered only to someone close to them to avoid offense.

Other Creative Expressions

Table 4: Other “Creative” Expressions

Term/Expression	Meaning
Ustomoyon?	“Gusto mo iyon?” (You like that?)
Jonkz	Another term for “joke”
Vaklang two	Used to refer to someone who agrees with something the speaker disagrees about
Amp	Used when the listener does not want to react directly to what the speaker says
GRRRRRRRRR	An expression of disgust/dismay/anger
Bekenemen	Used for something the speaker wishes/dreams to happen
Ganern	Used to reiterate something
Haixt	An interjection to express disgust/dismay; used when someone feels tired
I kennat	“I cannot”; used by the speaker to refer to something he/she can’t do; he/she can’t accept
Weh	Interjection used to express disbelief
Nani	Meaning “what?”
Da hu?	Used to ask “who is it?”
Hnnnnnnnn	Variation of hmmmmmm; used to express curiosity, doubt, reservation, hesitation
Icic	Used to express that someone understood something not clear at first; express realization
Owo/uwu	An interjection for joy/happiness
Chour	Variant of “char”
Oof/oop	Used in the context of ouch/ that sucks
Hakdog/hatdog	An expression used when someone you are speaking with does not understand you and you do not want to repeat what you’ve just said.
Xoxo	Take care
Boggart	Referring to a “loser”; used to ridicule a person who uttered something that has no sense

The list of words included those that were commonly used as interjections by the scholars. The list according to the scholars did not originate from them and that some were changed in terms of spelling to put more emphasis and to add "color" to the expression.

Connotative Meaning of the Expressions/Language

The connotative meaning of words could be positive and negative. For the reason that the words could be positive and negative or are just used as an interjection, the neutral category was added.

The scholars were asked to identify the connotation of the words based on how they were used in context.

Table 5: Summary of Words According to Connotation

Positive	Negative	Neutral
18	7	20

It could be gleaned from the data that majority of the expressions were neutral which means that these words were mostly used to express oneself. Examples of these include "char/charot", "chour", "skl", "sml", "oof/oop". On the other hand, there were more than 50 % of the words that are used positively. These are words used for endearment, to give compliments, and to maintain friendship. Expressions under this are "I'm Gucci", "owo/uwu", "Tysm", "Xoxo", "Lodi", "Squadgoals. There were 7 expressions found to have negative connotations. Some of these are "Vaklang Two" and Boggart?"

Analysis

Overall, it could be gleaned from the findings that computer mediated communication is most frequently used due to its accessibility. Majority of the respondents believed that CMC has improved their relationship with others by being able to communicate instantly and constantly. The same was found out by Turnbull (2010) that computer-mediated communication influences interpersonal relationships. Additionally, many participants of the survey and the interviews conducted by TurnBull (2010) believed that the best way to communicate interpersonally in the future will be through the use of social networking sites. These modes of communication give

users the "best of both worlds". Further, Sheldon (2012) demonstrates that social media is used to meet the basic human need for relatedness, which involves interpersonal closeness, connection, belonging, and acceptance.

With more number of neutral and positive connotations in their expressions, it could be said that the scholars are conscious about their language and the image they project. This idea strengthens the finding of Guld and Maksa (2014) that young people treat the information provided in the media critically and are aware of the general dangers presented by it. Octaviano (n.d.) also underscores that awareness of the group of users could be a source of reflective monitoring of action related to the use of social media as a tool of communication and interaction. Moreover, the way Generation Z used language on social media adheres to Nadkari and Hofmann (2012) who emphasize that social media promotes self-expression, reputation management, and efficient access to expansive networks that resonate the fundamental principles of autonomy and competency.

Generation Z's way of adapting to language used and coping with the changes in language on social media also proves that they do not want to be left behind. Demir et.al (2013), Diener and Seligman (2002) adhere that feeling socially accepted is the most essential ingredient to cultivate happiness specified as positive appraisals to one's life. Manago and Vaughn (2015) conclude that it would be reasonable to have tools at one's disposal to augment social connectivity and increase happiness. This tool would refer to the adaptation to existing culture in social media particularly on language use.

Conclusion

The ways in which Generation Z uses computer-mediated communication have proved that people belonging to this generation value interpersonal connectedness and take advantage of the immediate and instant way of communicating with others to establish friendship and maintain relationship. In addition, the study found out that their being active on social media somehow warns them of the possible consequences of their posts and comments. They are still conscious of what others have to say about them, and they still value positive image on social media. Lastly, it has been proven that they are adaptive and up-to-date to the many changes in language used because this is one of their ways to feel that they belong their community, thus cultivating happiness and positive appraisal.

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