Jurnal Gramatika: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia

Why is Generation Z Prone to Swearing? A Psycholinguistic Study on Semantic Shifts in Profanity

Mengapa Generasi Z Mudah Mengumpat? Studi Psikolinguistik pada Perubahan Semantik dalam Umpatan

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Abstract: The phenomenon of swearing is a common form of verbal aggression used by humans to express displeasure towards others or a specific situation. In Indonesian society, it is typical to incorporate animal names and gender-related terms with regional connotations. Generation Z, who predominantly engage in social media, have learned to use words like animal names or genders as tools to express their emotions, both aggressively and non-aggressively which impact on interpersonal communication. The objective of this research is to analyze the semantic evolution of words coined by Generation Z. This will be achieved by applying four principles of semantic change: amelioration, pejoration, narrowing, and broadening. This research will explore the use of expletives in the style of Generation Z in their daily lives and the purpose behind their usage. The study adopts a qualitative approach, with eight respondents meeting the criteria of being part of Generation Z, frequently using expletives, and actively participating in social media. The data obtained will be analyzed using a thematic approach. The results of this study indicate that the expletives used by Generation Z have deviated from standard literal language. Despite undergoing semantic changes, the words coined by Generation Z still constitute a part of verbal aggression. The inability to contextualize expletives within normative, psychological, and sociological perspectives renders these words commonplace and acceptable.

Keywords: psycholinguistics, verbal aggression, semantic change, Generation Z.

Abstrak: Manusia sering menggunakan kata-kata kotor sebagai agresi verbal untuk mengungkapkan ketidaksenangan terhadap orang lain atau suatu situasi. Penggunaan nama hewan dan istilah terkait gender yang berkonotasi kedaerahan merupakan hal yang lumrah di masyarakat Indonesia. Generasi Z, yang sebagian besar menggunakan media sosial, telah belajar menggunakan kata-kata seperti nama binatang atau jenis kelamin sebagai alat untuk mengekspresikan emosi mereka, baik secara agresif maupun non-agresif yang dapat mempengaruhi komunikasi interpersonal. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami perubahan semantik dalam kata-kata yang diciptakan oleh Generasi Z. Dengan

menggunakan empat prinsip perubahan semantik - generalisasi, spesialisasi, penyempitan, dan perluasan. Penelitian ini akan mengeksplorasi penggunaan kata-kata kotor oleh Generasi Z dalam keseharian mereka hidup dan tujuan di sebaliknya. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif. Responden dalam penelitian ini sebayak 8 orang dengan kriteria termasuk dalam usia generasi Z, sering mengumpat, dan aktif di sosial media Data dianalisis menggunakan pendekatan tematik. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kata-kata kotor yang digunakan oleh Generasi Z telah menyimpang dari bahasa literal standar. Meski mengalami perubahan semantik, kata-kata yang dilontarkan Generasi Z masih merupakan bagian dari agresi verbal. Ketidakmampuan mengkontekstualisasikan kata-kata kotor dalam perspektif normatif, psikologis, dan sosiologis membuat kata-kata tersebut lumrah dan dapat diterima.

Kata kunci: Psikolingusitik, agresi verbal, Perubahan semantik, Generasi Z

1. Introduction

Language, recognized as one of the most potent communication tools at the disposal of humanity, experiences shift in its utilization that mirror the social and cultural evolution of a society (Rabiah, 2018; Fasold & Connor-Linton, 2016). This dynamism arises from the interplay between logic and affective elements, encapsulating the nuanced realm of emotions and sentiments in communication (Zerbe, et al., 2010). To truly grasp the profound impact of this linguistic dynamism, it is imperative to first explore a global phenomenon related to the topic at hand. This phenomenon exemplifies how profanity adapts and transforms in response to societal changes (Tsaqiila & Yusra, 2023; (Lafreniere et al., 2022). Profanity, as an indispensable component of human language, stands as a potent means of expressing individual emotions and sentiments (Alarde et al., 2017). It represents a practical form of linguistic expression, intricately intertwined with intonation and expression, effectively conveying the depth of feelings and emotions in verbal form. The release of these emotions can be directed outwardly or even turned inward.

In psychological studies, profanity is one form of verbal aggression frequently used in cases of verbal bullying (Bekiari, & Pachi, 2017, Craig et al., 2009). The use of animal names such as "anjing" (dog), "monyet" (monkey), "jangkrik" (cricket) is the most common form. Additionally, mentioning genitalia with various regional variations is also customary. Besides its aggressive purpose, in certain cultures, profane words or phrases sometimes function as jokes or indicate familiarity, for instance, using the word "jancuk" in East Javanese Society (Sriyanto & Fauzie, 2017).

Profanity is usually used by individuals with lower education levels or those from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Mutekwe & Mutekwe, 2013, Syaiful & Zainuddin, 2020). However, based on observations made by the author, profanity is now commonly used not only by those from lower SES groups but also by those formally referred to as "educated." For example, in the Twitter social media platform, profanity in tweets is commonplace and sometimes practiced by intellectual circles. Whereas for the millennial generation, it is no longer a secret. The word "anjing" (dog) being "softened" into "anjay," "anjir," or "njing" is an easily uttered profanity.

As an aggressive act, cursing or using offensive and demeaning language toward others can significantly negatively impact various aspects of life. These impacts include interpersonal relationship damage that can lead to social isolation (Stapleton et al., 2022), increased tension and conflict in social interactions (Jay & Janschewitz, 2012), as well as hindering effective communication (Lafreniere et al., 2022). Moreover, cursing can also harm individual mental health by increasing stress, anxiety, and depression (Vingerhoets et al., 2013). Besides the personal and social impact, using profanity involving harassment or discrimination can also lead to legal sanctions (Hudson, 2009).

Several previous researchers have conducted research with the theme of profanity. For example, the study by Sugara & Saparianingsih, (2021) examined the use of profane or swearing expressions among the millennial generation, which are uncommon sentences or phrases uttered by someone when feeling angry towards something or as an expression of a wish for disaster or evil. Muhammad & Al Auwal, (2018) study discussed the trend that people tend to use profane language more frequently than before, which has now become part of everyday language use. Gender plays a significant role in profanity, with the stereotype that men are likelier to utter profanities than women. Setyawati et al., (2022) aimed to investigate the motives behind the use of profanity by student-athletes during sports training programs and competitions.

Four distinct aspects differentiate this study from the three previous ones. First, this research emphasizes Generation Z, a group active on social media and has a unique way of using profane language. It provides a more specific perspective on using profanity within a particular demographic group. Second, this study applies four principles of semantic change (amelioration, pejoration, narrowing, and broadening) to analyze the evolution of meanings of profane words coined by Generation Z. Third, the research employs a qualitative approach with a thematic approach, enabling a deeper understanding of how profane language is used in the context of Generation Z's daily lives. Fourth, the study focuses on the social and psychological context, explicitly examining the online world, with the subject of the study being active Gen Z users of social media in the virtual realm.

The theme is worthy of study because the use of profanity or explicit language created by Generation Z in their daily language has significant implications for their interpersonal communication and cultural dynamics. Understanding how Generation Z employs explicit language provides deep insights into their interactions with others, especially within the dominant context of digital and social media in their lives. Moreover, a study on the semantic changes of these words will unveil the language evolution from one generation to the next, reflecting shifts in values, norms, and culture within society. Additionally, comprehending the emotional and social intentions be the theme is worthy of study because the use of profanity or explicit language created by Generation Z in their daily language has significant implications for their interpersonal communication and cultural dynamics.

Understanding how Generation Z employs explicit language provides deep insights into their interactions with others, especially within the dominant context of digital and social media in their lives. Moreover, a study on the semantic changes of these words will unveil the language evolution from one generation to the next, reflecting shifts in values, norms, and culture within society. Additionally, comprehending the emotional and social intentions behind the use of explicit language offers insights into the psychological dynamics of Generation Z in their communication. This also has the potential to influence social norms related to explicit language and communication etiquette on a broader scale. The findings of this research can also be applied in education and parenting to guide the best practices in managing or redirecting the use of explicit language among Generation Z. Lastly, considering the cultural and regional context of explicit language use can aid in a deeper understanding of the intricacies of language and communication within Indonesian society. Thus, the study of explicit language use by Generation Z provides valuable insights into how they communicate and how this impacts their overall social interactions.

In tandem with technological progress and the pervasive influence of social media in everyday life, the use of language, including profanity or swearing, has emerged as a crucial area of study. Empirical observations underscore that Generation Z employs profanity more frequently than preceding generations. Functioning as a form of verbal aggression, profanity holds the potential to impact interpersonal communication and reshape social dynamics. Furthermore, it serves as a mirror reflecting cultural shifts and evolving social norms within society. Thus, delving into the reasons behind Generation Z's utilization of profane language and tracing the evolving meanings of these words over time has become an imperative subject for investigation.

In the framework of this research, semantic change refers to the changes in the meaning of curse words over time. This semantic change reflects language adaptation to the social and cultural developments that occur in society. Therefore, this research will analyze how Generation Z changes the meaning of curse words through generalization, specialization, narrowing, or semantic expansion. This research provides an understanding of language and cultural changes in the digital era. It offers essential insights into how Generation Z uses profanity language to express their emotions, analyzed through thematic analysis.

This research aims to understand and find answers to why millennials easily curse, as seen from the psycholinguistic approach to the semantic changes in the language used for cursing. In the psycholinguistic context, understanding how Generation Z uses profanity words can provide insight into the mental and psychological processes involved in expressing emotions. With a psycholinguistic approach, we can analyze how these curse words are processed in the minds of Generation Z, including what triggers the use of these words and how these curse words affect their perception of specific situations or individuals. A linguistic approach in this research will explain how cursing language changes over time and how these words evolve into more complex emotional expression tools.

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The uniqueness and feasibility of this article lies in its focus on the use of explicit language by Generation Z and its significant implications for interpersonal communication and cultural dynamics. The article also addresses semantic changes in profanity and how this reflects the evolution of language from one generation to the next, reflecting shifts in values, norms, and culture within society. Additionally, it delves into the emotional and social intentions behind the use of explicit language, as well as its potential influence on social norms related to explicit language and communication etiquette in general. The feasibility of this article lies in its relevance to the development of technology and the pervasive influence of social media in everyday life. The use of language, including profanity, has become a crucial area of research in this context. Furthermore, this research has the potential to provide practical guidance in managing or redirecting the use of explicit language among Generation Z, both in education and parenting.

This research provides valuable insights into Generation Z's explicit language use, shedding light on their communication and cultural dynamics. It examines semantic shifts in profanity, reflecting evolving language and societal norms. Additionally, it explores the emotional and social motives behind explicit language, potentially influencing broader norms and communication etiquette. The findings have practical applications in education and parenting for managing explicit language among Generation Z. Moreover, considering the cultural context deepens our understanding of language intricacies in Indonesian society. Overall, this research contributes to comprehending language and cultural shifts in the digital age.

2. Method
2.1 Research Design

This research employs a qualitative approach to delve into the semantic shifts in profanity terms used by Generation Z . The choice of a qualitative approach is attributed to the study's ambition to fathom complex phenomena through the lens of emotions and their underlying meanings (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Data is acquired through comprehensive in-depth interviews with several actively engaged Generation Z individuals on social media. Additionally, an analysis of public posts on social media, which incorporate Generation Z's profanity terms, is conducted. The in-depth interviews entail detailed and probing conversations with participants, aiming to extract nuanced insights and perspectives on their language usage and emotional expressions.

2.2 Participants

The participants in this research are eight individuals from Generation Z, born in the mid-1990s to early 2010s, actively using social media platforms. Participants are purposively selected based on specific criteria such as age, gender, and social media usage intensity. The choice of Generation Z as participants was made because this generation is significantly influenced by the use of social media (Yadav & Rai, 2017). Several participants representing this variation are interviewed to gain deeper insights into the usage of profanity terms in various contexts. An interview is chosen as a method to gather data since Interviews are commonly utilized in qualitative research as a prevalent method for collecting data. It is a frequent approach for obtaining information regarding participants' perspectives, attitudes, and experiences related to a specific research topic or phenomenon of interest (Ryan et al., 2009). The choice of Generation Z as participants was made because this generation is significantly influenced by the use of social media.

2.3 Procedure

The data collection process commences with in-depth interviews, a crucial component of qualitative research. The procedure for conducting in-depth interviews mirrors the standard process used in other types of research: it involves planning, creating tools, gathering data, analyzing the data, and sharing the findings (Boyce & Neale, 2006). These interviews are conducted individually with participants following a structured interview guide meticulously designed to explore the usage of profanity by Generation Z. The in-depth interviews are characterized by their detailed and probing nature, aiming to extract nuanced insights and perspectives on the participants' language usage and emotional expressions. Participants are asked to candidly share their experiences involving profanity terms, elaborate on the circumstances prompting their usage, and reflect on how these terms impact their online interactions. Subsequently, the interviews are recorded for accuracy and then transcribed with meticulous attention to detail.

Data is also obtained from public posts on social media containing Generation Z's profanity terms. This data is used to observe the usage of profanity terms in the context of the digital realm.

2.4 Data Analysis

The interview data and data from social media were analyzed using a thematic approach (Creswell & Poth, 2016, Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Thematic analysis involves identifying, grouping, and interpreting thematic patterns in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This analysis allows us to identify how profanity is used, potential shifts in meaning, and the contexts in which Generation Z uses these words. The interview results are presented in verbatim form. Subsequently, open coding is conducted by assigning themes to the verbatim results. In the next stage, relevant themes are selected following the research objectives, and any data that does not align is reduced. Then, data from the pertinent themes are grouped according to the theoretical

framework regarding semantic change. Data validation in the research is carried out through the technique of triangulation. Triangulation involves the use of various data sources or different data collection methods to confirm or verify findings or interpretations in the study (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021). In analyzing semantic changes, we will examine how profanity undergoes softening, coarsening, narrowing, or expanding of meaning. We will also consider social, cultural, and technological factors influencing these semantic changes.

3.   Semantic Changes in Generation Z's Profanity

In this section, we will describe the main findings of the research based on interviews with Generation Z, who actively use profanity on social media. The research process itself involves stages such as sample selection, conducting in-depth interviews with the selected sample. The interviews are conducted in person, and the data from participants is recorded by the interviewer. Next, the transcribed data is analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings will be classified into four main themes: Semantic Generalization, Semantic Specialization, Semantic Narrowing, and Semantic Expansion. Subsequently, these findings will be discussed in the context of linguistic and psychological theories. Our thematic analysis revealed several key themes related to semantic changes in their use of profanity.

3.1 Theme 1: Semantic Generalization

One of the main findings is the semantic refinement in the use of profanity terms. Generation Z tends to employ words that previously had stronger connotations as profanity, and then transform them into more neutral words while still retaining the profane meaning.

Here are verbatim examples from the interviews:

> "In the past, the profanity words were harsher, like 'dog' or 'pig.' Now, we more often use lighter ones, like 'oh my' or 'annoyed.' But the essence of it is still anger." (W1P1_July 10, 2023).

And from participant 3;

> "..I also often use the word 'vangke,' which actually means to curse 'bangke'" (W1P3_July 10, 2023).

This data reflects a semantic shift towards the refinement of profanity terms. Words like 'oh my', 'annoyed', and 'vangke' are examples of semantic refinement, where the strong negative connotations of the original words have been replaced with more neutral words, but are still used to express dissatisfaction or negative emotions. All participants in this study use these words to express profanity towards others.

The theme of semantic refinement in the use of profanity terms by Generation Z depicts an interesting phenomenon of semantic change. The theory of semantic change in linguistics has identified that language often undergoes shifts in meaning

through refinement or softening (Sweet, 1891). The usage of profanity words that were initially harsh and then transformed into more neutral words, while still being used to express negative emotions, reflects this process of semantic refinement. Furthermore, a study suggests that Generation Z uses more neutral words to showcase their identity as a distinction from previous generations (Dong, 2021)

The theory of social identity explains that an individual's self-image refers to the social categories they consider themselves a part of (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). This theory is reinforced by the perspective of a linguist, Steven Pinker, in his book titled "The Stuff of Thought" (Pinker, 2011). Pinker argues that language is an incredibly flexible tool of expression, and the semantic shifts in profanity words are an example of how language evolves in expressing emotions. In the theory of emotion regulation, it is explained that cursing can be one form of emotional regulation that allows individuals to express and cope with emotions intensely (Jay & Janschewitz, 2012). Generation Z, growing up in a fast-paced and high-pressure environment, may use profanity as a way to manage emotions and cope with the challenges they face.

Through linguistic refinement, the intensity of guilt is reduced. This is reflected in an interview with a participant; "..because when we say 'oh my' it's not as harsh as when we say 'dog' or 'damn.' So, our feeling of guilt also decreases... besides, it's just among us who are the same age" (W1P2_July 10, 2023). By reducing the intensity of language, a mindset is formed that it is not too conflicting with norms and is something that is still normatively accepted. This term is known in psychology as desensitization, where gradually the intensity of language decreases, resulting in reduced effects.

3.2 Theme 2: Semantic Specialization

On the contrary, there were also findings of semantic coarsening, wherein words that were previously not as harsh were transformed into more severe profanity. Here are verbatim examples from the interviews:

> "The term IQ used to be just normal, not harsh. Now if you say that, it is considered derogatory because it is associated with stupidity." (W1P4_July 11, 2023). Participant 7 also demonstrates using the word 'sarap' to replace 'Gila'; "...when I get annoyed with someone, sometimes I say 'sarap'... it is like going crazy" (W1P7_July 11, 2023).

Participants 4 and 7 reflect a semantic shift towards the coarsening of profanity terms. Words like IQ and 'sarap' (derived from 'saraf') that were initially neutral expressions have now evolved into demeaning words, especially when uttered with a specific intonation. It indicates that Generation Z can also transform words that previously had no negative connotations into sharper, derogatory expressions according to their emotional expression needs. The theory of semantic change in linguistics also notes that words initially devoid of negative connotations can transform into profanity due to social pressure or cultural shifts (Traugott & Dasher, 2002). Additionally, the prevalence of digital literacy and content discovery led Generation Z to grow up with constant access to search engines and information streams (Dobrowolski et al., 2022).

Generation Z is adept at finding content that caters to their needs, which can contribute to adopting new language trends such as semantic improvisation. Generation Z aims to showcase its identity as a unique culture (Parker et al., 2019).

3.3 Theme 3: Semantic Narrowing

The data also found that there is a type of derogatory expression resulting from semantic narrowing, where the meanings of profanity terms that were initially broader have been narrowed down. Here is a verbatim example:

> "The word 'cabe' used to be used for seasoning in food, but now it is more often used to mock people... to tease middle school kids who like spicy things" (W1P6_July 11, 2023).

This participant illustrates a semantic shift in the word 'cabe,' which used to have a broader range of meanings but now is more limited to derogatory usage. It is an example of semantic narrowing in profanity terms among Generation Z.

The theme of semantic narrowing highlights how the meanings of profanity terms, which were initially more diverse, have become more restricted. The theory of semantic change states that semantic narrowing can occur when specific words are consistently used in a particular context (Hopper & Traugott, 2003). In this study, the consistent use of profanity terms in the same context by Generation Z can trigger the narrowing of their meanings. Additionally, semantic narrowing is linked to psychological factors that influence everyday life as part of the identity of Generation Z and as a distinction from previous generations (Francis & Hoefel, 2018).

3.4 Theme 4: Semantic Expansion

On the other hand, there are also semantic expansion findings, where words initially used only in specific contexts are now used more broadly as swear words. Here is an example in verbatim:

> "The words 'onta, cebong, berudu' were originally just used to refer to animal names, but now people often use them as swear words for political rivals. For example, supporters of Mr. Jokowi insult those who support Mr. Anis as 'onta,' and vice versa, the term 'cebong' is often used for supporters of Mr. Jokowi" (W1P4_10July2023).

This data reflects the semantic shift in animal-related words that initially had a positive connotation but are now used as swear words. It is an example of semantic expansion, where the meanings of swear words have broadened in various contexts.

On the contrary, the theme of semantic expansion reflects how swear words that were initially used only in specific contexts have been adopted more broadly as expletives. The theory of semantic change also acknowledges that words can undergo semantic expansion when used in various contexts (Lakoff, 1973).

Linguist Barbara Johnstone (Johnstone, 2009) has highlighted how swear language can serve as a tool to express anger or frustration. In the context of Generation Z, active on social media, coarser swear words may reflect the intensity of emotions they want to convey in verbal aggression. When Gen Z may feel angry or frustrated, using swear words can be a cathartic release and help them communicate their feelings effectively (Finn, 2017). The more open-minded and liberal-thinking Generation Z actively advocates for fair and equal treatment of others, using semantic approaches to challenge traditional language norms and promote inclusion (Magano et al., 2020).

From the above data and theoretical perspectives, the words used for swearing have undergone a shift in meaning and have been culturally detached from their original language. Word-smoothing models like "anjay" demonstrate efforts to reduce more vital meanings. On the other hand, words like IQ, cebong, Bermuda, onta, which were initially neutral, have been imbued with socio-cultural meanings, thus transforming into expletives. This detachment of meaning is why Generation Z quickly resorts to swearing.

3.5 Psychological Implications

The research findings not only hold linguistic significance but also carry substantial psychological implications. The observed semantic shifts in profanity offer valuable insights into how Generation Z employs language as a means to convey their emotions in the online sphere. This is supported by the research findings (Tankosić & Dovchin, 2021), which found that social media influences language formation.

This phenomenon highlights their adeptness at adapting language for digital communication, showcasing the profound impact of the internet and social media on their linguistic practices. Additionally, it illuminates how profanity serves as a tool for emotional regulation in the digital context, providing Generation Z with a means to navigate conflicts or express dissatisfaction. This emotional dimension underscores the intricate relationship between language and the psychological well-being of this generation.

Moreover, incorporating additional theories to support these findings is crucial. The socio-cognitive theory of language acquisition posits that language development is deeply intertwined with social interactions and cognitive processes(Cherry, 2014). In the context of Generation Z's use of profanity, this theory suggests that their linguistic choices are influenced not only by personal emotions but also by the social norms and digital environments they are immersed in.

Furthermore, the socio-cultural theory, proposed by Vygotsky, emphasizes the role of culture and society in shaping language development (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2012; Panhwar et al., 2017; Newman & Latifi, 2021). In the digital age, where Generation Z is constantly exposed to a globalized online culture, their use of profanity may be influenced by broader societal trends and digital subcultures. This theory adds another layer to the understanding of how language, especially profanity, is utilized within a socio-cultural context.

Considering these additional theories, it becomes evident that Generation Z's linguistic practices, particularly in the realm of profanity, are deeply rooted in their social interactions, cognitive processes, and the broader cultural context shaped by the internet and social media. This intricate interplay between individual emotions, societal norms, and digital environments underscores the complexity of their linguistic expressions, providing a nuanced perspective on the psychological implications of their language use.

4. Conclusion

This research analyses Generation Z's semantic changes in profanity terms, particularly on social media. The study employs thematic analysis to identify patterns in the data. Four main themes emerge: Semantic generalization, semantic Specialization, semantic narrowing, and semantic expansion. Semantic generalization tends to replace more vital profanity terms with more neutral ones while still conveying the same negative emotions. It reflects a refinement in language use. Participants shared examples like using "oh my" or "annoyed" instead of harsher terms. Semantic Specialization using once neutral words, like "IQ," has evolved into derogatory terms due to cultural shifts. This demonstrates a coarsening of language. Participants also provided examples like using "sarap" as a more robust alternative to "Gila. Semantic narrowing is represented through some profanity terms, like "cabe," which have shifted from broader meanings to more restricted, derogatory usage. It reflects a narrowing of meaning based on consistent use in specific contexts. Semantic expansion by using animal-related words has transitioned from being neutral to being used as swear words for political rivals, showing how words have broadened their application. The research sheds light on linguistic changes and emphasizes significant psychological implications. It reveals how Generation Z utilizes language to express emotions online, influenced by social media and the internet.

Additionally, profanity serves as a tool for emotional regulation and conflict navigation. Furthermore, the study incorporates socio-cognitive and socio-cultural theories, highlighting the impact of social interactions, cognitive processes, and broader cultural contexts on language development. This complexity underscores the nuanced perspective on the psychological implications of Generation Z's language use.

This research provides insights into how Generation Z adapts language to the evolving digital landscape. The study's findings comprehensively explain the interplay between language, culture, and emotions in this generation's online communication. It lays the groundwork for further exploration in this domain, emphasizing the importance of understanding language evolution in the digital age.

In conclusion, this research serves as a valuable foundation for future studies in this domain, inviting further exploration of the intricate dynamics between language and culture in the ever-evolving digital landscape. The semantic shifts observed within profanity terms provide a window into the evolving linguistic practices of Generation Z, and the psychological implications shed light on the role of language in their emotional experiences and online interactions. As society continues to grapple with the rapid

transformations brought about by technology, understanding how language evolves within these digital spaces becomes increasingly vital for scholars and researchers alike.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study has provided crucial insights into how Generation Z has transformed the semantics of swear words. However, many topics still need further investigation in subsequent research. Here are some suggestions for further research on this topic: Longitudinal Study: Interview-based research and social media analysis are typically cross-sectional, so they cannot capture semantic changes over an extended period. Longitudinal studies that track the development of swear word usage by Gen Z over time can provide a deeper understanding of the evolution of their language. Comparison with Other Generations: While this research focuses on Generation Z, it is essential to examine the comparison of swear word usage with previous generations, such as Generation Y and X. This can help us understand how semantic changes in words may differ between generations.

Declaration of Conflicting Interest

The authors state that there is no conflict of interest concerning the publication of this paper.

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