

Fear of Missing Out as a Reflection of Generation Z's Participatory Culture: A Study of Slang Forms Among TikTok Users in Indonesia

Putri Oktarin Nandya

Malay Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, University of North Sumatra,
Indonesia

putryoktarin@gmail.com

Muhammad Safwan Jamil

Alumni of the Anthropology Study Program, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Al Washliyah
Darussalam University, Banda Aceh, Indonesia

safwanjamil01@gmail.com

Arie Azhari Nasution

Malay Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, University of North Sumatra,
Indonesia

arieazhari@usu.ac.id

Prayogo

Malay Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, University of North Sumatra,
Indonesia

prayogo@usu.ac.id

Putri Utami

Malay Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, University of North Sumatra,
Indonesia

putriutamii2004@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study examines the phenomenon of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) as a reflection of Generation Z's participatory culture through the use of slang on the TikTok platform in Indonesia. Theoretically, this study is grounded in the sociolinguistic perspective of Chaer and Agustina (2010), which emphasizes that language is variable according to heterogeneous social contexts. Within this framework, slang is understood as part of a dynamic sociolect and functions as a marker of group identity. The analysis employs the classification of slang forms by Allan and Burridge (2006) namely, fresh and creative, flippant, imitative, acronym, and clipping which is relevant for explaining Generation Z's linguistic adaptations in responding to the demands of fast-paced and aesthetically driven digital communication. This study employs a qualitative netnographic approach with participatory observation of trending content from March 2024 to December 2026. Data consisting of captions, video transcripts, and comments were selected through purposive sampling based on criteria of virality, interaction intensity, and representation of slang forms until data saturation was reached. The results of the study revealed 15 instances of slang categorized into four types according to Allan and Burridge (2006): 4 instances of "fresh and creative," 3 of "flippant," 4 of "acronyms," and 4 of "clippings." The research findings also indicate that the use of slang serves not only as a communication tool but also as a performative strategy to maintain social existence amid FoMO pressures, aligning with Eckert's (2019) perspective on language as a practice of identity negotiation in digital society.

Keywords: Slang, Generation Z, Fear of Missing Out, TikTok, Netnography.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji fenomena *Fear of Missing Out* (FoMO) sebagai cerminan budaya partisipatif Generasi Z melalui penggunaan slang pada platform TikTok di Indonesia. Secara teoretis, penelitian ini berlandaskan pandangan sosiolinguistik dari Chaer dan Agustina (2010) yang menekankan bahwa bahasa bersifat variatif sesuai dengan konteks sosial yang heterogen. Dalam kerangka ini, slang dipahami sebagai bagian dari sosiolek yang dinamis dan berfungsi sebagai penanda identitas kelompok. Analisis menggunakan klasifikasi bentuk slang dari Allan dan Burridge (2006), yaitu *fresh and creative*, *flippant*, *imitative*, *acronym*, dan *clipping*, yang relevan untuk menjelaskan adaptasi linguistik Generasi Z dalam menghadapi tuntutan komunikasi digital yang cepat dan estetik. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan netnografi kualitatif dengan observasi partisipatif terhadap konten trending periode Maret 2024 hingga Desember 2026. Data berupa caption, teks video, dan komentar dipilih melalui teknik *purposive sampling* berdasarkan kriteria viralitas, intensitas interaksi, dan representasi bentuk slang hingga mencapai saturasi data. Hasil penelitiannya terdapat 15 data yang termasuk pada 4 bentuk slang menurut Allan dan Burridge (2006) di mana 4 data *fresh and creative*, 3 *flippant*, 4 *acronym*, dan 4 *clipping*. Hasil penelitian juga menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan slang tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai alat komunikasi, tetapi juga sebagai strategi performatif untuk mempertahankan eksistensi sosial di tengah tekanan FoMO, sejalan dengan pandangan Eckert (2019) tentang bahasa sebagai praktik negosiasi identitas dalam masyarakat digital.

Kata Kunci: Slang, Generasi Z, Fear of Missing Out, TikTok, Netnografi.

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1. Introduction

Generation Z, born approximately between 1997 and 2012, grew up in an era of smartphones, high connectivity, and instant content sharing platforms; these conditions make Gen Z a demographic group that is highly susceptible to the phenomenon of FoMO (Ramadian, 2025). Numerous quantitative and qualitative studies indicate a high prevalence of FoMO among this age group (Putranto, 2025).

FoMO (Fear of Missing Out) is defined as anxiety or concern that others are having more enjoyable or meaningful experiences, causing a person to feel the need to stay constantly connected so as not to “miss out” (Sabila, 2025). This concept is now widely studied in media and psychology because of its strong connection to social media use (Kirana, 2025).

The culture of FoMO (Fear of Missing Out) on TikTok is very strong because this platform provides unlimited, easily accessible content that is presented in short durations, encouraging users to keep scrolling and following the latest trends so they don't feel “left out” or “out of date.” FoMO on TikTok manifests in varying degrees, ranging from mild curiosity to severe anxiety that can disrupt daily activities and even trigger severe stress (Darmayanti et al., 2023).

Algorithms and product design (notifications, “duets/stitches,” endless feeds) create soft pressure for continuous engagement; this design reinforces social feedback loops that can then

amplify feelings of FoMO. Some researchers cite platform design aspects as crucial structural triggers (Jain, 2025). The FoMO phenomenon has a significant impact on consumptive behavior among Generation Z, encouraging the purchase of viral products (fashion, cosmetics, culinary, and tourist attractions) as a symbolic strategy to maintain relevance and self-confidence on social networks (Putri & Apriadi, 2025; Hermawan & Rinawati, 2025; Sofiana, 2025). This impact is reinforced by media practices on TikTok that involve micro-rituals (performing challenges, rapid editing) as markers of participation and confirmation of digital social status (Geisel-Zamora, 2023).

Furthermore, FoMO also contributes to TikTok addiction, where users spend hours staying connected, which impacts self-control (Manek & Virilia, 2025; Maharani et al., 2025). In a commercial context, TikTok Shop and features such as live streaming, discount offers, and urgency/scarcity (flash sales, limited drops) utilize the FoMO mechanism to reinforce impulsive shopping behavior (Adyantari et al., 2025; Rizki, 2025; Elistyawati, 2025).

In sociolinguistic studies, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) can be understood as a linguistic and social phenomenon that reflects individuals' anxiety about missing out on social experiences that are considered important, especially in the context of social media. Linguistic analysis shows that the term FoMO evolved from older expressions such as “keeping up with the Joneses” and has now become part of digital discourse that reflects changes in the culture of participation and individual well-being (Khassanova et al., 2025; Reagle, 2015).

Chaer and Agustina (2010) state that sociolinguistics is an interdisciplinary field that studies language with a focus on how language is used in social contexts within society. In this study, the theory of language variation from sociolinguistics is particularly relevant because of the linguistic variation found on social media. In line with this, Chaer and Agustina (2010) state that language variation is linguistic diversity caused by social diversity and the functions of language in a non-homogeneous society. Language variation also emerges as a response to various situations and diverse needs.

Language variation itself has a complex theoretical classification, ranging from dialects (based on geography) to sociolects (based on social status, age, and group). Within the realm of sociolects, slang stands out as one of the most dynamic forms of language variation. Slang is understood as an informal lexicon created and used by specific social groups to express identity and foster a sense of exclusivity. Theoretically, slang has a specific typology; one of these is the taxonomy proposed by Allan and Burridge (2006), which divides slang into five main forms: fresh and creative, flippant, imitative, acronym, and clipping.

This slang theory is considered the most relevant for analyzing the linguistic adaptations of Generation Z, which is driven by the fast-paced and aesthetic demands of platform algorithms. In the context of FoMO, the mastery and use of this slang form is not merely a tool for communication but is also employed as a social defense mechanism to prevent speakers from being perceived as “out of

touch.” This aligns with modern sociolinguistic perspectives (Eckert, 2019), which view language variation as a performative practice in the negotiation of identity.

The research gap that this study aims to address is the lack of in-depth analysis of how FoMO pressure in Indonesia's participatory TikTok culture influences Generation Z's choice and use of language variation. A theoretical integration that brings together platform structure, FoMO pressure, and language variation practices is needed to build a comprehensive analytical framework. Based on the above background, this study aims to examine the sociolinguistic language variation brought about by FoMO among Generation Z TikTok users in Indonesia as a reflection of digital participatory culture.

Theoretically, this study will link the theory of language variation in sociolinguistics with FoMO to enrich interdisciplinary studies. Practically, the results of this study are relevant for: (1) providing input on digital literacy education policies and (2) designing mental health interventions that are sensitive to Gen Z cultural dynamics. Using a contextual qualitative netnographic approach, this study seeks to formulate conceptual understanding and relevant intervention policies.

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative netnographic approach, focusing on the depth of interpretation rather than the quantity of data. Given the highly dynamic nature of the social media platform TikTok, the researcher conducted participatory observation of hundreds of pieces of content that fell into the “trending” category between March 2024 and December 2026. Netnography examines viral content and TikTok user interactions that trigger FoMO, while sociolinguistic methods help analyze the linguistic variations and social meanings emerging in such communication (Darmayanti et al., 2023; Hermawan & Rinawati, 2025).

The research was conducted within the TikTok platform ecosystem, focusing on creator accounts whose content appears in the trending or viral (FYP) category in Indonesia. The research data includes textual data (captions, in-video text, and comments) that linguistically reflect social anxiety and trends. From this very large data population, the researcher conducted a selection using the Purposive Sampling technique to obtain the most representative discourse data. Data selection was based on the principle of data saturation, where the selected data represented the categories of slang variation according to the theory of Allan and Burridge (2006). Data selection criteria included: (1) content with a high level of engagement or viral nature, (2) utterances containing slang lexicon that triggered massive interaction, and (3) data capable of illustrating the link between sociolinguistic phenomena and Fear of Missing Out (FoMO).

The data collection procedure utilized note-taking and digital documentation techniques. The researcher took screenshots of relevant video content and interactions, then transcribed the linguistic data into results tables, which were grouped according to the slang categories outlined by Allan and

Buridge (2006). Data analysis adapts the interactive model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of three phases: (1) Data Condensation: Identifying utterances containing linguistic markers related to FoMO and discarding irrelevant data (such as spam). (2) Data Presentation: Organizing the selected linguistic data into tables of language variation classifications and social function matrices to identify patterns of association between linguistic forms and FoMO pressure. (3) Drawing Conclusions: Interpreting these linguistic patterns using sociolinguistic theory and participatory culture to address the research questions. To ensure data validity, this study employs source triangulation, which involves comparing language variations appearing across different types of trending content (e.g., comparing language in food trends with fashion trends) to confirm the consistency of language patterns shaped by FoMO culture (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

3. Results

Based on the results of a netnographic study conducted on the TikTok platform, 15 speech data points were identified that represent the phenomenon of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) among Generation Z. These data points were analyzed using Allan and Buridge's (2006) theory of slang forms to examine their linguistic structure, which will then be interpreted from an anthropological perspective to understand digital participatory culture.

3.1. Tipologi Slang Gen Z dalam fenomena FoMO

Tabel 1. Klasifikasi Bentuk Slang dalam Fenomena FoMO

No	Slang Data	Speech Data (FoMO Context)	Classification of Slang Forms (Allan and Buridge 2006)
1	Anjir	"Yang shimmer premium ga gini anjir , malah cakep poll"	<i>Flippant</i>
2	Puol	"gw beli shimmer cakep puol bjirr..."	<i>Flippant</i>
3	Chez	"Pemenangnya tetap chez "	<i>Fresh and Creatif</i>
4	Bgt, pls	"bagus bgttt woi!! pls cobain jugaa"	<i>Clipping</i>
5	woii	"shade nerose bagus woii next beli..."	<i>Flippant</i>
6	Mio Mirza	"lo belum tau Mio Mirza "	<i>Fresh and Creatif</i>
7	FoMO	"Day 1 fomo ngetik Glinda"	<i>Acronym</i>
8	doang	"PADEL! Emang beneran suka apa FOMO doang? "	<i>Clipping</i>
9	Trend Fuji	"fomo trend fuji"	<i>Clipping</i>
10	Gpp	" GPP juga dikatain norak"	<i>Acronym</i>
11	Hindia, nih	" fomoHindia nih"	<i>Acronym</i>

12	Jastip, ongkir	"Full katalog? Gas dm jastip, free ongkir "	<i>Clipping</i>
13	Bias	"dulu fomo banget sama bias... "	<i>Fresh and Creatif</i>
14	POV	" POV : lu masih kecil dan fomo..."	<i>Acronym</i>
15	Sjogging	" Sjogging tipis-tipis biar ga fomo amat"	<i>Fresh and Creatif</i>

4. Discussion

A. Slang as a tool for urgency and identity

Netnographic data analysis indicates that the pressure of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) influences the use of slang variations among Generation Z on TikTok, serving as a linguistic adaptation mechanism to affirm belonging and identity within online communities. These linguistic variations can be classified based on their social functions triggered by FoMO. Thus, participatory cultural practices on TikTok not only create a sense of FoMO but also constitute a new social system that structures Generation Z's behavior. FoMO functions as a "social disciplinary mechanism" that keeps users active within digital culture. Ultimately, this phenomenon demonstrates that social media platforms like TikTok are not merely a form of entertainment but also an integral part of Indonesian society's activities, where identity, social relationships, and cultural values are continuously produced and negotiated. Below is an analysis of data falling under the category forms of slang variations related to FoMO.

1. Slang Fresh and Creatif

According to Allan and Burrige (2006), this form refers to the use of fresh, unique terms, or the use of existing names or words that have been given new, creative meanings for specific purposes. According to Allan and Burrige, fresh and creative slang refers to the use of new, innovative, and imaginative vocabulary that emerges from the speaker's creativity in informal contexts. This type of slang can involve the creation of new terms, the modification of the meanings of old words, or the use of contemporary expressions relevant to specific social trends (Nurliana, 2025). In the context of TikTok users in Indonesia, Generation Z produces and reproduces slang terms such as "slay," "no cap," "red flag," or "glow up," which reflect their identity, self-expression, and the dynamics of their digital culture. This phenomenon demonstrates that language functions not only as a tool for communication but also as a symbol of membership in a participatory digital community.

From a Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) perspective, the use of fresh and creative slang reflects the participatory culture of Generation Z, which is driven to stay constantly connected, follow trends, and not fall behind in the flow of digital information. The ever-evolving slang on TikTok demonstrates how individuals strive to maintain social relevance through "up-to-date" and creative language, while simultaneously strengthening solidarity among their peers. Research indicates that the dominance of this type of slang in digital media signifies a high level of linguistic creativity as well as rapid

adaptation to shifts in popular culture. Thus, fresh and creative slang is not merely a form of linguistic variation but also a representation of the social pressures of FoMO and the distinctive participatory cultural practices characteristic of Generation Z in the social media era.

Data 1: @Evolveris “The winner is still chez”



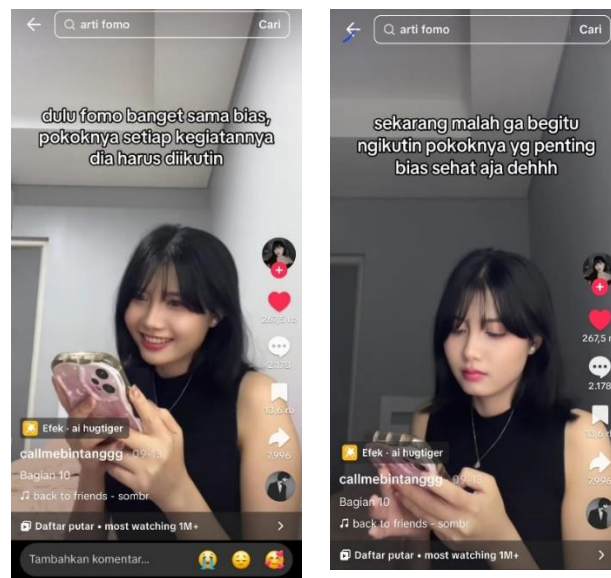
In a comment posted by @Evolveris on December 1, 2024, within content uploaded by @Kris Who <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSP1wGBc4/> terdapat, the slang term “Chez” is categorized as “Fresh and Creative” slang. In this context, the name “Chez” no longer functions merely as a noun (a person’s name), but has shifted in function to become a slang term symbolizing a standard of perfection or authenticity in content. Speakers use the name creatively as a “yardstick” to evaluate others’ content. The use of this slang form reflects Generation Z’s tendency to create “code language” or inside jokes understood only by those who follow viral trends on TikTok, thereby creating an impression of exclusive yet casual communication.

The phenomenon of comments like “The winner is still chez” on various types of content (even on random posts) is a strong manifestation of Generation Z’s participatory culture. This culture encourages users not only to consume content but also to actively compare it and engage in collective voting. By writing this comment, @Evolveris is participating in a “digital nostalgia” movement an effort to maintain their idol’s iconic status amidst the onslaught of new creators.

The connection to FOMO is evident in how these comments spread randomly. When new users or other netizens see the phrase “The winner is still Chez” everywhere without knowing who the person is, curiosity arises, leading to social anxiety. The fear of being “out of the loop” or “unaware of old trends” makes this audience feel alienated from the conversation. To overcome this feeling of being left behind, individuals are driven to find out who “Chez” is, watch their content, and eventually start using the same term to remain relevant within their digital social circle. Thus, the use of slang

referring to viral icons like this acts as a tool for spreading FoMO, forcing individuals to keep up with the history of trends so as not to be excluded from their group's participatory culture.

Data 2: @callmebintanggg (Konten): “I used to be so obsessed with my bias, I had to follow everything they did. Now I don't really keep up with them anymore; as long as my bias is healthy, that's all that matters.”



This content, uploaded by @callmebintanggg <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSPJ1uNvT/> on November 11, 2025, represents a fresh and creative take, particularly on the term “bias.” The term “bias” is a loanword from English that literally means “tilted” or “biased,” but within digital subcultures (particularly the fandom world), the word has shifted in meaning to become a term for referring to a member of one's favorite idol group. The use of this word demonstrates the linguistic creativity of the fan community in creating an exclusive identity term. The use of “bias” helps speakers feel connected to a global community with similar interests, while also distinguishing their speech style from the general public, who might use more formal terms like “favorite idol.”

From the perspective of participatory culture and FoMO, the term “bias” here serves as the focal point of participatory behavior. In the past, speakers felt a strong FoMO regarding their “bias,” which triggered a drive to follow all of their idol's activities without exception in order to remain considered a loyal fan. However, this data is interesting because it indicates a phase of “digital maturity,” in which speakers begin to free themselves from that FoMO pressure. Although the fear of missing out has diminished, the “bias” lexicon is still maintained as a part of self-identity. This proves that slang on social media is not merely a marker of fleeting trends, but an identity label that persists even when the speakers' underlying psychological behavior (FoMO) has changed or stabilized.

**Data 3: @Mella Carli (Tuturan): Are you lazy but want to go jogging? “CASUAL JOGGING”
(Caption): “For lazy people who have FOMO about running”**



The content posted by @Mella Carli <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSPJnYha/> pada on July 18, 2025, is an acronym in the “FOMO” lexicon and a fresh and creative term in the “Sjogging” lexicon. Meanwhile, the word “Sjogging” is a new form of linguistic creativity that combines the words “Santai” and “Jogging.” Speakers cleverly created this new term to provide a unique and “marketable” label for an ordinary activity. The use of this fresh and creative slang aims to build a new brand or identity that feels lighter, more inclusive, and relevant to the Gen Z audience on TikTok.

From a participatory culture perspective, this data reflects how a physical hobby has transformed into a competitive digital trend. The massive running trend in 2025 triggers FOMO among those who are usually passive or “lazy,” as they feel they’re missing out on the chance to post productive content on social media. The term “FOMO” here serves as an acknowledgment of this social pressure, while the term “Sjogging” emerges as a participatory solution. The speaker offers a way for the audience to still “get in” on the running trend and participate in that culture without having to become a professional runner. This demonstrates that slang is used to lower the barriers to participation, so that anyone can feel like they’re part of a trending community.

2. Flippant Slang

Allan and Burrige (2006) state that the flippant form refers to language use that conveys a lighthearted, humorous attitude and disregards rigid norms of politeness to create a casual impression. According to Keith Allan and Kate Burrige (2006), flippant slang refers to expressions that are casual, tend to be unserious, and often contain wordplay or indirect associations. This type of slang typically arises from word combinations, puns, or light metaphors used to convey a specific attitude without a formal tone. In the context of TikTok users in Indonesia, Generation Z actively uses flippant

slang forms such as “recek,” “halu,” “gaskeun,” or “auto sultan,” which serve not only as expressions of humor but also as a form of social closeness in digital communication. Studies in linguistic journals show that flippant slang often spreads rapidly on social media due to its flexible nature, ease of modification, and ability to create a sense of familiarity among users.

In relation to the phenomenon of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), the use of flippant slang reflects Generation Z’s drive to stay relevant and engaged in trending digital conversations. This lighthearted and informal language allows users to participate quickly without the pressure of formality, thereby reinforcing a participatory culture on social media. Recent research in digital sociolinguistics indicates that the use of such casual slang correlates with the need for social recognition and engagement within online communities. Thus, flippant slang is not merely a form of linguistic variation but also serves as an indicator of how FoMO drives individuals to keep up with the evolving dynamics of communication on digital platforms like TikTok.

Data 1: @ssa “The premium shimmer isn’t like this, man it’s actually super pretty”



The quote above, written by @ssa on April 5, 2024 a TikTok user in the comments section of @blueberries__’s content <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSP1w8bR1/>. Based on exemplifies the flippant use of the word “anjir.” In this context, the word “anjir” is used as an emotional interjection to emphasize a new fact the speaker wishes to convey. The use of this lexical item is not intended to be rude, but rather to convey a sense of “honesty” and boldness in expressing an opinion amidst the flood of negative parodies regarding the shimmer gown. The speaker employs a flippant style to make their defense of the premium shimmer product appear more authentic, fluid, and acceptable to the Generation Z community on TikTok, which is highly anti-formality. Additionally, this data reflects a highly dynamic participatory culture, where TikTok users actively negotiate a trend experiencing a decline in image. Amid the abundance of content shaming Shimmer abaya users due to the fabric’s glare, @ssa actively participates by offering a counter-validation. The use of the slang term “anjir”

serves as a tool to emphasize the quality difference between “regular Shimmer” and “premium Shimmer.”

The connection to FoMO lies in the speaker’s attempt to reignite a sense of collective self-confidence. When someone feels embarrassed or afraid of falling short of the “correct” taste standards, these expressive slang comments serve as a psychological lifeline to reassure the audience that they won’t make a style mistake by choosing the “premium” version. This triggers a new type of FoMO: the fear of buying the wrong product (fear of buying something flashy or cheap) and a strong desire to own the “super stylish” version (the premium version). Thus, this flippant slang serves as a social navigation tool that helps individuals stay in the shimmering abaya trend without having to bear the social consequences (embarrassment) of choosing the wrong fabric.

Data 2: @callmeami “I bought a really nice shimmer, not like this one”



A comment posted on April 3, 2024, by TikTok user @callmeami on @blueberries__’s content <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSP1w8bR1/> show features the term “bjirr” in a flippant context. The lexeme “bjirr” itself is a further deformation or sound change of the word “anjir” (which is also a euphemism for a vulgar word). Speakers use “bjirr” to express a spontaneous emotional reaction that still feels lighthearted and non-aggressive. In TikTok communication, the use of this flippant form serves to demonstrate the speaker’s familiarity with other viewers, while simultaneously reinforcing the speaker’s position as an individual who keeps up with the latest linguistic trends among Generation Z.

The use of the slang “bjirr” in data 2 reflects the dynamics of participatory culture, where users actively defend their group identity. The speaker felt the need to clarify that the shimmer product they own is different from the one parodied in the content. The phrase “ga kaya gini,” preceded by the flippant interjection “bjirr,” indicates an attempt at social distancing; the speaker wants to separate

themselves from the “group of cheap shimmer users” and assert their position as part of the “group of high-quality shimmer users.”

The connection between this phenomenon and FoMO is evident in speakers’ anxiety regarding social stigma. When a trend (shimmer gamis) begins to be negatively parodied, a fear arises among users that they might be perceived as having poor taste or making a mistake by following the trend. The slang term “bjirr” here serves as a tool to trigger a new kind of FoMO among the audience: namely, the fear of not obtaining the “right shimmer” product. By validating that there is a “caep puol” (extremely beautiful) version, speakers indirectly encourage others to continue participating in the trend, but with higher standards. This demonstrates that slang is used to navigate social anxiety so that individuals remain relevant and proud within the circle of digital participatory culture.

Data 3: @abell “That shade is so pretty! What shade should I get next?”



A comment from user @abell on June 3, 2025, posted by @juuaa <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSP1Kku3r/>, reveals the use of slang in the form of “Flippant” in the lexical entry “woii.” The lexeme “woii” functions as an emotional interjection intended to attract the attention of other audience members and emphasize the speaker’s satisfaction. Additionally, there is the addition of letter repetition in the word “yaaa,” which, though simple, is a form of written expression that reinforces a spoiled or familiar tone of speech. The use of this flippant form reflects the communication characteristics of Generation Z, which prioritizes direct and communal expression of feelings in digital spaces.

From a participatory culture perspective, this data serves as concrete evidence of the reciprocal interaction between creators and audiences. @abell does not merely act as a passive consumer; rather, she actively engages in providing positive validation for the trending product. The question “What shade should I buy next?” indicates a reliance on the collective voice to determine the next step in consumption. This reflects one of the hallmarks of participatory culture: the presence of social support

where community members share knowledge and advice to sustain a trend. This relates to FoMO because it indicates a continuous cycle of consumption. The use of enthusiastic slang like “bagus woi” acts as a psychological trigger for other audience members who haven’t yet acquired the product. FoMO arises when a user is not satisfied with just one product but feels the urge to purchase other variants to remain “complete” and relevant to the current trend. Thus, this flippant slang serves as a tool that accelerates the flow of information and social anxiety, compelling individuals to continuously participate in every stage of the product’s trend development.

Data 4: @FT “You don’t know Mio Mirza yet”



A comment by a TikTok user with the username @FT, posted on March 20, 2024, on @Gerald Vincent’s content <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSP1ENyJG/>, includes the use of the word “lo.” In this context, “Mio Mirza” is used as a slang term serving as a tool for “playful bullying” against other users perceived as not keeping up with trends. The speaker uses a flippant tone to give the impression that there is some secret, important knowledge possessed only by the “coolest” group. This data represents the participatory culture on the TikTok platform. The emergence of thousands of similar comments across various content (even irrelevant ones) indicates a collective effort by users to manipulate the algorithm until the word becomes a blue search link. The digital community no longer merely consumes content but consciously “collaborates” to create a trend from something initially simple (motorcycle modifications). The @FT comment is a form of active participation in expanding the trend’s reach to ensure it remains dominant in the digital space.

The connection between this phenomenon and FoMO is evident in the phrase “you don’t know yet.” This phrase is a direct psychological trigger that stirs up the fear of missing out on information. When users see “Mio Mirza” comments everywhere especially when the links are blue they feel anxious that there’s some secret information or digital “truth” they haven’t discovered yet. The curiosity triggered by this slang comment compels thousands of people to click on the link (and

perform a search). Thus, the flippant slang in the Mio Mirza phenomenon is not merely a style of speech, but an information trap that exploits the psychology of FoMO.

3. Slang Acronyms

According to Keith Allan and Kate Burridge (2006), slang acronyms refer to the formation of words by abbreviating the initial letters of several words, which are then used as new terms in informal communication. In the context of TikTok users in Indonesia, Generation Z actively utilizes this form through the use of acronyms such as “FYP” (For You Page), “OOTD” (Outfit of the Day), “POV” (Point of View), and “FYI” (For Your Information), which serve to expedite communication while demonstrating digital literacy and membership within online communities. Digital sociolinguistic research indicates that the use of acronyms on social media is closely linked to linguistic efficiency and the need for rapid expression in online interactions, and forms part of a participatory culture driven by the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) phenomenon, where individuals are motivated to keep up with trends and communicate concisely to remain relevant in the fast-paced flow of information.

Data 1: @informatika “Day 1 FOMO typing ‘Glinda’”



Content created on November 7, 2025, by TikTok user @informatika <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSP1EBvBJ/> pada includes the term “fomo,” which is listed as an acronym. The word “fomo” stands for Fear of Missing Out. Interestingly, in Generation Z’s digital conversations, the word “fomo” has undergone a shift in function. It is no longer used strictly as a medical or psychological term but has blended into everyday slang as a verb or adjective, often combined with the word “ngetik” (to type), creating a casual, practical communication style that aligns with Generation Z’s habit of typing in short, concise messages.

The “Glinda” phenomenon is a perfect example of a participatory culture facilitated by platform technology. TikTok intentionally embedded a secret feature a screen animation to prompt user

interaction. When @informatika wrote “Day 1 fomo typing Glinda,” they were actively participating while also honestly acknowledging that they had been drawn in by the trend. They also wanted to see the Glinda animation on their own phone screen. In this content, the slang term “FOMO” acts as a contagious call to action. When other users read the comment “FOMO typing Glinda,” curiosity immediately arises. They’ll wonder, “What’s the big deal about typing Glinda?” The fear of missing out on this visually trending experience drives people to flock together and type the word. Here, FOMO is no longer just a drive to buy goods, but a drive to gain a digital experience. This slang comment becomes the connecting chain that turns a simple app feature into a massive participatory trend.

Data 2: @jalomm: “This is the Hindia FOMO”



The Spotify Wrapped content created by @jalomm <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSPJ15M3c/ini> on December 4, 2025, features the acronym “fomo” in the lexicon. The term “Fear of Missing Out” has been simplified to “fomo” and is used in everyday conversation to describe the act of following trends so as not to feel left behind. The use of this acronym, combined with the casual particle “nih,” reflects Generation Z’s characteristic communication style-direct, efficient, and candid in acknowledging the influence of external trends on their personal preferences in the digital space.

From a participatory culture perspective, the statement “fomo Hindia nih” during the Spotify Wrapped moment reflects how music consumption has evolved into an annual social ritual. Participatory culture encourages users to share their musical tastes not merely for personal satisfaction, but to participate in global conversations on social media. The use of the word “FOMO” here indicates an awareness that the choice to listen to popular artists like Hindia or share the results is driven by a desire to stay relevant to what’s trending. This demonstrates that slang serves as a tool of legitimization for individuals to “claim” that they are part of the mainstream, thereby avoiding the social anxiety that comes from not participating in the ongoing digital celebration.

Data 3: @Dailymeme (Content): “POV: You’re still a kid and have FOMO, so you want to join the protest,” (Recorder’s Comment): “Who told you to come here? Go home!”



Content created by the @Dailymeme account <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSPJJrSEv/> on September 13, 2025, features the acronym “POV.” The term “POV” is an acronym for the English phrase “Point of View.” Within the TikTok ecosystem, “POV” has acquired a specialized meaning as a content genre label that positions the audience as the main character in the presented scenario. The use of this acronym demonstrates the efficiency of digital language, where speakers prefer short codes that are universally understood by the community rather than using lengthy descriptive explanations.

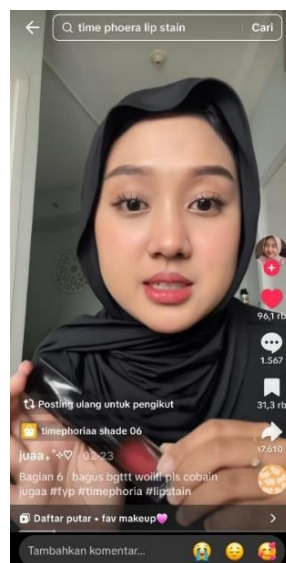
From the perspective of participatory culture and FoMO, the term “POV” acts as a trigger for psychological engagement. The use of “POV” compels the audience to identify themselves within a situation that is currently trending (in this case, joining a protest). This is closely tied to the FoMO phenomenon, where the audience is encouraged to feel a sense of “fear” if they do not participate in a major event that is currently the center of attention. Participatory culture encourages individuals to always want to be part of a popular narrative, even if only through imitation. Thus, the acronym “POV” here is not merely a technical marker but a sociolinguistic instrument that breaks down the boundaries between spectators and trend-setters, while simultaneously reinforcing the social pressure on individuals to always be present in every moment deemed viral.

4. Slang Clipping

According to Allan and Burridge (2006), clipping is the process of shortening words without altering their original meaning, with the aim of achieving communicative efficiency while conveying a casual tone. According to Keith Allan and Kate Burridge (2006), slang clipping is the process of shortening words without altering their original meaning, with the aim of creating both efficiency and a casual tone in communication. In the practice of TikTok users in Indonesia, Generation Z uses clipped forms

such as “info” (information), “promo” (promotion), “admin” (administrator), or “net” (internet) as part of rapid interactions in the digital space. This phenomenon indicates that language adapts to the demands of instant communication, particularly within a participatory cultural context influenced by the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), where individuals are driven to respond and participate quickly to avoid falling behind trends. Research in digital linguistics confirms that clipping has become one of the primary strategies in social media communication because it enhances speed, practicality, and social closeness among users, thereby reinforcing the role of slang as a representation of Generation Z’s linguistic dynamics in the digital age.

Data 1: @juua “So good!! Please try it too!”



An excerpt from the caption of a lipstick promotional post by the brand Timephoria, created by @juua <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSP1Kku3r/> on February 23, 2025, appears in the form of a clipping in the lexicon “bgttt” and “pls”. The lexeme “bgttt” is an abbreviation of the word “banget” with the addition of repeated ‘t’s at the end to provide visual emotional emphasis. Meanwhile, the lexeme “pls” is an abbreviation of the English word “please” adapted for everyday conversation. The use of these clipped forms reflects Generation Z’s preference for speed in conveying messages and is very common in social media interactions.

The use of the slang term “clipping” in this promotional caption serves as a call for active participation. As a creator doing an endorsement, @juua uses very egalitarian language to break down the barriers between seller and buyer. The phrase “pls cobain jugaa” is not merely a suggestion, but a participatory instruction for the audience to try the viral Timephoria product. The emergence of the fear of missing out (FOMO) is triggered by the creator’s style of speech, which seems to imply that if the audience doesn’t try this product now, they will miss out on the moment or the latest beauty standards that others are currently buzzing about. For Generation Z, uncertainty about the quality of a

product promoted with such “convincing” language can lead to social anxiety. Thus, the use of clipped slang here acts as a catalyst for FOMO, transforming an advertisement into a form of social pressure that compels the audience to act immediately to consume in order to stay relevant within the trend.

Data 2: @Rama.nrr “PADEL! Do you actually like it, or is it just FOMO?”



Content posted by @Rama.nrr <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSP1EKNpH/> on July 2, 2025. The utterance above contains the lexeme “doang,” which is classified as a clipping. The lexeme “doang” is an informal shortening used to replace the standard word “saja.” In this context, the use of the clipping “doang” emphasizes a limiting, dismissive, or flippant nature. The speaker deliberately chose this shortened form to create a sharper, more sarcastic tone than would be achieved using the formal word. The use of this lexical form demonstrates the efficiency of communication on TikTok, where short words are used to convey messages rich in emotion and subjective judgment.

From the perspective of participatory culture and FOMO, the phrase “FOMO doang” serves as a stigmatizing label for participation deemed inauthentic. Participatory culture encourages individuals to constantly engage with the latest trends, yet this often triggers superficial FOMO behavior. The use of the word “doang” after “FOMO” serves to diminish or degrade the value of one’s participation; as if involvement in Padel lacks a strong foundation in genuine interest, but is merely driven by the anxiety of losing one’s digital presence. Thus, this clipped slang form serves as a critical tool for exposing the social reality on social media: that many activities are undertaken not for the essence of the activity itself, but merely to meet social demands to remain relevant in the public eye.

Data 3: @Beuraa: “Fuji trend FOMO” (Video imitating Fuji’s bowling dance).



Content created by @Beuraa <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSP1oYS5M/> on March 11, 2025, includes the word “trend” in the caption, which is categorized as a form of slang known as clipping (abbreviation). In this context, the word “trend” is an abbreviation of the English terms “trending topic” or “trending video.” The speaker chose to omit the words that follow and leave only the core word to simplify the labeling of content on TikTok. The use of this clipping form reflects the fast-paced nature of digital communication, where speakers prioritize conveying their meaning clearly and effectively over using long, formal terms.

From the perspective of participatory culture and FoMO, the use of the word “trend” serves as a symbol of uniformity in action. The emergence of Fuji’s video dancing at a bowling alley established a new behavioral standard that sparked a surge in mass participation. The connection to FoMO is evident in how the speaker felt the need to label it a “trend” to affirm that the video they created at Timezone was an effort to stay relevant to the mainstream. The fear of missing out on popular moments pioneered by public figures like Fuji drives individuals to “claim” themselves as part of that trend. In this case, the slang term “trend” serves as a marker that the speaker has successfully overcome their social anxiety by participating in an activity that is widely recognized by the digital community.

Post 4: @aprianda43 (Content): “Finally got to buy the Adidas Samba the shoes I’ve been wanting for so long.” (Caption): “It’s okay if people call me tacky.”

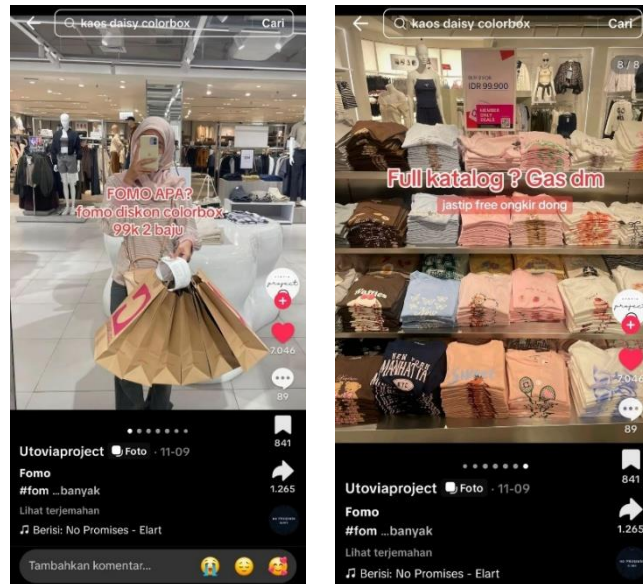


The content and caption created by @aprianda43 <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSP1o3Y5Y/> on August 27, 2025, feature a prominent form of slang: the clipping of the phrase “GPP.” The term “GPP” is an abbreviation of the phrase “gak apa-apa” (it’s okay), which is very commonly used in digital conversations to create a casual and relaxed impression. The use of this slang reflects the characteristics of Generation Z, who prefer practicality in self-expression, while also indicating the speaker’s attempt to remain calm or indifferent toward others’ negative judgments on social media.

From the perspective of participatory culture and FoMO, the statement “It’s okay to be called tacky” reveals the speaker’s awareness of the social stigma associated with following a massive trend. Adidas Samba sneakers are a symbol of a global trend that often triggers FoMO, where individuals feel they must own them to remain relevant and fashionable. The use of the word “tacky” refers to the sarcasm often directed at trend-followers by those who feel more original or who already own the item. By using slang as a defense, the speaker demonstrates that the desire to participate in the trend remains stronger than the fear of ridicule. This demonstrates that slang functions as an emotional navigation tool to cope with social anxiety stemming from the relentless pressure of trends.

Data 5: @Utovaproject: Photo 8 Slide

(Slide 1): “What's FOMO? FOMO over the Colorbox 99k discount on 2 shirts” (Slide 8): “Want the full catalog? Hit me up on DM for shopping assistance with free shipping!”



This content, created by @Utovaproject <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSPJ1hgVk/> on November 9, 2025, is classified as a “Clipping,” because two lexical items using this pattern were found in the data: “jastip,” derived from the phrase “jasa titip,” and “ongkir,” derived from the phrase “ongkos kirim.” The speaker intentionally truncated the latter parts of these words so that information regarding the type of service and cost details could be conveyed instantly. The use of this clipping form reflects the characteristics of a digital society that desires fast and practical messages, in line with the nature of the social media platform TikTok, which prioritizes information density.

From the perspective of participatory culture and FoMo, the terms “jastip” and “ongkir” serve as tools that help audiences stay relevant to current trends. Participatory culture enables the emergence of a collaborative economy where users help one another obtain products that are currently trending. The connection to FoMo is evident in how these two terms function as solutions to the audience’s anxiety. When the audience fears missing out on clothing discounts due to distance or time constraints, the “jastip” offer and the lure of “free ongkir” act as triggers to make immediate decisions. Thus, this clipped slang is not merely a simplification of words, but a social tool that accelerates interaction and overcomes psychological barriers caused by the fear of missing out (loss aversion) in the digital space.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the phenomenon of slang usage among Generation Z on TikTok is a tangible manifestation of language variation from a sociolinguistic perspective, as proposed by Abdul Chaer and Leonie Agustina (2010), wherein language constantly adapts to dynamic and

heterogeneous social contexts. Such variation, particularly in the form of slang as part of a sociolect, demonstrates that language functions not only as a tool for communication but also as a means of building group identity and solidarity. The typology of slang classified by Keith Allan and Kate Burridge (2006) including fresh and creative, flippant, imitative, acronym, and clipping proves relevant in explaining Generation Z's linguistic practices, which are adaptive, creative, and responsive to the demands of speed and digital aesthetics. In the context of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), the use of slang functions as a social strategy to maintain one's existence and relevance within a participatory culture, aligning with Penelope Eckert's (2019) perspective, which emphasizes language as a performative practice in the negotiation of identity. Using a qualitative netnographic approach through participatory observation of trending content from March 2024 to December 2026, this study confirms that the dynamics of slang on social media are not merely a linguistic phenomenon, but a complex reflection of social interactions, digital cultural pressures, and the construction of Generation Z identity in the technological age.

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