

Research project – Abstract

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Generational use of slang on Reddit

This study investigates how slang is distributed across self-identified generational communities (Millennials, Generation Z, and Generation Alpha) on Reddit and examines whether these online spaces exhibit distinct lexical patterns of slang usage. Although no prior research has specifically analysed Reddit in this context, the platform's structure and forum-based organization makes it particularly suitable for examining generational language practices. Rather than treating generations as verified age groups, we conceptualize them as participation in self-described generational subreddits and analyse how such communities construct linguistic differentiation. Focusing primarily on distributional patterns, we compare the relative frequencies of 24 pre-selected slang expressions across three subreddits representing these Generations, which we eventually cut to 12 slang expressions. The dataset consists of the comment sections of the twenty most upvoted posts in three subreddits dedicated to Millennials (r/Millennials), Gen Z (r/GenZ), and Gen Alpha (r/GenAlpha) sampled within a defined time window (December 31st 2025 and January 14th 2026). This study aims to contribute to preexisting sociolinguistic research on online identity construction and group affiliation by quantifying the actual usage of slang, demonstrating how Reddit communities serve as sites for the emergence and negotiation of generational linguistic styles. Further research could be conducted from a qualitative standpoint, potentially assessing the identity formation more in depth as our study may only contribute from a quantitative standpoint.