
AN ANALYSIS OF SLANG WORD USED BY “FUNNYMEMES” ACCOUNT
ON INSTAGRAM

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji penggunaan slang dalam komunikasi digital melalui analisis akun Instagram "funnymemes" dengan menggunakan pendekatan sosiolinguistik. Fokus penelitian adalah mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis fungsi slang berdasarkan teori eufemisme dan disfemisme dari Allan dan Burridge (2006). Kajian ini relevan karena fenomena slang di media sosial tidak hanya memiliki dimensi linguistik, tetapi juga merefleksikan dinamika sosial dan identitas kelompok dalam ruang digital. Menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, peneliti menganalisis 23 caption unggahan dari akun tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan distribusi yang menarik: 17 slang berfungsi sebagai eufemisme untuk memperhalus makna, membangun suasana santai, dan menyamarkan ekspresi yang berpotensi ofensif. Sementara itu, 7 slang berfungsi sebagai disfemisme untuk mengekspresikan kritik, kemarahan, sindiran, atau respons emosional secara lebih tajam. Temuan unik adalah adanya satu slang "f" yang memiliki fungsi ganda, dapat berperan sebagai eufemisme maupun disfemisme bergantung konteks penggunaannya. Dari perspektif sosiolinguistik, penggunaan slang menunjukkan strategi komunikasi yang mencerminkan identitas kelompok, solidaritas sosial, dan gaya bahasa khas komunitas digital. Slang berfungsi tidak hanya sebagai bentuk ekspresi informal, tetapi juga sebagai alat membangun koneksi sosial antarpengguna yang memiliki referensi budaya populer sama. Penelitian ini menegaskan kompleksitas slang dalam media sosial sebagai fenomena linguistik yang berperan penting dalam mengatur hubungan sosial dan memperkaya pola interaksi era digital.

Kata Kunci: *slang, Instagram, eufemisme, disfemisme, sosiolinguistik*

Abstract

This study examines the use of slang in digital communication through analysis of the Instagram account "funnymemes" using a sociolinguistic approach. The research focus is to identify and analyze the functions of slang based on the theory of euphemism and dysphemism by Allan and Burridge (2006). This study is relevant because the phenomenon of slang in social media not only has linguistic dimensions but also reflects social dynamics and group identity in digital spaces. Using a qualitative descriptive method, the researcher analyzed 23 captions from the account's posts. The research results show an interesting distribution: 17 slang terms function as euphemisms to soften meanings, create a casual atmosphere, and disguise potentially offensive expressions. Meanwhile, 7 slang terms function as dysphemisms to express criticism, anger, sarcasm, or emotional responses more sharply. A unique finding is the existence of one slang term "f" that has a dual function, capable of serving as either euphemism or dysphemism depending on the context of its use. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the use of slang demonstrates communication strategies that reflect group identity, social solidarity, and distinctive language styles of digital communities. Slang functions not only as informal expression but also as a tool for building social connections among users who share the same popular cultural references. This research confirms the complexity of slang in social media as a linguistic phenomenon that plays an important role in regulating social relationships and enriching interaction patterns in the digital era.

Keywords: slang, Instagram, euphemism, dysphemism, sociolinguistics

INTRODUCTION

Language as a tool of communication continuously evolves in line with changes in time and social needs. One prominent form of language variation in contemporary communication is slang informal vocabulary creatively used by specific social groups to build closeness, express identity, and create a relaxed communicative atmosphere (Eble, 2016, p. 12). In the digital context, particularly on social media, the use of slang has become increasingly massive and complex. Instagram, as one of the most popular social media platforms today, provides space for the spread of slang expressions that function not only linguistically but also reflect social dynamics and popular culture.

The phenomenon of slang usage in Instagram captions, particularly on humor-themed accounts like *funnymemes*, presents a new reality in language studies. Slang on social media serves not only as a means of informal communication but also as a tool for constructing digital group identity and social solidarity (Holmes, 2013, pp. 8–10; Danesi, 2024, p. 210). The *funnymemes* account, known for its humorous meme posts filled with slang expressions, offers a linguistically rich space for sociolinguistic investigation. The use of words such as "tbh," "nvm," or "pops" illustrates how lexical choices can reflect communication strategies, closeness among community members, and even resistance to formal language norms (Allan & Burridge, 2006, pp. 69–72).

Research on slang in social media has been conducted by Ulfah (2021), who examined slang variation in TikTok videos, and by Sri Indra and Marhamah (2024), who studied forms of slang on Instagram. However, these studies tend to focus on the types or lexical categorization of slang, rather than exploring the communicative functions of slang in depth. Studies on the euphemistic and dysphemistic functions of slang, as proposed by Allan and Burridge (2006, p. 31), within the visual and public context of social media remain very limited. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by analyzing how slang on the *funnymemes* account is used to either soften (euphemism) or intensify (dysphemism) meaning in digital communication.

The urgency of this research lies in the importance of understanding the social functions of slang as part of digital identity construction and discursive strategies within online communities. In an era where social media has become a primary space for interaction, slang is not merely a form of linguistic creativity but also a communication strategy that represents social position, group affiliation, and ways of expressing criticism or

emotional expression in a manner acceptable to a broad audience (Tagliamonte, 2024, p. 203; Dynel, 2020, p. 112).

The main problems addressed in this study are: (1) What are slang words used in the Instagram account “funnymemes”? (2) How do slang words function euphemistically and dysphemistically in the Instagram account “funnymemes” seen from a sociolinguistic perspective? To answer these questions, the study employs a descriptive qualitative approach that allows the researcher to understand the use of slang in a contextual and in-depth manner.

The aim of this study is to identify of slang found in the *funnymemes* account and to analyze their functions in constructing social meaning, either through message softening (euphemism) or expression intensification (dysphemism). Theoretically, this research extends the application of Allan and Burridge’s theory within a digital context and enriches sociolinguistic studies on social media language. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a reference in the study of popular language, the development of sociolinguistics teaching materials, and the understanding of communication strategies in digital content. Thus, slang is not only seen as a temporary lexical form, but also as a linguistic phenomenon that reflects the dynamics of identity, solidarity, and social relations in the ever-evolving digital space.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. This approach is chosen because it aims to describe language phenomena in depth within a specific sociocultural context, namely the use of slang on the *funnymemes* Instagram account. According to Creswell (2013, p. 185), qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. It involves an emerging inquiry process, data collected in the participants’ setting, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. Therefore, a descriptive qualitative design provides flexibility to explore the meanings, functions, and contexts of slang use as naturally and contextually presented in digital data.

Time and Place of the Research

This study was conducted over the period of January to December 2021. The primary data source consisted of captions from posts on the *funnymemes* Instagram

account, which were collected online from the Instagram platform. Data collection focused on posts published during the year 2021. The selection of this year was based on the consideration of the maturity of digital language patterns and the stability of slang trends during that period, as stated by Tagliamonte (2024, p. 120).

Object of the study

The object of this study is the Instagram account *funnymemes*, which falls under the category of digital humor accounts. This account was chosen as the research object because it consistently uses informal language forms, including slang, to build interaction with its audience. With over 6 million followers, the account is widely recognized in the digital community as one of the popular meme providers. The technique for selecting the object was purposive sampling, namely choosing an account that consistently uses various forms of slang in its captions and has high engagement with its followers.

Data Collection

To collect the data, there are several steps following as:

1. Reading the posts of the Instagram account "funnymemes" uploaded from January - December 2021
2. Selecting "funnymemes" posts on Instagram that contain the use of slang words.
3. Cross-checking the selected slang words using an online slang dictionary (Urban Dictionary) to validate their meaning and confirm their categorization as slang.
4. Organizing the validated data, the data was ready for analysis.

Data Analysis

Based on Creswell (2009, p.314) data analysis procedures are continued to interpret data collection and writing findings. This is important in order to gain a deeper understanding of what has been studied in order to perfect the interpretation in the analysis. Data analysis activities are core activities that must exist in a study because, in the end, the data analysis activities produce the results of a study. In data analysis, this study used a qualitative descriptive analysis.

The steps of the data analysis technique have been arranged as follows:

1. Introducing Data

The first step in data analysis was understanding the data that had been collected. The researcher read and reread the posts and captions several times to get an

overview of using slang. The slang words encountered and their frequency were recorded.

2. Identifying Slang Words

The next step was identifying slang words in the posts and captions. Each slang word was documented and categorized based on its usage context within the humor-based content of the "Funnymemes" account.

3. Analyzing Slang Functions

After identifying slang words, the researcher analyzed the euphemistic and dysphemistic functions of the identified slang words based on Allan and Burridge theory (2006). This analysis aimed to understand how these slang words function in digital humor communication and their social meanings within the Instagram community context.

4. Discussing and Concluding

The results of the analysis were presenting clearly and in a structured manner. The conclusion was presenting descriptively, summarizing the main findings about the slang words identified in the "Funnymemes" account and their euphemistic and dysphemistic functions. The analysis highlighted the most commonly used slang words, their meanings, and how they function strategically in the context of online humor communication.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study based on the analysis of slang words used in the *Funnymemes* Instagram account. The analysis addresses two main aspects: the identification of slang words and the examination of their euphemistic and dysphemistic functions. Using Allan and Burridge's (2006) framework, supported by a sociolinguistic perspective, the discussion highlights how these slang terms reflect digital communication strategies, social interaction patterns, and group identity within online humor communities.

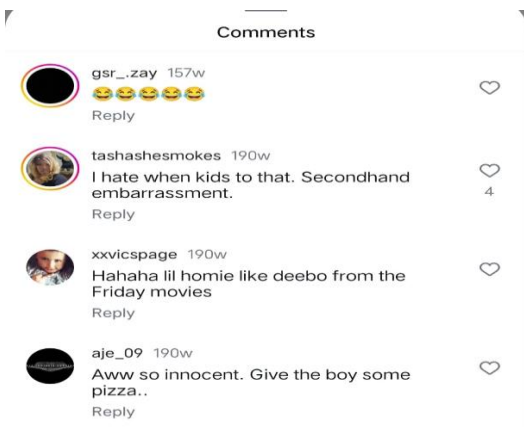
A. Euphemism of Slang Words in Funnymemes Account

Datum 1: wya



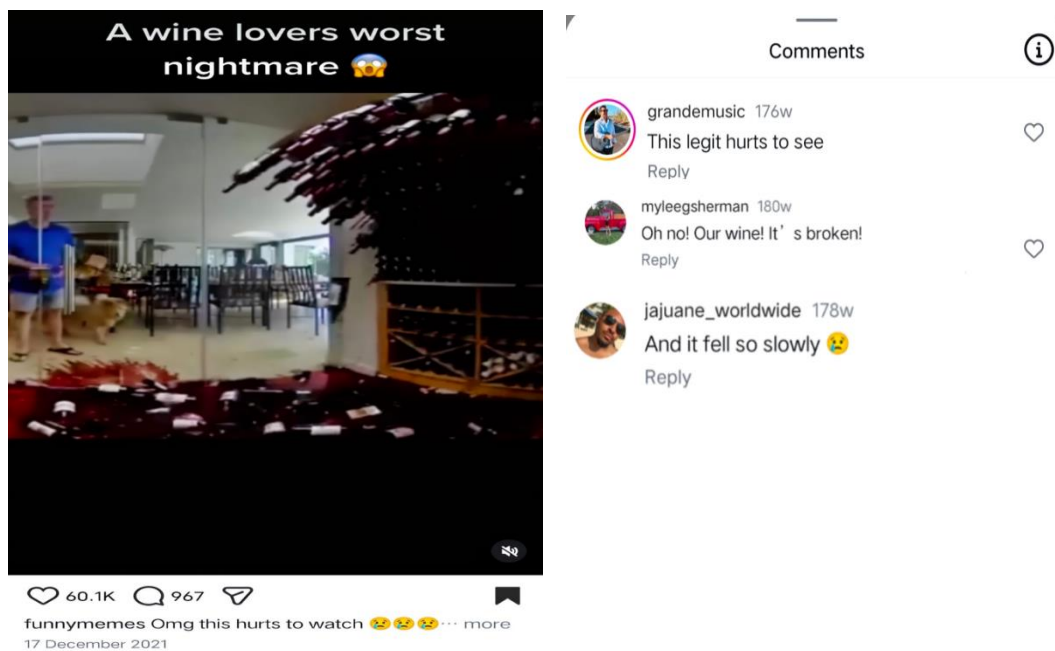
The use of the slang "wya" (short for "where you at") in the caption “introvert gang wya” functions as a euphemism that softens direct invitations, making it more suitable for the introverted community. According to Allan and Burridge (2006), this euphemistic form offers a polite, friendly tone that avoids imposing social pressure. It successfully creates a safe and inclusive space for users to respond at their own comfort level—evident in varied comment styles, from short replies like “Me” to more personal confessions about feeling isolated in social settings. With over 48,000 likes, the post illustrates how digital slang like "wya" performs a dual function: maintaining informal efficiency while facilitating emotionally sensitive and socially considerate communication.

Datum 2: Lil buddy



In an Instagram post by the @funnymemes account, the use of the slang "Lil buddy" functions as a euphemism that softens the potential humiliation of a child who thinks he's about to get a slice of pizza but ends up not getting it. According to Allan and Burrige's (2006) theory, this expression uses friendly and light language to describe a situation that could otherwise be embarrassing, keeping the tone humorous and empathetic. Comments such as "Aww so innocent. Give the boy some pizza..." and "Hahaha lil homie like Deebo from the *Friday* movies" reinforce this light tone by expressing sympathy and including pop culture references. Even when users express secondhand embarrassment, as in the comment "Secondhand embarrassment," it is conveyed with empathy rather than mockery. Thus, the use of "Lil buddy" not only reflects the informal language style typical of social media but also serves as an ethical communication strategy to deliver humor without offense—something that is well received by the digital community.

Datum 3: OMG



In the analyzed post, the use of the slang "Omg" (short for "Oh My God") functions as a euphemism that expresses emotional shock or distress in a socially acceptable and moderated form. Based on Allan and Burrige's (2006) theory, this euphemistic usage softens what could be intense or offensive emotional expressions—such as "This is fucking devastating"—into lighter interjections like "Omg this hurts to watch," allowing users to convey strong feelings without breaching politeness norms. Comments such as "This legit hurts to see" and "Oh no! Our wine! It's broken!" further demonstrate this euphemistic

pattern, where emotional responses are framed with casual, non-confrontational language. Even emojis like 😞 serve as visual euphemisms that communicate sadness without explicit wording. Sociolinguistically, these responses illustrate how euphemism functions as a digital strategy for emotional regulation, enabling users to show empathy, concern, and shared experience while maintaining appropriate social distance. Euphemisms like "Omg," "hurts," and "Oh no!" help balance sincerity and entertainment, showing emotional engagement without appearing overly dramatic—highlighting how digital communities manage sensitivity while still consuming content for amusement.

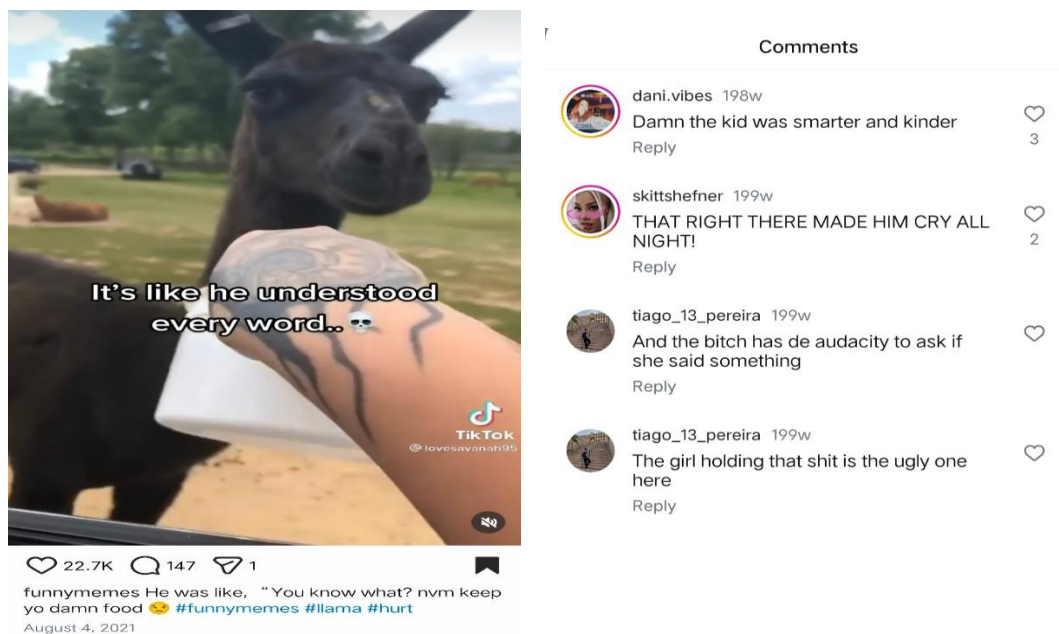
Datum 4: f



In the @funnymemes post on October 31, 2021, the caption “The most F up prank 😞” uses the slang abbreviation “F” as a linguistic form that serves two functions simultaneously: **euphemism and dysphemism**. As a **euphemism**, the letter “F” replaces the vulgar word “fucked” to make the phrase sound softer and more acceptable on social media, helping avoid violations of politeness norms or censorship. At the same time, as a **dysphemism**, the abbreviation still conveys strong emotional intensity such as shock or disapproval toward the prank, which is considered extreme or inappropriate. According to Allan and Burridge (2006), this type of expression is called a *euphemized dysphemism*—a

harsh expression disguised in a milder form so it can be socially acceptable. Comments like “LOL” and “wicked prank” show that the audience understood the emotional intent behind the slang and responded with laughter and surprise. This proves that the slang “F” is not just a way to avoid censorship, but also an expressive communication tool that retains emotional impact while maintaining politeness in digital interaction.

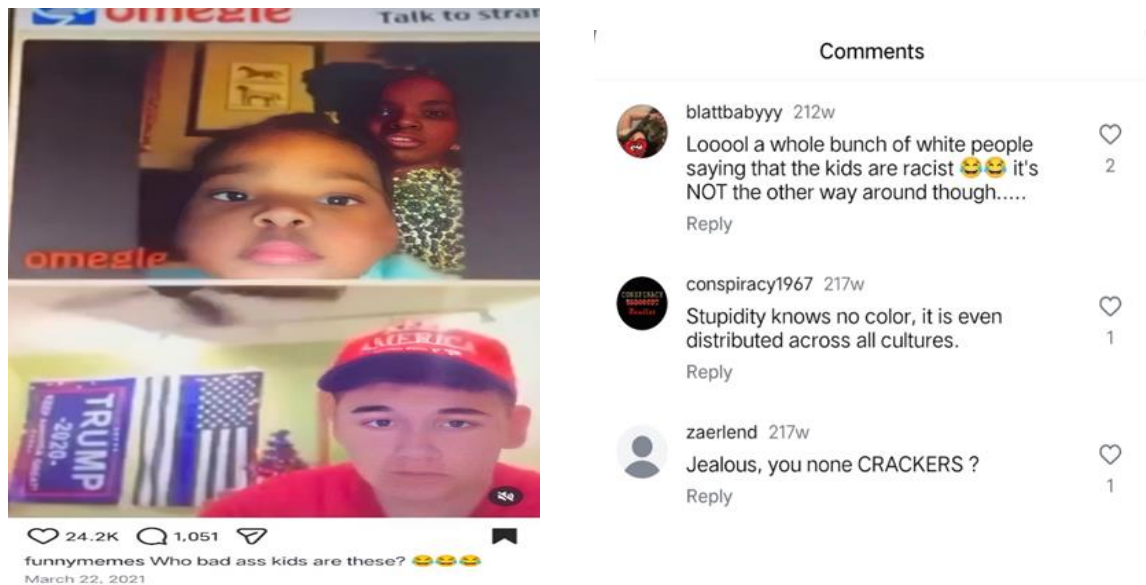
Datum 5: nvm



The use of the slang "nvm" in the caption “he was like, 'you know what? nvm, keep yo damn food” functions as a euphemism that softens rejection or a change of intention in a light and humorous way. As an abbreviation of “never mind,” this term reflects the informal language style commonly used in digital communication to speed up interactions and express closeness among users. Based on Allan and Burridge’s theory (2006), “nvm” allows the delivery of rejection indirectly without using harsh language, thereby maintaining a humorous tone. User responses in the comment section, such as expressions of sympathy toward the animal portrayed as offended, show that the audience understands and empathizes with the euphemistic meaning. Moreover, comments defending the animal indicate digital community solidarity, formed through shared understanding of this slang. Thus, the use of “nvm” not only enriches the narrative and enhances emotional engagement, but also strengthens collective identity and familiarity within the social media community.

B. Dysphemism of Slang Words in Funnymemes Account

Datum 6: Bad ass



In a post by @funnymemes on March 22, 2021, featuring a clip from Omegle, the slang phrase “bad ass” is used in the caption “Who bad ass kids are these? 😂😂😂” to describe children behaving in a surprising or impolite manner. While “bad ass” can carry ambivalent meanings—both positive (brave, cool) and negative (rude, rebellious)—its use in this context leans towards a dysphemistic function, emphasizing deviant behavior through coarse language for humorous effect. According to Allan and Burridge (2006), dysphemism is employed to express criticism or insult directly, often for humor or mockery. This is evident in the caption and further supported by sharp, unfiltered comments such as @blattbabyyy’s sarcastic remark on racial stereotyping, @conspiracy1967’s blunt generalization, and @zaerlend’s use of a controversial racial term. These responses reflect an online discourse marked by deliberate rudeness and humor rooted in social critique. Thus, the use of “bad ass” illustrates how social media humor accounts utilize dysphemistic slang to create an edgy, provocative comedic style that resonates with their audience.

Datum 7: wth

In the Instagram post, the slang "WTH"—an acronym for "What The Hell"—functions as a dysphemism that conveys emotional shock in a concise, socially acceptable form suitable for digital platforms. According to Allan and Burrige (2006), dysphemism intensifies emotional expression, and even in abbreviated form, "WTH" retains its impact, framing the unexpected appearance of a child in the video with surprise and humor. This emotional framing is reflected in the comment section, where users respond with exaggerated emotional reactions, such as laughter, disbelief, and strong language, creating a ripple effect of affective engagement. Comments like “Damn near dropped my phone 🤦” and “killing myself with laughter” demonstrate how "WTH" sets a tone that encourages expressive, unfiltered responses. The popularity of the post—with over 8,000 likes—highlights how dysphemistic abbreviations like "WTH" enhance content virality by blending humor, intensity, and relatability, fostering communal interaction and emotional resonance in the online space.

Datum 8: f



In the @funnymemes post on October 31, 2021, the caption “The most F up prank 😏” uses the slang abbreviation “F” as a linguistic form that serves two functions simultaneously: **euphemism and dysphemism**. As a **euphemism**, the letter “F” replaces the vulgar word “fucked” to make the phrase sound softer and more acceptable on social media, helping avoid violations of politeness norms or censorship. At the same time, as a **dysphemism**, the abbreviation still conveys strong emotional intensity such as shock or disapproval toward the prank, which is considered extreme or inappropriate. According to Allan and Burridge (2006), this type of expression is called a *euphemized dysphemism*—a harsh expression disguised in a milder form so it can be socially acceptable. Comments like “LOL” and “wicked prank” show that the audience understood the emotional intent behind the slang and responded with laughter and surprise. This proves that the slang “F” is not just a way to avoid censorship, but also an expressive communication tool that retains emotional impact while maintaining politeness in digital interaction.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

This study concludes that the use of slang on the Instagram account "funnymemes" is not merely a casual language style but serves as a meaningful communication tool within the digital community. The study identified 23 slang terms from posts uploaded in 2021 and analyzed their functions using the theory of euphemism and dysphemism by Allan and Burrige (2006). The analysis revealed that 17 slang terms function as euphemisms to soften expressions, create a relaxed or humorous tone, and maintain social harmony, while 7 slang terms serve as dysphemisms to express strong emotions or criticism. One slang term, "f", was found to have a dual function depending on the context. From a sociolinguistic perspective, these findings indicate that slang is used to build group identity, strengthen social solidarity, and support effective informal communication in digital spaces, especially on humor-based platforms.

Suggestions

Future research is recommended to expand the quantity and variety of data and to consider other platforms such as Twitter or TikTok to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of slang usage dynamics across digital communities. Additionally, alternative approaches such as pragmatics or discourse analysis can be applied to explore the meanings of slang in broader contexts. For linguistic learners and educators, this study can serve as a reference to understand the development of non-standard language as a reflection of the speakers' social and cultural realities. For social media users, it is important to recognize that the use of slang not only conveys messages but also reflects social identity and positioning within the digital community, thus requiring context-aware and appropriate usage.

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