

Understanding Youth Slang in the Digital Age: A Systematic Literature Review of Identity, Multilingualism, Generational Gaps, and NLP Applications

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ABSTRACT

Youth slang has become a central feature of digital communication, shaping how adolescents and young users construct identity, negotiate peer relationships, engage in multilingual practices, and participate in platform-based cultures. This systematic literature review examines the state of research on youth slang in the digital age, with specific attention to identity construction, multilingualism, intergenerational communication gaps, computational/NLP applications, and digital literacy implications. Guided by PRISMA procedures, the review synthesizes 25 selected studies published between 2020 and 2026 and organizes them into five themes: youth slang, identity construction, and peer communication; multilingualism, code-mixing, and language transformation; intergenerational understanding and communication gaps; computational/NLP approaches to slang detection, translation, and sentiment analysis; and digital literacy, education, and social/health implications. The findings show that youth slang is not merely informal language but a dynamic sociolinguistic resource for expressing belonging, humour, emotion, cultural identity, and online participation. The review also highlights that digital slang increasingly crosses linguistic boundaries through English borrowing, hybrid lexicons, abbreviations, and code-mixing. However, rapidly evolving slang may create communication barriers between youth and older generations and poses challenges for NLP systems due to its contextual, cultural, and multilingual complexity. This review contributes an integrated understanding of youth slang as a sociolinguistic, educational, intergenerational, and technological phenomenon, while emphasizing the need for culturally responsive digital literacy and context-aware computational models.

Keywords: Youth slang; Digital communication; Identity construction; Code-mixing; Natural Language Processing

INTRODUCTION

Youth slang has become a prominent feature of digital communication, especially among adolescents, Generation Z, Generation Alpha, and multilingual young users who interact through platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, X/Twitter, YouTube, and online messaging spaces. In the digital age, slang is not merely informal or playful language; it functions as a sociolinguistic resource for identity construction, peer belonging, emotional expression, humour, and cultural participation. The reviewed studies show that youth slang appears in multiple forms, including internet slang, TikTok slang, memes, emoji, abbreviations, English borrowings, code-mixing, hybrid lexicons, and textism. These practices are evident in studies on adolescent identity and peer relationships, multilingual youth writing, Malaysian bilingual youths, Indonesian youth language transformation, and Nigerian Gen Z communication on Twitter.

The rapid evolution of youth slang creates several problems. Older generations, educators, parents, and even digital systems may struggle to interpret slang, memes, emoji, and platform-specific expressions accurately.

Studies in the document show that such misunderstandings may contribute to intergenerational communication gaps and reduce adults' ability to recognize online risks or youth concerns. At the same time, computational and NLP systems face challenges in detecting, translating, and analysing youth slang because slang is dynamic, context-dependent, culturally embedded, and multilingual.

Despite growing research interest, existing studies remain scattered across sociolinguistics, education, digital literacy, communication studies, and computational linguistics. Therefore, a systematic literature review is needed to synthesize current knowledge on youth slang by integrating five key dimensions: identity construction, multilingualism, generational gaps, NLP applications, and digital literacy implications. This review addresses that gap by organizing 25 selected studies into thematic categories and identifying how youth slang operates as a social, linguistic, educational, and technological phenomenon in digital communication.

Research questions are important to a systematic literature review (SLR). The questions provide the foundation and direction for the entire review process. A well-defined research question ensures that the literature search is exhaustive and systematic, covering all relevant studies that address key aspects of the topic (Kitchenham, 2007). The research questions in this SLR are formulated based on the PICo framework. This framework is a mnemonic style used to formulate research questions, particularly in qualitative research, proposed by Lockwood et al. (2015). PICo stands for Population, Interest, and Context. This SLR is done to answer the four research questions below;

RQ1 How do adolescents and young digital users use youth slang to construct identity, express emotions, build peer relationships, and signal group belonging in online communication?

RQ2 What multilingual and sociolinguistic patterns characterize youth slang in digital communication, particularly in relation to code-mixing, English borrowing, abbreviation, and language transformation?

RQ3 How does youth slang contribute to intergenerational communication gaps in the interpretation of slang, memes, emoji, and other digital communication symbols?

RQ4 How have computational and NLP-based approaches been developed and evaluated for detecting, translating, and analyzing youth slang in digital communication?

RQ5 What educational, digital literacy, social, and health-related implications are associated with youth slang use in online communication?

LITERATURE REVIEW

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Understanding Youth Slang in The Digital Age: A Systematic Literature Review of Identity, Multilingualism, Generational Gaps, And NLP Applications

Sociocultural Linguistic Theory of Identity by Bucholtz & Hall (2005) that supports Youth Slang, Identity Construction, and Peer Communication

Sociocultural Linguistic Theory of Identity by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) provides a strong theoretical foundation for understanding youth slang, identity construction, and peer communication. The theory argues that identity is not fixed or simply determined by age, gender, or social background; instead, identity is actively produced through linguistic and semiotic practices during social interaction. Bucholtz and Hall emphasize that people construct identity through stance, style, language choice, labels, and interactional positioning, making the theory especially relevant to the study of youth slang. In digital communication, adolescents use slang not only to express meaning but also to signal belonging, display familiarity with youth culture, create humour, and distinguish themselves from adults or outsiders. Slang terms, memes, abbreviations, and platform-specific expressions become identity markers that help young people negotiate

peer relationships and participate in shared online communities. Therefore, this theory supports the theme by framing youth slang as a socially meaningful resource through which teenagers perform identity, establish group membership, and maintain peer solidarity in digital spaces.

Third-Wave Sociolinguistic Variation Theory by Eckert (2012) that supports Multilingualism, Code-Mixing, and Language Transformation in Digital Communication

Third-Wave Sociolinguistic Variation Theory by Eckert (2012) provides a useful theoretical lens for understanding multilingualism, code-mixing, and language transformation in digital communication. Unlike earlier approaches that mainly viewed linguistic variation as a reflection of fixed social categories such as age, class, gender, or ethnicity, Eckert's third-wave perspective argues that language variation actively constructs social meaning through style, stance, and identity performance. In this view, young people do not merely use slang, English borrowings, abbreviations, or code-mixed expressions because they belong to a particular age group; rather, they use these linguistic resources strategically to project identities such as being trendy, humorous, global, informal, creative, or digitally competent. This theory strongly supports the theme because digital communication allows youth to combine languages, reshape meanings, and create new hybrid forms across platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, X/Twitter, and online messaging. Code-mixing and language transformation can therefore be understood as stylistic practices that help young users negotiate belonging, social positioning, and cultural relevance in multilingual digital spaces.

Speech Accomodation Theory by Giles & Powesland (1975) that supports Intergenerational Understanding and Communication Gap

Speech Accommodation Theory by Giles and Powesland (1975) provides a useful theoretical foundation for understanding intergenerational understanding and communication gaps. The theory explains how speakers adjust their speech style, language choices, and communicative behaviour according to the person or group they are interacting with. Giles and Powesland emphasize that speech style is socially evaluated and can influence how speakers are perceived in terms of status, solidarity, and social distance. In intergenerational communication, this theory is especially relevant because younger and older generations may use different linguistic styles, particularly in digital environments. Youth often rely on slang, abbreviations, memes, emoji, and platform-specific expressions to communicate with peers, while older generations may not share the same linguistic knowledge or digital cultural background. When young people diverge through slang use, they may strengthen peer-group identity but unintentionally create distance from adults. Conversely, when adults attempt to accommodate youth language, mutual understanding may improve. Therefore, Speech Accommodation Theory supports this theme by explaining how differences in language adaptation contribute to misunderstanding, social distance, and communication gaps between generations.

Computational Sociolinguistics by Nguyen, Doğruöz, Rosé and de Jong (2016) that supports Computational/NLP Approaches to Slang Detection, Translation, and Sentiment Analysis

Computational Sociolinguistics by Nguyen, Doğruöz, Rosé and de Jong (2016) provides a strong theoretical foundation for examining computational/NLP approaches to slang detection, translation, and sentiment analysis. This framework connects sociolinguistic concerns—such as language variation, social identity, multilingual communication, and interactional meaning—with computational methods used to analyse large-scale digital data. Nguyen et al. argue that language is inherently social and that computational linguistics can benefit from incorporating sociolinguistic insights when modelling online communication. This is particularly relevant to youth slang because slang is highly dynamic, context-dependent, culturally embedded, and often shaped by social media communities. In NLP tasks, youth slang can challenge conventional models because meanings may shift rapidly, expressions may be ironic or playful, and terms may differ across platforms, peer groups, and languages. Therefore, Computational Sociolinguistics supports this theme by showing that effective slang detection, translation, and sentiment analysis require more than lexical matching or standard language processing; they require awareness of social context, identity, multilingual variation, and digital communicative practices.

Digital Literacy Conceptual Framework by Eshet-Alkalai (2004) that supports Digital Literacy, Education, and Social/Health Implications of Youth Slang

Digital Literacy Conceptual Framework by Eshet-Alkalai (2004) provides a relevant theoretical foundation for understanding the digital literacy, education, and social/health implications of youth slang. Eshet-Alkalai argues that digital literacy involves more than the ability to operate digital devices; it includes cognitive, social, emotional, and evaluative skills needed to function effectively in digital environments. The framework identifies several forms of literacy, including photo-visual literacy, reproduction literacy, branching literacy, information literacy, and socio-emotional literacy, all of which are important for interpreting online communication. This theory supports the theme because youth slang often appears in fast-moving digital spaces where meaning depends on platform context, peer norms, humour, emotion, and social sensitivity. In educational contexts, students must learn when slang is appropriate and how it differs from formal academic language. In social and health contexts, slang may also appear in discussions of anxiety, cyberbullying, exclusion, peer pressure, or emotional wellbeing. Therefore, Eshet-Alkalai's framework helps explain why young users need critical and socio-emotional digital literacy to interpret, evaluate, and use slang responsibly in online communication

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

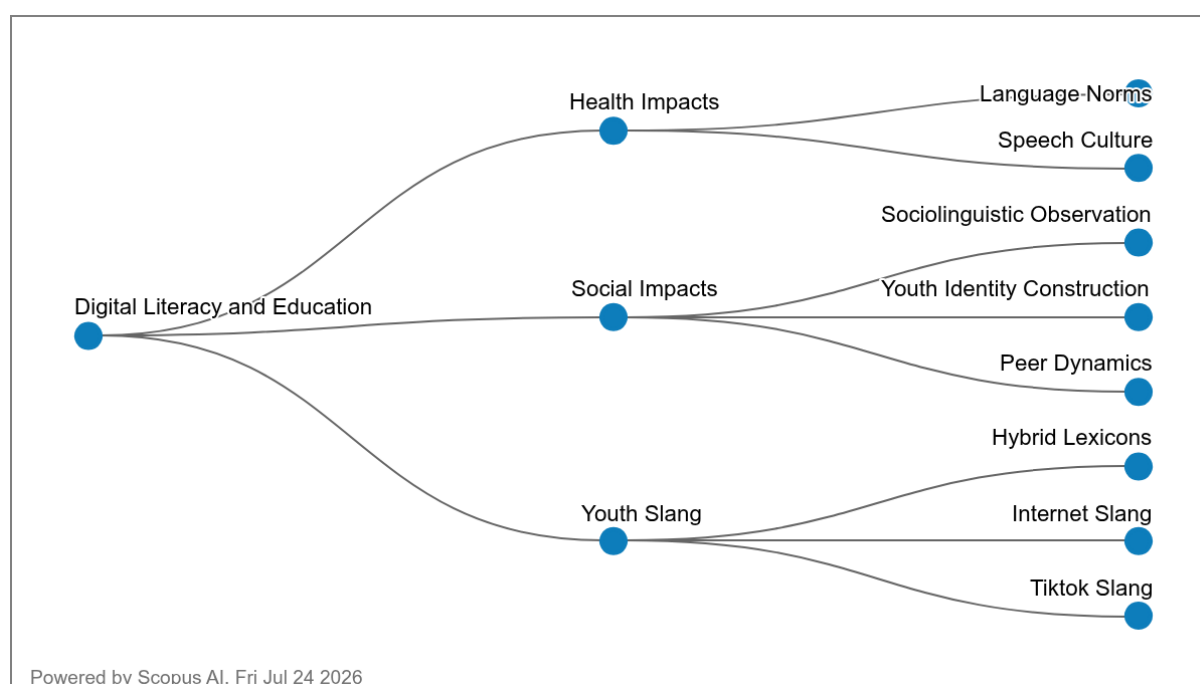


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework for “Understanding Youth Slang in the Digital Age” positions digital literacy and education as the central entry point for understanding how youth slang operates across digital environments. As shown in the diagram, digital literacy and education branch into health impacts, social impacts, and youth slang, which are further connected to language norms, speech culture, sociolinguistic observation, youth identity construction, peer dynamics, hybrid lexicons, internet slang, and TikTok slang. This structure is anchored in Eshet-Alkalai’s (2004) Digital Literacy Conceptual Framework, which explains that digital participation requires cognitive, social, emotional, and evaluative skills, not merely technical ability. This supports the need to examine how youth slang affects education, online wellbeing, language awareness, and social or health-related communication.

The framework also draws on Bucholtz and Hall’s (2005) Sociocultural Linguistic Theory of Identity, which supports the link between youth slang, identity construction, and peer communication by viewing language as a resource for social positioning and group belonging. Eckert’s (2012) Third-Wave Sociolinguistic Variation Theory further supports the multilingual and code-mixing dimension by explaining slang, hybrid

lexicons, and language transformation as stylistic resources that construct social meaning in digital communication. Meanwhile, Speech Accommodation Theory by Giles and Powesland (1975) explains intergenerational communication gaps, particularly when adults and youth differ in their ability to interpret slang, memes, and digital symbols. Finally, Computational Sociolinguistics by Nguyen et al. (2016) supports the NLP dimension by framing youth slang as socially situated, dynamic, and challenging for slang detection, translation, and sentiment analysis systems.

METHODOLOGY

For conducting systematic literature reviews, the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) approach is a widely accepted standard that guarantees transparency, completeness, and consistency throughout the procedure by Page et al. (2021). guide how to systematically identify, screen, and include studies in their review. In the context of this SLR, the writers involved in this article act as researchers and work together to analyse the articles deemed relevant for the title. Two important databases, Web of Science and Scopus, were used in this analysis because of their wide coverage and robustness.

The PRISMA approach is organized into four key stages: (i) identification, (ii) screening, (iii) eligibility, and (iv) data abstraction. In the identification phase, databases are searched to locate all relevant studies. The screening phase then involves evaluating these studies against predefined criteria to eliminate irrelevant or low-quality research. During the eligibility phase, the remaining studies are thoroughly assessed to confirm they meet the inclusion criteria. Finally, data abstraction focuses on extracting and synthesizing data from the included studies, which is essential for deriving meaningful and reliable conclusions. This structured method ensures that the systematic review is conducted with rigor, leading to trustworthy results that can guide future research and practice. The PRISMA framework lists three main stages for analysis: (i) identification, (ii) screening, (iii) eligibility, (iv) data abstraction and analysis, as well as (v) quality of appraisal.

Identification

In accordance with the PRISMA framework, the identification phase represents a critical starting point in the systematic literature review process, as it is designed to ensure exhaustive coverage of relevant studies while reducing the risk of selection bias. In this study, a structured and comprehensive search was conducted across two leading bibliographic databases, Scopus and Web of Science (WoS), using the keywords “academic writing,” “obstacles,” and “higher institutions.” Table 1 below shows the search string.

These databases were deliberately selected because of their extensive multidisciplinary coverage, stringent indexing criteria, and strong representation of high-quality, peer-reviewed journals. The search process resulted in the retrieval of 100 records from Scopus and 43 records from Web of Science, yielding a combined total of 143 records prior to the removal of duplicates.

The higher number of results obtained from Scopus can be attributed to its broader inclusion of journals and stronger coverage in the social sciences, whereas WoS contributed a more targeted collection of highly cited and methodologically rigorous studies. As shown in Table 1, the identification of 143 records reflects the growing academic interest in writing within higher education and highlights the conceptual diversity of research spanning linguistic, pedagogical, and psychological perspectives. Employing multiple databases enhances the methodological robustness of the review by minimizing database-specific bias and increasing the likelihood of capturing diverse research traditions and geographical contexts.

Additionally, the use of carefully designed search terms ensured sensitivity to terminological variation while maintaining alignment with the review’s objectives. Overall, this transparent and systematic identification process establishes a strong foundation for subsequent screening and eligibility stages, consistent with PRISMA standards and expectations for rigorous, replicable research

Table 1 Search Strings Used for Scopus and Web of Science

Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY (("Gen Z" OR "Generation Z" OR "youth" OR "young people" OR "teenagers" OR "adolescents") AND (slang OR "informal language" OR "colloquial language" OR "youth language") AND ("social media" OR "online platforms" OR "digital communication" OR "social networking" OR "social networking sites"))
Web of Science	TITLE-ABS-KEY (("Gen Z" OR "Generation Z" OR "youth" OR "young people" OR "teenagers" OR "adolescents") AND (slang OR "informal language" OR "colloquial language" OR "youth language") AND ("social media" OR "online platforms" OR "digital communication" OR "social networking" OR "social networking sites")) Extracted July 2026

Screening

During the screening stage of the systematic literature review, potentially relevant studies were evaluated to ensure their alignment with the four established research questions. This phase focused on refining the initial pool of records by removing duplicates and applying predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Following the initial review, 143 publications were excluded for failing to meet the scope and relevance requirements of the study, leaving 88 (Scopus=78; Wos; 10) articles for further consideration, as outlined in Figure 2. The primary inclusion criterion was the type of literature, with priority given to scholarly sources that offer substantive and empirical insights. As a result, materials such as book reviews, book series, meta-syntheses, meta-analyses, conference proceedings, and book chapters not directly related to the core focus of the review were excluded. To ensure consistency and relevance to contemporary academic discourse, only peer-reviewed publications written in English and published between 2020 and 2026 were retained. Additionally, a duplication check led to the removal of 0 repeated records across the databases. This systematic and criteria-driven screening process enhanced the focus and quality of the evidence base, ensuring that only the most relevant and methodologically sound studies progressed to the subsequent stages of analysis.

Eligibility

For the third step, known as eligibility, a total of 25 articles have been prepared. All articles' titles and key content were thoroughly reviewed at this stage to ensure that the inclusion requirements were fulfilled and fit into the present study with the current research aims. Therefore, two reports were omitted because they were not pure science articles based on empirical evidence. Finally, 40 articles are available for review (see Table 2).

Table 2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Study Selection

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English	Non-English
Time line	2020 – 2026	< 2020
Literature type	Journal (Article)	Conference, Book, Review
Publication Stage	Final	In Press
Subject Area	Gen-Z Slang	Besides Gen-Z Slang

Data Abstraction and Analysis

An integrative analysis was used as one of the assessment strategies in this study to examine and synthesize a variety of research designs (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods). To develop themes, the authors

carefully analyzed 25 publications for relevant material related to the study's topics. They examined the methodology and research results of significant studies on PIU and mental health in children. The authors collaborated to develop themes based on the evidence presented throughout the study. They kept a log of their data analysis process to document relevant perspectives, analyses, or ideas. The authors ensured consistency in theme design by comparing the results and discussing disagreements between themselves. This expert review phase established the validity of each subtheme by ensuring clarity, importance, and suitability (Refer to Appendix 1).

Quality of Appraisal

According to Kitchenham and Charters (Kitchenham, 2007), the researchers need to assess the quality of the research chosen. The next stage is applying quality assessment suggested by Abouzahra et al., (2020), which consist of six questions complying to a scoring procedure for evaluating each criteria. The possible ratings are "Yes" (Y) with a score of 1 if the criterion is fully met, "Partly" (P) with a score of 0.5 if the criterion is somewhat met but contains some gaps or shortcomings, and "No" (N) with a score of 0 if the criterion is not met at all.

Table 3 Quality Assessment Criteria Adapted from Abouzahra et al. (2020)

No	Question
QA1	Is the purpose of the study clearly stated?
QA2	Is the interest and the usefulness of the work clearly presented?
QA3	Is the study methodology clearly established?
QA4	Are the concepts of the approach clearly defined?
QA5	Is the work compared and measured with other similar work?
QA6	Are the limitations of the work clearly mentioned?

Each writer independently assesses the study according to these criteria, and the scores are then totalled across all experts to determine the overall mark. For a study to be accepted for the next process, the total mark, derived from summing the scores from all three experts, must exceed 3.0. This threshold ensures that only studies meeting a certain quality standard proceed further. The results are shown in Table 4.

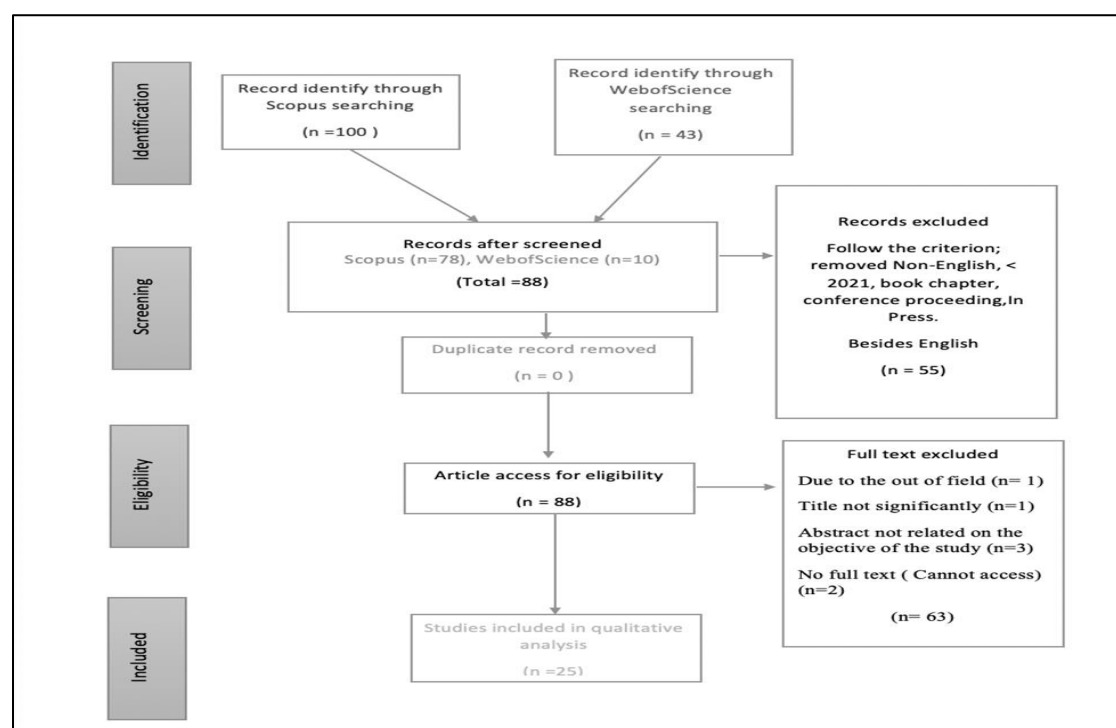


Figure 2 Flow diagram of the proposed searching study Moher et al. (2009)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Quality of Assessment

Table 4 shows the results of the assessment performance for selected primary studies. The overall quality of the articles is as follows;

- **High quality ($\geq 80\%$):** Majority of studies
- **Moderate quality (60–79%):** Conceptual or descriptive studies
- **Lower quality ($<60\%$):** Primarily survey-only or exploratory abstracts

Table 4 Quality Assessment Results of the Selected Studies

PS	Study	Author(s) & Year	Article Title	QA1	QA2	QA3	QA4	QA5	QA6	Total Mark	Percentage (%)
PS1	CEUR Workshop Proceedings	Curcuglioti D.; Pigureddu L.; Gena C. (2026)	Slang4Pepper entered the chat: Building a slang-aware glossary for Social Robots interacting with Teenagers	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	P	5.0	83.3
PS2	Ampersand	Verheijen L.; van Hout R. (2022)	Manifold code-mixing in computer-mediated communication: The use of English in Dutch youths informal online writing	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	5.0	83.3
PS3	3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature	Carganilla M.V.; Desalit J.B.; Wei C.; Wakat G.S. (2025)	Interpreting Social Media Memes: Exploring Variations in Understanding Gen Z Slang Across Gen X, Gen Y and Gen Z	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	N	4.5	75.0
PS4	Journal of Language Teaching and Research	Ajam M.R.; Taha M.; Sumar-Karman A. (2026)	Language Change in Social Media and Its Impact on the Linguistic Identity of Indonesia's Younger Generation: A Sociolinguistic	Y	Y	P	Y	N	N	3.5	58.3

			Study								
PS5	RUDN Journal of Language Studies, Semiotics and Semantics	Sidorova L.A. (2025)	Features and Varieties of Youth Slang in Modern English	Y	P	P	Y	N	N	3.5	58.3
PS6	TESL-EJ	Apridayan i A.; Sompuwet W. (2026)	Social Media as a Digital Language Learning Ecosystem: An Interpretive Study of Thai Teenagers English Development	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	5.5	91.7
PS7	Respectus Philologic us	Jagun A. (2023)	The Influence of the English Language on the Polish Youth Speak	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	N	4.5	75.0
PS8	Palimpsest	Prodanovs ka- Poposka V. (2025)	The Pragmatic Functions of TikTok Slang in Adolescent Identity Construction and Peer Relationships	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	N	4.5	75.0
PS9	Dragoman	Salieva D.; Dzheenba eva K.- M.; Kyzy M.B.; Askarov U.; Kyzy E.A. (2025)	The Use of English Slang by the Younger Generation Across Various Media	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	5.0	83.3
PS10	Vestnik Tomskogo Gosudarst vennogo Universite ta, Filologiya	Vlasov M.S.; Sychev O.A. (2021)	Internet Slang in the Lexical Decision Task: Does Reaction Time for Word Recognition Correlate with Problematic Internet Use in Youth?	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	P	5.0	83.3
PS11	IEEE Internatio nal WIE	Afrin M.; Jahin G.T.S.;	An Explainable Hybrid Approach for Generation Z	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	5.5	91.7

	Conference on Electrical and Computer Engineering / WIECON-ECE	Maliha F.; Arefin M.S. (2025)	Slang Detection								
PS12	Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems	Teng C.E.; Joo T.M. (2023)	Is Internet Language a Destroyer to Communication?	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	N	4.5	75.0
PS13	Annals of Economics and Finance	Zhang W.; Zhang Z. (2025)	Dissemination Mechanism of Internet Slang and Social Identity Construction among Youth Groups	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	P	5.0	83.3
PS14	Computers and Composition	Verheijen L.; Spooren W.; van Kemenade A. (2020)	Relationships between Dutch Youths Social Media Use and School Writing	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	N	4.5	75.0
PS15	Frontiers in Sociology	Putri V.C.C.; Akbar M.; Irwanto I.; Alem Febri S. (2026)	Digital communication symbols and intergenerational gap: A case study analysis of Netflixs Adolescence	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	P	5.0	83.3
PS16	AMATHE 2024	Kamath S.; Padiya V.; D'Silva S.; Patil N.; Narvekar M. (2024)	TeenSenti - A novel approach for sentiment analysis of short words and slangs	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	5.0	83.3
PS17	LingBaW. Linguistics Beyond and Within	Zak A. (2025)	Girl Math or Nonsense? - (De)valuation and (In)visibility of Women in Social Media Slang	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	N	4.5	75.0
PS18	New Media and	Owens E.	It speaks to me in brain rot:	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	5.5	91.7

	Society	(2025)	Theorising brain rot as a genre of participation among teenagers								
PS19	Filolog (Banja Luka)	Obasi J.C.; Obasi C.M. (2024)	Communicative Features of Selected Nigerian ESL Generation Zs Language Use on Twitter	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	5.5	91.7
PS20	Journal of Language Teaching and Research	Hasjim M.; Arimi S.; Kushartanti B.; Arafah B.; Taqdir (2026)	Language Transformation in Social Media and Its Impact on the Linguistic Identity of Indonesian Youth	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	N	4.5	75.0
PS21	Research in Corpus Linguistics	Palacios-Martinez I.M. (2023)	Multicultural London English (MLE) as perceived by the press, on social media, and speakers themselves	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	5.0	83.3
PS22	Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics	Ishita; Mamidi R. (2025)	The Evolution of Gen Alpha Slang: Linguistic Patterns and AI Translation Challenges	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	N	4.5	75.0
PS23	WCSE 2025	Sagum R.A.; Ramos M.C.A.; Certeza D.R.A.; Andres A.C.A.; Gatchalian A.D.M. (2025)	Filipino Gen Z Slang Sentiment Analyzer using BERT	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	P	5.0	83.3
PS24	IEEE TQCEBT 2024	Sundaram A.; Subramaniam H.; Ab Hamid S.H.; Nor A.M.	A Three-Step Procedural Paradigm for Domain-Specific Social Media Slang Analytics	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	5.5	91.7

		(2024)									
PS25	Jurnal Komunika si: Malaysian Journal of Communi cation	Shing S.R. (2025)	Textism in Digital Communication: Usage of Internet Slang in Social Media among Bilingual Malaysian Youths	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	N	4.5	75.0

The table presents the quality assessment results for 25 selected studies (PS1–PS25) included in the systematic literature review. Each article is evaluated using six quality assessment criteria: clarity of study purpose (QA1), usefulness of the work (QA2), methodological clarity (QA3), conceptual clarity (QA4), comparison with similar studies (QA5), and stated limitations (QA6). Overall, most studies scored highly, with total marks ranging from 3.5 to 5.5 out of 6, equivalent to 58.3% to 91.7%.

The highest-scoring articles are PS6, PS11, PS18, PS19, and PS24, each achieving 5.5 marks (91.7%), indicating strong methodological and conceptual quality. The lowest-scoring articles are PS4 and PS5, each with 3.5 marks (58.3%), mainly due to weaker evidence of comparison with similar work and limited discussion of study limitations. Across the table, QA1, QA2, and QA4 are consistently satisfied, suggesting that most studies clearly state their aims, usefulness, and concepts. However, QA6 appears to be the weakest criterion, as many abstracts do not explicitly mention limitations.

Themes (formed from table 4)

Table 5 Distribution of Selected Studies Across Themes

Theme No.	Theme Name	Number of Articles	Percentage (%)
Theme 1	Youth Slang, Identity Construction, and Peer Communication	6	24%
Theme 2	Multilingualism, Code-Mixing, and Language Transformation in Digital Communication	6	24%
Theme 3	Intergenerational Understanding and Communication Gaps	4	16%
Theme 4	Computational/NLP Approaches to Slang Detection, Translation, and Sentiment Analysis	5	20%
Theme 5	Digital Literacy, Education, and Social/Health Implications of Youth Slang	4	16%
Total		25	

The table summarizes the overall distribution of the 25 selected articles across five themes in the systematic literature review. Theme 1: Youth Slang, Identity Construction, and Peer Communication and Theme 2: Multilingualism, Code-Mixing, and Language Transformation in Digital Communication contain the highest number of articles, with six articles each, representing 24% respectively. This indicates that the reviewed literature gives strong attention to how youth slang supports identity formation, peer interaction, multilingual expression, code-mixing, and digital language change. Theme 4: Computational/NLP Approaches to Slang Detection, Translation, and Sentiment Analysis includes five articles, accounting for 20%, showing increasing scholarly interest in applying computational methods to understand and process evolving youth slang. Meanwhile, Theme 3:

Intergenerational Understanding and Communication Gaps and Theme 5: Digital Literacy, Education, and Social/Health Implications of Youth Slang each include four articles, representing 16% respectively. Overall, the distribution demonstrates that youth slang research is multidimensional, covering sociolinguistic, technological, educational, and intergenerational perspectives, with all 25 articles fully categorized across the five themes.

Theme 1 (T1): Youth Slang, Identity Construction, and Peer Communication

Table 6 Youth Slang, Identity Construction, and Peer Communication

PS	Author(s) & Year	Article Title
PS8	Prodanovska-Poposka V. (2025)	The Pragmatic Functions of TikTok Slang in Adolescent Identity Construction and Peer Relationships
PS13	Zhang W.; Zhang Z. (2025)	Dissemination Mechanism of Internet Slang and Social Identity Construction among Youth Groups
PS18	Owens E. (2025)	'It speaks to me in brain rot': Theorising 'brain rot' as a genre of participation among teenagers
PS19	Obasi J.C.; Obasi C.M. (2024)	Communicative Features of Selected Nigerian ESL Generation Z's Language Use on Twitter
PS21	Palacios-Martínez I.M. (2023)	Multicultural London English (MLE) as perceived by the press, on social media, and speakers themselves
PS17	Žak A. (2025)	Girl Math or Nonsense? – (De)valuation and (In)visibility of Women in Social Media Slang

The table presents six selected studies categorized under the theme Youth Slang, Identity Construction, and Peer Communication. Overall, these articles show that youth slang functions as more than informal vocabulary; it acts as a sociolinguistic resource for expressing identity, belonging, humour, emotion, and social positioning. Prodanovska-Poposka (2025) and Zhang and Zhang (2025) directly examine how TikTok and internet slang contribute to adolescent identity construction and peer relationships. Owens (2025) extends this discussion by conceptualizing “brain rot” as a participatory youth genre, showing how teenagers use digital slang to create shared cultural meaning. Obasi and Obasi (2024) focus on Nigerian ESL Generation Z users on Twitter, highlighting slang, memes, and other digital features as markers of online youth identity. Palacios-Martínez (2023) explores Multicultural London English and how slang is perceived by speakers, media, and social networks. Meanwhile, Žak (2025) adds a gendered perspective by examining how social media slang may reproduce or challenge stereotypes about women. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that youth slang plays a central role in peer communication, identity performance, and digital youth culture.

Theme 2 (T2): Multilingualism, Code-Mixing, and Language Transformation in Digital Communication

Table 7 Multilingualism, Code-Mixing, and Language Transformation in Digital Communication

PS	Author(s) & Year	Article Title
PS2	Verheijen L.; van Hout R. (2022)	Manifold code-mixing in computer-mediated communication: The use of English in Dutch youths' informal online writing
PS4	Ajam M.R.; Taha M.; Sumar-Karman A. (2026)	Language Change in Social Media and Its Impact on the Linguistic Identity of Indonesia's Younger Generation: A Sociolinguistic Study
PS7	Jagun A. (2023)	The Influence of the English Language on the Polish Youth Speak
PS9	Salieva D.; Dzheenbaeva K.-M.; Kyzy M.B.; Askarov U.; Kyzy E.A. (2025)	The Use of English Slang by the Younger Generation Across Various Media
PS20	Hasjim M.; Arimi S.; Kushartanti B.; Arafah B.; Taqdir (2026)	Language Transformation in Social Media and Its Impact on the Linguistic Identity of Indonesian Youth
PS25	Shing S.R. (2025)	Textism in Digital Communication: Usage of Internet Slang in Social Media among Bilingual Malaysian Youths

The table presents six studies categorized under the theme Multilingualism, Code-Mixing, and Language Transformation in Digital Communication. Collectively, these articles highlight how youth digital communication is shaped by multilingual practices, English influence, slang borrowing, abbreviation, and textism. Verheijen and van Hout (2022) examine English code-mixing in Dutch youths' informal online writing, showing how English elements are integrated into computer-mediated communication. Ajam et al. (2026) and Hasjim et al. (2026) focus on Indonesian youth, emphasizing how social media encourages language change through slang, acronyms, code-switching, orthographic play, and new linguistic identities. Jagun (2023) investigates the influence of English on Polish youth speech, particularly through borrowed slang linked to internet culture and gaming. Salieva et al. (2025) similarly explore English slang use among younger generations across songs, television, and social media, showing the cross-media spread of slang expressions. Shing (2025) adds a Malaysian bilingual perspective by examining internet slang and textism among bilingual youths. Overall, the studies demonstrate that digital platforms accelerate language transformation and enable young users to creatively blend languages for identity, solidarity, and informal communication.

Theme 3 (T3): Intergenerational Understanding and Communication Gaps

Table 8 Intergenerational Understanding and Communication Gaps

PS	Author(s) & Year	Article Title
PS3	Carganilla M.V.; Desalit J.B.; Wei C.; Wakat G.S. (2025)	Interpreting Social Media Memes: Exploring Variations in Understanding Gen Z Slang Across Gen X, Gen Y and Gen Z
PS12	Teng C.E.; Joo T.M. (2023)	Is Internet Language a Destroyer to Communication?
PS15	Putri V.C.C.; Akbar M.; Irwanto I.; Alem Febri S. (2026)	Digital communication symbols and intergenerational gap: a case study analysis of Netflix's "Adolescence"
PS1	Curcuglioniti D.; Pigureddu L.; Gena C. (2026)	Slang4Pepper entered the chat: Building a slang-aware glossary for Social Robots interacting with Teenagers

The table presents four studies categorized under the theme Intergenerational Understanding and Communication Gaps. Collectively, these articles show how youth slang, memes, emoji, and platform-specific digital symbols can create differences in interpretation between younger and older generations. Carganilla et al. (2025) examine how Gen X, Gen Y, and Gen Z interpret social media memes containing Gen Z slang, highlighting semantic ambiguity and generational differences in meaning-making. Teng and Joo (2023) focus on whether internet language affects communication habits, particularly by creating gaps between Gen Z and baby boomers. Putri et al. (2026) extend this issue by analysing digital communication symbols in Netflix's *Adolescence*, showing how misunderstandings of slang, emoji, and memes may prevent adults from recognizing online risks. Curcuglioniti et al. (2026) approach the issue from a technological perspective by developing a slang-aware glossary for social robots interacting with teenagers. Overall, these studies demonstrate that youth digital language can strengthen peer communication but may also widen intergenerational misunderstanding when adults lack familiarity with rapidly changing slang and online cultural references.

Theme 4 (T4): Computational/NLP Approaches to Slang Detection, Translation, and Sentiment Analysis

Table 9 Computational/NLP Approaches to Slang Detection, Translation, and Sentiment Analysis

PS	Author(s) & Year	Article Title
PS11	Afrin M.; Jahin G.T.S.; Maliha F.; Arefin M.S. (2025)	An Explainable Hybrid Approach for Generation Z Slang Detection
PS16	Kamath S.; Padiya V.; D'Silva S.; Patil N.; Narvekar M. (2024)	TeenSenti - A novel approach for sentiment analysis of short words and slangs

PS22	Ishita; Mamidi R. (2025)	The Evolution of Gen Alpha Slang: Linguistic Patterns and AI Translation Challenges
PS23	Sagum R.A.; Ramos M.C.A.; Certeza D.R.A.; Andres A.C.A.; Gatchalian A.D.M. (2025)	Filipino Genz Slang Sentiment Analyzer using BERT
PS24	Sundaram A.; Subramaniam H.; Ab Hamid S.H.; Nor A.M. (2024)	A Three-Step Procedural Paradigm for Domain-Specific Social Media Slang Analytics

The table presents five studies categorized under the theme Computational/NLP Approaches to Slang Detection, Translation, and Sentiment Analysis. Collectively, these articles demonstrate growing scholarly interest in developing computational methods to process youth slang in digital communication. Afrin et al. (2025) propose an explainable hybrid model for detecting Generation Z slang, emphasizing both classification accuracy and interpretability. Kamath et al. (2024) focus on sentiment analysis by introducing TeenSenti, which incorporates short words and slang to improve the understanding of informal online expressions. Ishita and Mamidi (2025) extend the discussion to Gen Alpha slang, highlighting linguistic patterns and the difficulties AI translation systems face when interpreting culturally specific and rapidly changing youth vocabulary. Sagum et al. (2025) contribute a Filipino Gen Z slang sentiment analyzer using BERT, showing the relevance of transformer-based models for low-resource language contexts. Sundaram et al. (2024) propose a procedural paradigm for extracting and validating domain-specific slang for social media analytics. Overall, these studies show that youth slang presents significant challenges for NLP because it is dynamic, context-sensitive, multilingual, and culturally embedded.

Theme 5 (T5): Digital Literacy, Education, and Social/Health Implications of Youth Slang

Table 10 Digital Literacy, Education, and Social/Health Implications of Youth Slang

PS	Author(s) & Year	Article Title
PS5	Sidorova L.A. (2025)	Features and Varieties of Youth Slang in Modern English
PS6	Apridayani A.; Sompuwet W. (2026)	Social Media as a Digital Language Learning Ecosystem: An Interpretive Study of Thai Teenagers' English Development
PS10	Vlasov M.S.; Sychev O.A. (2021)	Internet Slang in the Lexical Decision Task: Does Reaction Time for Word Recognition Correlate with Problematic Internet Use in Youth?
PS14	Verheijen L.; Spooren W.; van Kemenade A. (2020)	Relationships between Dutch Youths' Social Media Use and School Writing

The table presents four studies categorized under the theme Digital Literacy, Education, and Social/Health Implications of Youth Slang. Collectively, these articles show that youth slang is not only a linguistic phenomenon but also has important implications for learning, literacy, cognition, and wellbeing. Sidorova (2025) provides a classification of modern English youth slang across domains such as music, sports, technology, fashion, social media, and student life, showing how slang reflects young people's everyday communicative environments. Apridayani and Sompuwet (2026) examine social media as a digital language learning ecosystem for Thai teenagers, highlighting how platforms support English development while also exposing learners to informal language, distraction, and credibility issues. Vlasov and Sychev (2021) connect internet slang recognition with problematic internet use, suggesting that slang processing may relate to young users' online engagement patterns. Verheijen et al. (2020) explore the relationship between Dutch youths' social media use and school writing, showing both possible risks and benefits. Overall, these studies demonstrate that youth slang intersects with digital literacy, education, language learning, psychological processing, and responsible online communication.

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review concludes that youth slang in the digital age is a multidimensional phenomenon that intersects with identity, multilingualism, intergenerational communication, computational processing, and digital literacy. The review of 25 selected studies shows that youth slang is widely used as a

resource for identity construction, peer belonging, humour, emotional expression, and social positioning, as reflected in studies by Prodanovska-Poposka (2025), Zhang and Zhang (2025), Owens (2025), Obasi and Obasi (2024), Palacios-Martínez (2023), and Žak (2025). The findings also show that digital communication accelerates multilingual practices and language transformation, particularly through code-mixing, English borrowing, abbreviations, hybrid lexicons, and textism, as demonstrated in studies by Verheijen and van Hout (2022), Jagun (2023), Salieva et al. (2025), Hasjim et al. (2026), and Shing (2025). In addition, studies on generational gaps reveal that slang, memes, emoji, and digital symbols may cause misunderstanding between youth and older generations. The implications of this review are significant for educators, parents, policymakers, digital platform designers, and NLP researchers.

Youth slang should not be viewed merely as language deterioration, but as a meaningful sociolinguistic practice that reflects youth culture, digital identity, and online participation. Educational institutions may use these findings to strengthen digital literacy, language awareness, and responsible online communication. Meanwhile, NLP developers should consider the dynamic, culturally embedded, and multilingual nature of youth slang when designing tools for slang detection, translation, and sentiment analysis. Future research should expand cross-cultural and longitudinal studies, examine underrepresented languages, and develop more context-aware AI models capable of interpreting rapidly evolving youth slang across platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, X/Twitter, and online learning environments.

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