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**BRIDGING THE LINGUISTIC GAP: INVESTIGATING GEN Z SLANG
FAMILIARITY AND COMPREHENSION AMONG GENERATION X AND
MILLENNIALS**

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Ročník: 3.

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I confirm that this thesis is my own work written using solely the sources and literature properly quoted and acknowledged as works cited.

06.05.2024 v Českých Budějovicích

.....

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Anotace

Tato bakalářská práce zkoumá vliv internetu a sociálních médií na jazykové a komunikační vzorce různých generačních skupin. Studie se konkrétně zabývá tím, jak Generace Z používáním slangových výrazů, které získaly popularitu převážně na platformách sociálních médií, ovlivňuje komunikaci se staršími generacemi, jako jsou Generace X a Mileniálové. Autorka práce sestavila seznam více než 200 často používaných slangových výrazů Generace Z na základě průzkumu různých zdrojů, jako jsou online články a tištěné slovníky, a následně s pomocí osob pocházejících z Generace Z jej prostřednictvím předběžného dotazníku zúžila na 40 výrazů, které byly použity v hlavním dotazníku. Tento dotazník byl zaměřen na příslušníky Generace X a Mileniálů s cílem zjistit jejich znalost a porozumění těmto slangovým výrazům. Shromážděná data odhalila, že Mileniálové jsou ve srovnání s Generací X lépe obeznámeni se slangovými výrazy Generace Z. Nasbíraná data také odhalila, že ačkoli se obě generace setkávají s počátečními nedorozuměními při kontaktu se slangem Generace Z, jeho používání může nakonec komunikaci mezi těmito třemi odlišnými generacemi usnadnit. Výsledky studie zdůrazňují složitost mezigenerační komunikace a poukazují na možnosti, jak porozumění mezi různými generacemi vylepšit.

Klíčová slova: Internet, sociální média, vývoj jazyka, komunikační vzorce, sociolingvistika, Generace X, Mileniálové, Generace Z, slang, mezigenerační komunikace, jazykové charakteristiky.

Abstract

This bachelor's thesis investigates the impact of the Internet and social media on language and communication patterns across different generational groups. Specifically, it examines how Generation Z's use of slang terms, which predominantly gained popularity on social media platforms, affects communication with older generations such as Generation X and Millennials. The author compiled a list of over 200 frequently used Gen Z slang terms through research of various sources, such as online articles and printed dictionaries, and with the help of Gen Z individuals through a preliminary questionnaire, narrowed it down to 40 terms for the main questionnaire. This questionnaire was aimed at Generation X and Millennials to determine their familiarity and comprehension of these slang terms. The collected data disclosed that Millennials are more familiar with Gen Z slang than Generation X. The findings also revealed that while both cohorts encounter initial misunderstandings when engaging with Gen Z slang, its use might ultimately facilitate communication between these different generations. The results underscore the complexity of intergenerational communication and highlight opportunities for fostering better understanding across different generations.

Keywords: Internet, social media, language evolution, communication patterns, sociolinguistics, Generation X, Millennials, Generation Z, slang, intergenerational communication, linguistic characteristics.

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Introduction

What do the members of Generation Z mean when they use phrases like “that one celebrity has an immaculate *rizz*” or “someone acts too much as a *simp*”? While it is not uncommon for older generations to express concerns about the increasing reliance on mobile phones and the Internet by younger generations due to technological advancements, the impact of social media has been particularly transformative for Generation Z. Growing up in an era dominated by social media has given rise to unique language patterns characterised by the frequent use of slang words and phrases. This contemporary lexicon may be unfamiliar to older generations, particularly Generation X and Millennials, making communication with their Gen Z children, friends, or colleagues challenging. This thesis seeks to explore to what extent Generation X and Millennials are familiar with and comprehend the prevalent slang terms used by Generation Z.

The inspiration behind the chosen research topic stems from my personal experience of incorporating Generation Z slang into my everyday conversations with my friends, both online and offline. This has proven to be an effective method of enhancing the smoothness and engagement of our interactions. However, I have faced challenges when communicating on forums or social media with older users belonging to either the Generation X or Millennial cohort. They often struggled to understand the meanings of the slang terms. As a result, my research also aims to investigate the impact of the usage of Gen Z slang on intergenerational conversations.

Consisting of seven chapters, this thesis delves into various aspects of the research topic. The first chapter is a literature review that investigates relevant sources on the topic of different generations and their communication styles. Chapter 2 briefly examines internet language based on works by linguist David Crystal. Chapter 3 explores the various generational differences, including lifestyle and communication variances. The fourth chapter characterises Generation X and Millennials and sheds light on their specific language features. Chapter 5 is dedicated to Generation Z, highlighting their beliefs and values, and exploring what makes their language unique compared to previous generations. In Chapter 6, the research methodology is presented, including the data collection and questionnaire design. Chapter 7 presents the findings from the survey and focuses on their analysis while also offering a discussion and interpretation of the findings.

1. Literature Review

This chapter of the thesis aims to review the literature relevant to intergenerational communication research, especially between Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. In the past, several studies have characterised these three generations, examining their beliefs and values (Manheim 1952; Strauss and Howe 1991) and how they have incorporated the internet world into their daily lives (Twenge 2023; Lisetti 2023). Research has also acknowledged that older generations have difficulty understanding the language of younger generations (Tagliamonte 2016; McCulloch 2020). In today's world, there is a noticeable lack of academic research on the topic of how well Generation X and Millennials understand the slang used by Generation Z. To address this gap, this thesis aims to identify the slang terms frequently used by Generation Z, evaluate how well Generation X and Millennials comprehend them and examine if the use of Gen Z slang has any impact on the communication between different generations. A comprehensive survey is conducted to gather answers to these questions.

It is crucial to study the differences in language use across different generations as it plays a critical role in comprehending the cultural dynamics and relationships that exist between them. By examining the generational differences in language use, people can gain a deeper understanding of how language evolves, the impact of cultural and social changes on language, and how these changes shape the way different generations interact with each other. In their book *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069*, William Strauss and Neil Howe, as well as Karl Mannheim in his essay "The Problem of Generations," both explore the topic of generations. However, they differ in their approaches and methods. Mannheim (1928, edited in 1952) focuses on the sociological elements of generations, explaining how the common consciousness and formative tendencies unite people of the same generation and how historical events and societal changes shape generational perspectives and identities. In contrast, Strauss and Howe (1991) categorise generations into specific archetypes and cycles in American history, each playing a distinctive role in societal dynamics over a series of turnings. Although both address the concept of generations, Mannheim's work is rooted in sociological theory, emphasising shared consciousness, while Strauss and Howe's approach involves a more cyclical and archetypal analysis of generational patterns throughout history.

Mannheim believed that the consciousness of a generation is significantly influenced by the shared historical events they experience. However, Jean M. Twenge (2023) opposes this viewpoint and asserts that the impact of technological advancements such as smartphones and

social media is more prominent. These changes have caused a distinct generational identity by leading to shifts in daily life, culture, and societal dynamics. Therefore, the focus has shifted from historical events to the transformative impact of technology on individualism. In addition, Twenge in her book *Generations: The Real Differences Between Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Boomers, and Silents – and What They Mean for America's Future* (2023) analyses all six generations currently residing in the US and explores their unique characteristics. The author uses numerous charts and figures to illustrate how different generations have dealt with various issues. The data used in the book are drawn from 24 datasets, assessing a total of 39 million people who offered their own real stories. Although Twenge has done a remarkable job of defining and outlining the unique characteristics of each generation, she did not delve into an analysis of how the communication styles of different generations vary from one another.

How communication on the Internet differs from traditional communication and how is language influenced by the Internet and social media is analysed by David Crystal in his works *Language and the Internet* (2001), *Txtng: The Gr8 Db8* (2009), and *Internet Linguistics* (2011). While all three books share a common theme of investigating language in the context of the Internet, they differ in their specific focuses and depth of coverage. Crystal (2001) examines the impact of the Internet on language, focusing on how digital communication platforms influence linguistic expression, interaction, and the formation of online communities. Crystal (2009) specifically investigates the linguistic phenomenon of texting or text messaging. He addresses the concerns and criticism surrounding the use of abbreviations and acronyms, aiming to dispel misconceptions and highlight the linguistic richness of texting. In addition, Crystal (2011) provides a more up-to-date overview of linguistic phenomena in the digital age. He also in more detail explores the differences between traditional and internet writing and the evolution of emoticons.

Delving deep into the evolution of communication from emoticons to emojis, which are extensively used by people today, is Gretchen McCulloch in her book *Because Internet: Understanding How Language is Changing* (2020). Chapter 3 of this book, titled “Internet People,” is full of crucial information for the thesis, as it explores the diverse demographics of internet users and sheds light on what makes their communicative styles unique. By analysing the data presented in this chapter, one can gain a better understanding of how the Internet has transformed the way people communicate with each other.

McCulloch's (2020) study on the communication patterns of different generations on the Internet has been further explored in the book titled *Gen Z, Explained: The Art of Living in a Digital Age* (2021) authored by Roberta Katz and her co-writers. The book is based on interviews with postmillennial students collected since 2017, examining their perspectives on technology usage, self-identity, values, and how they interact with their families and friends. The authors have also created the iGen Corpus, which is a compilation of over 70 million words of age-specific English language data in various forms such as text, images, and videos, gathered from social media platforms and interviews. The corpus data has been thoroughly analysed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the younger generation's mindset and behaviour. However, as of April 2024, the corpus data have not yet been made available to the public.

The research conducted by Katz et al. (2021) delves into the language characteristics that are unique to Generation Z. The comprehensive analysis of the lexicological terms used by this generation can be found in two popular Gen Z dictionaries. One of these dictionaries is *The Gen Z Dictionary* by Kelly King, published in 2020, while the other one is *Decoding Gen-Z Slang: Your Guide to Learning, Understanding, and Speaking the Gen-Z Vernacular* by Devon Knott, published in 2021. Both of these dictionaries offer an extensive list of examples, definitions, and origins of the most commonly used Gen Z terms. In conducting my survey, I have found some of the lexicological items featured in the dictionaries significantly relevant to my work. To supplement these dictionary entries, several online resources, including more recent articles by Sessoms (2023), Kato (2024), and Liles (2024), were consulted.

Sali A. Tagliamonte, a renowned linguist, has made a remarkable breakthrough in her research on the language used by young people. Her book *Teen Talk: The Language of Adolescents*, published in 2016, is an in-depth linguistic analysis of the most common language features, including slang, used by teenagers during the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Tagliamonte has devoted her 20-year academic career to gathering extensive corpora, and her book explores how the Internet has influenced the way young people communicate. With intriguing examples and figures of communication between herself and her daughter, as well as between teenagers, she illustrates the changing communication styles. This work is a significant contribution to the field of sociolinguistics, providing valuable insights into the linguistic patterns and communication styles of adolescents.

Janet Holmes' book, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (2013), is a rich and insightful exploration of the intricate relationship between language and society. The book offers a comprehensive analysis of sociolinguistic phenomena, including language variation, multilingualism, and language attitudes, and uses numerous examples and case studies to illustrate the dynamic relationship between language and social identity, power, and culture. Chapter 7 and Chapter 9 are particularly relevant to the topic of teenagers' communication styles, and their insights contribute significantly to the understanding of how the language of young people changes throughout time. Another notable sociolinguist, John Edwards, offers a broader perspective on the field in his book *Sociolinguistics: A Very Short Introduction* (2013). In contrast to Holmes, Edwards provides more detailed discussions and analyses of language usage in a variety of historical literary examples.

As mentioned earlier, there has not been any recent research on how the use of Gen Z slang affects communication between Generation Z, Generation X, and Millennials. However, several scholars have explored the topic of generations and their characteristics, such as Karl Mannheim, William Strauss, Neil Howe, and Jean M. Twenge. They have emphasised the impact of collective consciousness, historical events, and technological advancements in shaping generational perspectives. Linguists like David Crystal, Gretchen McCulloch, and Sali A. Tagliamonte have studied the communication styles of different generations and the influence of the Internet on language. Roberta Katz and her co-authors have analysed the language features of Generation Z. Additionally, Kelly King and Devon Knott have provided an extensive analysis of the lexicon specific to Gen Zers. All mentioned authors and their works contribute to a comprehensive understanding of generational differences in lifestyles and communication styles.

2. Language and the Internet

Considering the extensive scope of the thesis, it is not necessary to delve into the detailed history of the Internet. However, it would be beneficial to provide a brief overview of the linguistic domain that primarily focuses on analysing the language influenced and shaped by the Internet – the Internet Linguistics.

2.1. Communication on the Internet

Crystal (2011) discusses different labels that have been suggested to emphasise the communicative role of the Internet. While “Computer-mediated communication” (CMC) gained popularity in the 1990s, it was considered too broad from a linguistic perspective, as it encompassed all types of communication, including music, photos, and videos (2011: 1). Other terms such as “Electronically mediated communication” (EMC) or “Digitally mediated communication” (DMC) were proposed (2011: 1–2). However, he prefers his own term “Internet Linguistics,” as it is a more convenient label for examining all language varieties in the electronic medium (2011: 2). Crystal defines Internet Linguistics as the “synchronic analysis of language in all areas of internet activity, including email, the various kinds of chatroom and games interaction, instant messaging, and Web pages, and including associated areas of computer-mediated communication, such as SMS messaging (texting)” (2005: 1).

Crystal (2001) discusses two main forms of communication in the early days of the Internet: e-mail and chatgroups. E-mail is defined as the transfer of messages between users facilitated through computer systems where the messages can be sent and received in private mailboxes (2001: 11). On the other hand, chat groups are online discussions that focus on a specific topic and take place in “rooms” located on particular websites (ibid.). Communication through email and chat groups exhibits similarities to spoken conversation. The use of language in these digital mediums often displays a sense of urgency and energy similar to face-to-face conversations (2001: 29). However, there are also differences as internet interactions have a slower rhythm due to potential delays, which can create uncertainty about response time, causing a waiting period for the recipient before the message appears on their screen (2001: 30).

Online conversations have become the norm in today’s world. However, people in the early days of the Internet have expressed concerns about the unique language used in these conversations and whether they need to learn a new language to fit into the internet world. According to Crystal (2001), the language used on the Internet, referred to as “Netspeak,” is

shaped by its electronic, global, and interactive nature (2001: 17–18). However, electronic messaging makes it technically impossible to convey nonverbal cues that are essential in face-to-face communication (2001: 30). Nonverbal cues such as facial expressions, gestures, and body language are absent, which makes it challenging to express subjective opinions and regulate social relationships. To overcome this deficiency, emoticons were created in the early development of Netspeak (2001: 36).

2.2. Texting

According to Crystal (2009), the emergence of texting as a form of language has been attributed to the advancement of technology (2009: 164). Texting has become increasingly popular, with people preferring to send messages via their mobile phones rather than via computers.

When texting became popular in the UK and the US around 2000, it was seen as a linguistic disaster due to the use of abbreviations (Crystal 2011: 4–5) and various reports even suggested that texting was causing a decline in literacy and harming language as a whole (Crystal 2009: 7). However, it was proven that texting helps rather than hinders literacy (Crystal 2009: 9). According to Crystal (2009), texting cannot be considered a significant factor in the discussion about children who struggle with literacy as those who have difficulty with reading and writing are unlikely to have the sophisticated abilities needed to operate technology that demands such skills (2009: 156). He concludes that children could not be good at texting if they had not already developed considerable literacy awareness (2009: 162).

The language used in mobile phone text messages has been referred to as “textese,” “slanguage,” and a “new hi-tech lingo,” in comparison with the language used in online computer communication referred to as “Netspeak” (Crystal 2009: 13). Crystal mentions that the unique spellings and symbols used in texting were once considered “deviant” because they drew attention away from the “normal” elements (2009: 16). Interestingly, the most noticeable characteristic of text messages is a combination of both standard and nonstandard features (2009: 17). Texters tend to alter only the functional words while keeping the standard spelling in longer messages (2009: 19).

Crystal (2009) also examines various characteristics of text messaging, which include the use of pictograms, logograms, initialisms, omitted letters, nonstandard spellings, and shortenings. Emoticons are examples of pictograms which are visual symbols representing

objects or concepts (2009: 37). Logograms are single letters or symbols used for representing words or parts of words, such as *gr8* for *great* (ibid.), while initialisms, such as *LOL* for *Laughing Out Loud*, are used to shorten words to their initial letters (2009: 41–42). Omitted letters refer to the practice of shortening words by dropping letters from the middle or end, such as *tmrw* from *tomorrow* (2009: 44–45). Nonstandard spellings involve deliberately or unconsciously misspelling words, like *wassup* for *what's up* and *dunno* for *don't know* (2009: 47–48). Shortenings involve abbreviating words by omitting one of their meaningful elements, for example, *bro* from *brother* and *max* from *maximum* (2009: 50). These features are widely used in text messaging and contribute to the unique language utilised in this form of communication.

Crystal (2009) suggests that certain expressions used in text messages may be classified as slang, and their use can indicate that the sender belongs to a particular community (2009: 56). Therefore, texting has become a method for younger generations to display their sense of belonging, and shared texting habits can imply that individuals are members of the same group (2009: 92).

3. Generational Differences

After examining what features make communication on the Internet distinctive, the attention is now placed on the unique traits and characteristics of three distinct generations - Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. First, it is important to provide a brief overview of what is meant when people talk about generational differences.

3.1. Generational Differences in Lifestyles

The pace of cultural change has been so rapid that the experience of growing up today is vastly different from that of growing up in the 1950s or even the 2000s. These differences are referred to as generational differences (Twenge 2023: 2). Twenge defines generational differences as variations in the average age at which different generations get married, their levels of religiosity, or their levels of self-confidence, among other factors (2023: 24–25).

Why is the understanding of generational differences significant? Twenge states that understanding generational differences helps people to better comprehend family dynamics (2023: 3). For instance, it offers explanations as to why children and teenagers spend so much time glued to their phones or why parents and grandparents are not up to date with the discourse about pronouns. Twenge elaborates that it also helps to appreciate the differences between younger employees and older bosses, or it helps to predict how each generation will vote as they age, and how they will understand economic policies or marketing strategies (*ibid.*). Lisetti adds that acknowledging the life experiences and principles of each age group helps people gain insight into their viewpoints and collaborate in tackling mutual obstacles (2023: 8).

Why are people's lives today vastly different from the lives of past generations? The reasons for this are the innovations and advancements in technology that people daily use. Twenge suggests that technology has transformed people's lives and impacted their thinking, behaviour, and relationships (2023: 6). Today, everything that makes modern life possible, from advanced medical care to washing machines, is considered technology (*ibid.*).

There are other factors which contributed to generational gaps apart from technology. Twenge identifies two factors: individualism [prioritizing self-interest], and a slower life trajectory [individuals are taking much longer to mature into adults and also taking longer to age] (2023: 8). The notion of treating individuals as unique entities involves disregarding the notion of group affiliation as predetermined, which has given rise to movements advocating for individuals' rights based on gender, race, and class (2023: 10). Slower life trajectories include

medical care known for lengthening life spans, labour-saving devices that help slow down ageing, and a knowledge-based economy that requires individuals to have more years of education (2023: 18).

3.2. Generational Differences in Communication

Every new generation distinguishes itself from the previous one and will inevitably be distinct from the one that will follow. According to Tagliamonte, young individuals not only tend to distinguish themselves from the older generation by clothing, appearance, and music preferences but especially through the way they use language (2016: 43). During adolescence, individuals expand their social networks which exposes them to a wider range of language behaviours. As a result, they learn novel words and phrases from their peers (2016: 53).

Sociolinguist Holmes states that a broad range of information about language mechanics, social relationships in a community, and the way people create aspects of their social identity through language is obtained by examining how language is used in various social contexts (2013: 1). Another sociolinguist, Edwards, notes that languages possess significant power in demarcating boundaries and designating specific social affiliations, thereby acting as emblems of group identity (2013: 10). This is supported by Holmes, who argues that language can be utilised by individuals to indicate their association with specific groups and to shape various aspects of their social identity, which is also influenced by various aspects such as social status, gender, age, and ethnicity (2013: 131).

Holmes mentions that different age groups exhibit various characteristics in their speech patterns. Pitch, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar are some of the factors that can differentiate individuals of different ages (2013: 176). Holmes also points out that studying the variation in speech patterns between people of different ages can provide valuable insights into the evolution of language over time. This approach is known as the “apparent-time method” of studying language change (2013: 219). Tagliamonte explains that in an apparent time study, generational differences are compared at a specific point in time and the purpose of the study is to make inferences about how a change may have occurred in the past (2016: 6). As Holmes states, differences in language usage between older and younger individuals are generally seen as signs of ongoing changes, as younger speakers tend to adopt more innovative language forms, while older speakers tend to stick to the more traditional or conservative forms that they learned during their youth (2013: 219).

4. Generation X and Millennials

In the preceding section, the concept of generational differences in a broad sense was explored. To develop a deeper comprehension of the subject, it is essential to delve more extensively into the characteristics that differentiate each of the three generations. By doing so, a more profound insight into the unique communication styles and lifestyles of each generation can be gained.

4.1. Generation X

Generation X is placed between two bigger and more frequently mentioned generations, Baby Boomers and Millennials, which makes this generation often overlooked and forgotten (Twenge 2023: 149). Twenge mentions Douglas Coupland's novel *Generation X* in which the generation was first named and the novel focuses on people born between the early 1960s and early 1980s (2023: 150). However, Pew Research defines Generation X as members who were born between 1965 and 1980 (Miller 2018).

4.1.1. Relationship with Technology

What can be said about Generation X is that their life was full of technological advancements. Twenge points out that they were born post-television era and grew up during the computer and internet ages (2023: 151). Although Baby Boomers were the first generation to have access to TV during their childhood, their children from Generation X considered it as given and could not imagine their lives without television (2023: 157). The most popular TV channel among the generation was *MTV*, which was launched in 1981 and became an instant sensation among teenagers (2023: 208). When they were not watching the programs on TV, they used the television set for playing video games (2023: 159).

Kamber argues that Gen Xers are a “hybrid group of digital users” (2017: 48). They are comfortable with technology but still remember the time when things were more primitive. Despite that, Generation X was the generation that fully used the potential of the digital world (Kamber 2017: 49). As Twenge states, they were sending emails to friends, using instant messaging services, and working at technology start-ups and IT departments (2023: 156). They were also the first ones to grow up with access to technologies such as *YouTube*, *Netscape*, and *Yahoo!*, which were the foundations for popular websites today (2023: 155). In addition, many of the popular online platforms and services, such as *eBay*, *Myspace*, and *Twitter* were all founded by members of Generation X (2023: 155).

4.1.2. Lifestyle

Their childhood is distinguished by the life of latchkey kids. They were nicknamed *latchkey kids* after the key from their houses that they wore on a string around their necks while playing in their neighbourhood till late hours (Twenge 2023: 161). Generation X was also the first generation where having divorced parents was considered normal due to the rise of individualism which has led to an increase in divorce rates as stigmatization of divorce was disregarded and emphasis was placed on individual needs (2023: 159–160). Fast forward to their adult years, Generation X tended to get married at a later age than any previous generation in American history, and they also put off having children (2023: 166). According to Lisetti, it was due to their strong emphasis on work-life balance and personal fulfilment (2023: 46–47).

Twenge further defines Gen Xers with the words “cynicism,” and “independence” (2023: 149), as well as “resilience,” “scepticism,” and “pessimism” (2023: 184). Twenge suggests that resilience and hardiness can be attributed to their struggle to balance between the physical and digital world, coupled with the lack of supervision (2023: 164–165).

This generation also became known as the "sustainability natives" due to their awareness and concern for ecological preservation (Baskin & Sommer 2017: 43). In addition to their environmental activism, Gen Xers were also instrumental in advocating for equal treatment and acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals during a time of significant societal change (Johnston 2017: 93).

4.2. Millennials

Millennials are individuals born between 1981 and 1996 (Cummings 2018). They are also known as Generation Y; however, the term “Millennials” is more frequently used (Lisetti 2023: 57).

4.2.1. Relationship with Technology

Millennials are a generation which fully embraced the digital age and became experts in using technology. The average Millennial, born in 1987, was introduced to the Internet at a very young age when it was commercialised in 1995 (Twenge 2023: 232). By their teenage years, home Internet became more common around 2000, and in 2012 the majority of Americans owned a smartphone (ibid.).

In 2004, Mark Zuckerberg launched *Facebook*, which has since grown to have over 3 billion active users worldwide, which made Zuckerberg the most famous American Millennial (Twenge 2023: 255). Another popular social media site, *Snapchat*, was launched in 2011 and has amassed 75 million users by 2015 (ibid.). Today, *Snapchat* has over 750 million monthly active users (Shewale 2024). Millennials use social media platforms to maintain social connections, stay informed on current events, and mobilize political activism (Twenge 2023: 255).

4.2.2. Lifestyle

Millennials brought back the slow strategy of life by having fewer siblings and thus receiving more attention from their Baby Boomer parents during their childhood and adolescence (Twenge 2023: 238). Crappell also adds that their Generation X parents were called the “helicopter” parents as they always kept an eye on them (2015: 40). According to Twenge, Millennials’ parents were focused on childrearing which led to the emergence of the term *parenting* as a verb, which created a culture of competition and judgement among parents (2023: 238). However, as Millennials reached adulthood, they were surprised by the challenges of *adulthood*, which included mundane tasks such as paying bills and doing laundry (ibid.). In the 2020s, Generation Z also coined the term *cheugy* to describe Millennials who are trying to be trendy but are out of touch (ibid.). In contrast, Millennials created the phrase *OK Boomer* to express frustration towards Boomers who they believed did not understand their economic struggles (2023: 311–312).

Millennials continued in the slow-life approach as women were typically marrying at the age of 28, while men waited until they were 30 (Twenge 2023: 278). Consequently, Millennials were more inclined to have a baby in their early 30s rather than their late 20s (2023: 284–285). Lisetti claims that these individuals were postponing residing on their own or with significant others, marriage, and raising children because of financial limitations and the aspiration for autonomy and self-discovery (2023: 58).

The level of interest in environmentalism displayed by Millennials was much lower than that of Gen Xers, and even though Gen Z has revived interest in helping the environment, it is still not on the level as when Gen X was young in the 1990s (Twenge 2023: 212).

4.3. Communication Styles of Generation X and Millennials

Considering the profound impact of the Internet on both older and newer generations, it is intriguing to examine the diverse ways in which these generations communicate in the online world.

McCulloch (2020) categorises internet users into distinct groups based on their level of engagement with the Internet. As both Generation X and Millennials were generations who grew up in an era where the Internet was becoming increasingly popular and spent most of their childhood and adulthood interacting with technology, it is safe to assume that chapters “Old Internet People” and “Full Internet People” are describing the collective memories and experiences of these two generations.

McCulloch defines “Old Internet People” as individuals who were among the first to access the Internet (2020: 68). They communicated online with strangers through tools such as *Usenet*, *Internet Relay Chat*, or forums (ibid.). Their terminology was quite similar to that used by programmers, as having programming skills was the only way to access the Internet (2020: 71). Their language and slang were recorded in a document called the *Jargon File*. Its earliest version from 1976 contains 49 words and their meanings. Some examples of these words are *win*, *feature*, and *glitch* (2020: 72). McCulloch notes that the inception of acronyms occurred in 1977 and these acronyms were used to save typing in early kinds of chat. Some examples of acronyms are phrases like *R U THERE?* and *CUL* [see you later] (ibid.). In December 1977, the *Jargon File* added *BTW* [by the way] and *FYI* [for your information], which are still widely used today. The *Jargon File* began resembling the social Internet in 1990, as it added emoticons, all caps for shouting, and more acronyms, including *LOL* [laughing out loud], and *BRB* [be right back] (ibid.). Before the introduction of *LOL* chatroom users relied on a variety of other expressions, such as “>grin<,” “>laugh<,” and “*smile*,” to convey amusement (2020: 75).

The second group are the “Full Internet People” whom McCulloch defines as individuals who fully embraced the Internet as a medium for their social lives (2020: 78). They came of age during the late 1990s to early 2000s when the social Internet was beginning to gain prominence. This group would thus be full of primarily older Millennials. McCulloch explains that Full Internet People adopted many of the communicative norms established by their peers who were already using the Internet (2020: 78). Instant Messaging (IM) services like *AOL Instant Messenger (AIM)*, *MSN*, and *ICQ* were at the core of their first internet experience,

along with personalised homepages and profile pages featuring neon-coloured backgrounds and blinky gifs (ibid.).

4.3.1. Typography

One trend that became widely used in the 1990s and 2000s was the elongating of words with one-off repetitions, for instance, *everyone* was extended to *evvveryone* and *damn* was extended to *damnnn* (McCulloch 2020: 120).

Another popular instance of early internet slang was *leetspeak*, which was characterised by the use of numbers and special characters in place of letters that looked similar, like *l337* for *leet* (McCulloch 2020: 125). It also incorporated common typos, for example, the exclamation mark was often mistyped as the number *l*, since English keyboards place these two symbols on the same key, people often typed a series of exclamation marks as *!!!!l!!!!* (ibid.).

McCulloch mentions another common typographical tool, which was the usage of **asterisks** and *_underscores_* to emphasise text (2020: 127). Early internet users also used asterisks for decorative purposes, particularly when combined with tildes (2020: 127–128). In the late 1990s and early 2000s, people used sparkle punctuation in their status messages, ranging from a single *~*~* up to *~~~~*****~~~~*, mixing capitalization, adding extra spaces, and including star symbols (ibid.). As technology advanced, people started to use multicoloured text, upside-down letters, and built-in fonts (2020: 128).

4.3.2. Hashtags

The Internet has also introduced new symbols derived from programming languages, such as using an initial exclamation mark to indicate negation (*!interesting* = not interesting) and the hashtag symbol (Crystal 2011: 65). Hashtags were first used in 1988 on the Internet Relay Chat platform, and in 2009 they were adopted by *Twitter* (now *X*) (MacArthur 2021). They were initially created to find and group social media conversations or to tag pictures with relevant categories. By clicking on the hash-tagged word, people could find all posts and pictures relevant to the word. It was also possible to use hashtags to add a touch of irony to sentences, much like using sarcasm or rants, for example, *#awkward* (McCulloch 2020: 128–129).

4.3.3. GIFs, Emoticons, and Emoji

People use hands to illustrate their points, and facial expressions to convey their emotions. However, when people communicate through text messages, these nonverbal cues are lost, leaving only the words to convey the message (McCulloch 2020: 157). As a result, GIFs, emoticons and emojis have been used so people could fully express themselves in the online world.

As McCulloch states, gifs have been predominantly used as reaction gifs, which were silent, looping animations of people or characters performing a specific expressive gesture representing body language in different situations (2020: 14).

It was Scott Fahlman who in 1982 introduced the idea of using a simplified smiling face as a means of communication in text messages (McCulloch 2020: 177). According to McCulloch, the idea was quickly adopted by other participants in Fahlman's message thread and within a couple of months, people started using sideways text faces, as well as non-face emoticons such as the heart <3 (2020: 177–178). Some of the classics were :-) :-(:-P, which were later replaced by their more popular noseless variants (ibid.). These symbols were given the name *emoticons*, which is a combination of the words *emotion* and *icon* (2020: 178).

As McCulloch mentions, a new form of digital face, known as *kaomoji*, started to emerge on an early Japanese computer network called ASCII Net. *Kaomoji* was made up of the Japanese words *kao* [face] and *moji* [character] (2020: 179). Some classic examples of kaomoji such as ^_^ [happy], T_T [crying] and o.O [wide-eyed], are almost as old as emoticons themselves, appearing as early as 1985 or 1986 (ibid.). Certain kaomoji have become popular among English speakers, particularly those that describe actions, such as table flip (ノ◻°) ヽ(͡ಠ ͡ಠ) since 2011, flower-in-hair (🌸🌸) since 2013, and shruggie ಠ_ಠ since 2014 (ibid.).

The main question now is how the emojis as we know them today evolved. McCulloch describes that designers at SoftBank, a Japanese cellphone carrier, created short number codes for ninety small images in the late 1990s (2020: 181). These images included icons for weather, transit, hearts, hands, or faces that looked similar to the existing kaomoji. The word *emoji* comes from the Japanese *e* [picture] and *moji* [character] (ibid.). These easy-to-send pictures became quickly popular in Japan and other Japanese cellphone carriers added their own sets of emojis. Apple devices began incorporating emojis in 2011 and Android in 2013 (ibid.). In 2015, just

five years after emoji were introduced to the international stage, the most popular emoji, *tears of joy* - 🥳, surpassed the usage level of the most popular emoticon, :) (2020: 181–182).

4.3.4. Memes

What is always mentioned when discussing internet culture are memes. It was in 1976 when Richard Dawkins introduced memes as ideological counterparts to genes. Explaining just like how genes spread through sexual selection and physical fitness, memes spread through social media selection and ideological fitness (McCulloch 2020: 238–239). As Katz et al. note, memes have become the new form of slang. Both memes and slang were created by people outside of the mainstream and were used to create social groups (2021: 114).

The term *meme* in the context of the Internet refers to more than just a video, image, or phrase that becomes popular. It is an element of the Internet that is remixed and combined, spreading like an atom (McCulloch 2020: 240). In the late 1990s, the first internet memes were developed as image macros featuring the Impact font (Katz et al. 2021: 114). The first memes to gain popularity were the *lolcats*, which consisted of images of cats with overlaid text that began circulating on *4chan* back in 2005. Lolcats led to the emergence of meme-generator websites that popularised a consistent meme style, featuring all-caps, and white text with a black outline in the Impact font (McCulloch 2020: 241–242).

In the late stages of the lolcat meme, websites dedicated to creating memes emerged. These websites introduced numerous animal memes between 2008 and 2014 and these memes were called *Advice Animals* (McCulloch 2020: 244). These memes had a common human or animal character archetype in the centre and the narration of the memes consisted of two lines describing the actions or thoughts of the character. For instance, *Philosoraptor* was a velociraptor image in a pinwheel that pondered hypothetical questions and *Grumpy Cat* was a cat with an unamused facial expression (2020: 245).

4.3.5. Language Features Proposed by Tagliamonte

The data examined in the book by Tagliamonte was collected over several years, starting from 1995 and ending in 2010 (2016: 8). During Tagliamonte's research between 2009 and 2010, significant data consisting of peer interaction across three different CMC registers (Email, Instant Messaging, and Phone Texting) were obtained (2016: 17). Some data that she examined can be attributed to Generation X and Millennial individuals who were in their teenage and

young adult years at the time the data was gathered. What were the distinctive features of their online and offline conversations?

Tagliamonte points out that the teen language was often criticised for its use of pragmatic markers or discourse markers such as *like*, *you know*, *yeah*, *well*, *of course*, and *so* (2016: 24–26). What was also distinctive for the language of teens between the years 1995 and 2010 was the use of quotative verbs. Tagliamonte states that young people in the United States in the 1990s most frequently used *like* to quote themselves when they talked about their thoughts or sounds they made (“I’m like, ‘Oh my God!’”) (2016: 69–71). However, it was people born in the 1970s who became teenagers in the 1980s who started using *like* first (2016: 72–73). The language usage of the 1990s was also characterised by the use of intensifiers. Individuals over 35 years of age tended to rely on the intensifier *very*, whereas younger speakers tended to use *really* more frequently (2016: 85). Sentence starters such as *so*, *like*, *you know*, and *well* were another popular feature of teenage language (2016: 116–117). Certain age groups also tended to use specific ways of ending sentences. For instance, people born in the 1960s were known for using *right* frequently (2016: 137). *Whatever* was the preferred sentence ender for individuals between 1980 and 1984, while *so* was the most commonly used among those born between 1985 and 1989 (*ibid.*). Additionally, *and stuff* became the favoured way of ending sentences for people born after 1989 (*ibid.*).

4.3.6. Generation X and Millennials’ Slang

According to Tagliamonte, slang is a type of informal language with its own distinct features (2016: 2). Slang words are usually used as synonyms for everyday words, and although they are often considered to have a short lifespan, some of them remain in use for a long time (*ibid.*).

Gen X individuals had their own language and slang that reflected their laid-back, cynical, and music-loving nature during the 80s and 90s, according to an article by Michele Debczak. Debczak (2024) lists some of the slang terms used by Gen Xers, including *chill pill* [to calm down], *gnarly* [challenging or dangerous], *diss* [to discredit something], *hella* [very or a lot of], and *trippin’* [to act like a fool]. Zoghlami (2022) further adds more terms used by Gen Xers, including *dip* [to leave], *crib* [a place where you spend most of your time], *phat* [an abbreviation of *Pretty Hot and Thick*], and *bogus* [something false]. Devlin (2021) mentions terms like *BFF* [an abbreviation for *Best Friends Forever*], *emo* [overly emotional], and *vacay* [an informal short for *vacation*].

Millennials also have their own unique language and slang terms. Debczak (2023) mentions some of these terms, including *humblebrag* [announcing an accomplishment in a casual tone], *adulthood* [to conduct oneself like an adult], *totes* [an abbreviation for *totally*], *bae* [a term of endearment originating in AAVE], and *ghosting* [cutting off communication with someone without warning]. Borge and Nicolaou's article (2021) provides more terms that originated with Millennials, and some that were popularised by Gen Z. These include *clap back* [a verbal retaliation to criticism], *flex* [showing off your accomplishments], *OK Boomer* [an expression of frustration], *low key* [to keep something secretive], *high key* [to keep something loud and clear], *tea* [hot gossip, originating from '80s and '90s drag culture], *Bye, Felicia!* [be tired of putting up with someone], *Keep it 100* [be authentic], and *turnt* [a synonym for *drunk*]. Additionally, Zoghلامي's article (2022) also includes terms like *feels* [short for *feelings*, being overwhelmed with good or bad emotions], *swot* [short for *swollen*, getting muscular at the gym], and *shipping* [to support a romantic relationship between fictional characters].

Debczak (2023) and Borge and Nicolaou (2021) have in their respective articles highlighted an interesting phenomenon related to slang terms. According to them, many slang terms that had their origins with a particular generation were later adopted and popularised by the following generation. Hence, it is not uncommon to see terms that originated with Generation X being used by Millennials, and similarly, terms used by Millennials being even more popularised by Generation Z. Additionally, both articles also emphasise that a sizeable portion of these slang terms has its roots in the African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and the ball culture. The ball culture was a vibrant underground subculture in the LGBTQ community where people competed in drag competitions to celebrate their gender identity and queerness. Hence, these slang terms represent not only a generational evolution but also a cultural one, reflecting the rich diversity and history of various communities.

5. Generation Z

After examining the characteristics of Generation X and Millennials, this chapter aims to explore the defining traits of Generation Z and examine what makes their communication style distinctive.

5.1. Characteristics

Generation Z, often referred to as “post-millennials,” “Zoomers,” or “iGen-ers,” represent the first generation that has never experienced a world devoid of the Internet and everything that comes with it (Katz et al. 2021: 1). They are also commonly known as "digital natives" due to their early exposure to technology since childhood (Lisetti 2023: 63). The exact birth years that define Generation Z are difficult to determine, with various sources offering varying perspectives. While King places Generation Z within the span from 1997 to 2012 (2020: i), Twenge asserts that the generation began two years earlier, in 1995 (2023: 345). In the survey conducted for my research, I adhere to the period proposed by King.

5.1.1. Relationship with Technology

Generation Z is known for their fondness towards technology, which is a result of growing up in the digital age. Almost every individual belonging to this generation spends a considerable amount of their leisure time scrolling through social media or texting their friends. According to Twenge, the development of smartphones, such as the first iPhone in 2007, caused a significant shift in social life and communication (2023: 345). McCulloch agrees that the devices equipped with large touchscreens, built-in internet connectivity and keyboards integrated into the screens played a crucial role in this shift (2020: 141). Similarly, Tagliamonte observes that by 2009, texting had become ubiquitous as every family member had their own phone, replacing the traditional landline family phone (2016: 226). This generation has also been profoundly impacted by the COVID-19 lockdown. They were deprived of the natural and spontaneous way of communicating and had to rely on technology to stay connected with their classmates and friends.

Gen Zers use social media platforms to strengthen real-world relationships when meeting in person is not possible (Katz et al. 2021: 99). The survey conducted by Katz et al. found that social media plays a significant role in the social lives of slightly over 25% of respondents in both the United States and the United Kingdom (ibid.). Just under 25% of respondents said that

social media holds no importance for them, while 50% held a moderate stance, saying that social media was neither important nor unimportant to them (ibid.).

Pandit mentions that people's online experiences are increasingly shaping their identities. This includes factors such as the number of likes, shares, and views they receive on their posts and comments, and these factors have more influence on their identities than the number of real friends or real-world experiences they have (2015: 12). Some members of Generation Z spend so much time on social media which negatively influences their behaviour. Individuals who spend a significant amount of time online are referred to as chronic online users. Excessive online activity can distort their perception of reality and affect their ability to communicate about critical issues in the real world (Al-Heeti 2021). Chronically online people typically do not have any friends offline and instigate pointless arguments online just to create drama (ibid.).

5.1.2. Lifestyle

According to Katz et al., there has been a significant shift in the way young people view their Gen X and Millennial parents (2021: 130). They are now often seen as friends and confidants with whom they share their daily activities in the same way they would with their peers (ibid.). This is in contrast to earlier generations when parents were primarily viewed as authority figures (2021: 131). Additionally, a significant number of Gen Zers have been raised in diverse family structures, including single-parent families, blended families, and those led by same-sex couples (2021: 133).

The Internet has also revolutionised how people connect with other people. As Katz et al. mention, dating has now become a semi-private and anonymous activity due to dating apps like *Tinder* or *Bumble* (2021: 141). Technology has also enabled the development of romantic relationships online without ever progressing beyond the digital realm (2021: 143). Twenge then suggests that Generation Z might not only delay marriage and relationships but potentially refrain from even entering them (2023: 376).

Generation Z is a group of young people who feel an intense sense of responsibility towards making a positive impact in the world (Katz et al. 2021: 172). According to Katz's study, climate change is the most concerning issue for the future, leading to some Gen Z members joining environmental groups and participating in climate activism (2021: 173). Social media play a vital role in Generation Z activism, providing an ideal means of disseminating information and promoting awareness (2021: 180). Twenge also agrees that social media is crucial for Gen Z activism as it not only connects individuals with similar

perspectives but also brings formerly hidden events into public view (2023: 438). One example of social media playing an important role in spreading information was during the 2020 US presidential election when *TikTok* transformed from a platform for uploading funny videos to a space increasingly used for political engagement and campaigning (Katz et al. 2021: 180).

In addition, it is common among the members of Generation Z to discuss their mental health openly, even with people they are not very close to, as expressing oneself and discussing one's life experiences is seen as a sign of authenticity (Katz et al. 2021: 162). Twenge suggests that the changes in mental health and behaviour may be linked to the rapid growth and widespread adoption of technology, with social media being a prime example (2023: 401). Social media are the primary source of negative news and online conversations tend to escalate quickly, as it is much easier to insult people when they are not visible (Twenge 2023: 423). Crystal also notes that online conversations differ from traditional ones primarily because of the anonymity of participants, which can lead to offensive content being expressed (2011: 7). Pandit recalls his youth and how quickly information and opinions about him would spread on the Internet, even from people he had never met. He notes that when these opinions were posted on social media, people judged him more harshly than they would in face-to-face communication, highlighting the more hostile nature of online communication (2015: 11). However, research conducted by Andrew Przybylski, Amy Orben and Netta Weinstein shows that the impact of using digital technology on adolescent well-being is minimal (Katz et al. 2021: 162–163). Additionally, a study by Katz et al. discovered that some people even find social media helpful during times of anxiety and loneliness (2021: 163).

5.2. Communication Style of Generation Z

Generation Z lives in a fast-paced world where every second counts and should not be wasted on unimportant things or tasks. One participant in Katz's study confirms this by saying that he "treats time as a currency, which you can spend however you like" (2021: 22).

5.2.1. Acronyms and Abbreviations

Members of Generation Z often communicate by texting and messaging as primary modes of interaction with family and friends. They are deliberately condensing messages to be as concise as possible and acronyms and abbreviations are the perfect feature for that. The most commonly used acronyms by Gen Z today are, for example, *ASAP* [As Soon As Possible], *FOMO* [Fear Of Missing Out], *IRL* [In Real Life], *SMH* [Shaking My Head] (Meleen 2022);

FRFR [For Real For Real], *OOMF* [One Of My Followers], *FYP* [For You Page], *POV* [Point Of View], *TBH* [To Be Honest], and *NGL* [Not Gonna Lie] (Ahmed 2024).

5.2.2. Typography

Gen Zers often type their messages in lowercase. There is a strong tendency to use only lowercase letters, avoiding the awkwardness when choosing the uppercase on a keyboard (Crystal 2011: 64). McCulloch explains that adopting a minimalist lowercase style at the beginning of sentences makes the sender more approachable (2020: 147). In contrast, using all caps is considered shouting (Crystal 2011: 64). McCulloch suggests that it is because the use of caps is associated with expressing strong emotions (2020: 15). Another popular way of emphasising text in online conversations by Gen Z is by the repetition of letters for emotive words like *yayyy* or *nooo* (McCulloch 2020: 120).

Insight into the communicative style of Gen Z can be gained by observing their use (or lack) of periods at the end of sentences. According to one respondent in Katz's study, the inclusion of a period at the end of the sentence could be misconstrued as a signal of the sender's anger (2021: 15). The participant in the study also suggests that a delayed response to a text or message may be interpreted as a sign of underlying hostility (*ibid.*). Therefore, the anticipation of a response to a message may not solely imply that the prospective respondent is currently occupied; it could also evoke the perception that the individual simply does not want to engage in further conversation with the sender.

In online conversations, it is important to be polite and respectful. According to McCulloch, the exclamation mark is often used to express warmth or sincerity, not just excitement (2020: 124). Young people also use *lol* (2020: 126) or the repetition of *ha* such as *hahahaha* (2020: 106) to express genuine laughter. Another way to show politeness is by adding smiley faces, which help to soften the tone of the message (2020: 125–126). According to Katz et al., Generation Z is also conscious that their text messages can be misinterpreted as aggressive or sarcastic (2021: 16–17). To counter this, they employ tildes, XML closing tags *<s>*, and **asterisks** to convey sarcasm and irony (*ibid.*).

5.2.3. Emoticons and Emoji

As McCulloch points out, people use emojis, particularly faces and hand gestures, to express themselves better in digital messages (2020: 14). Emojis are also frequently used to replace intonation and rhythm, clarify meaning or substitute punctuation (Blanco & Wilson 2022).

The currently most popular emojis used by Gen Z are the *crying emoji* 🤔, which does not represent crying but laughing; the *skull emoji* 🤪, which does not represent death or a skull but amusement at something too funny or too cringe-worthy; and the *smiley face* 😏 is used in messages to emphasise the passive-aggressive context (Cramer 2023). Gen Zers also use the *thumbs-up emoji* 👍 as a passive-aggressive way to punctuate a statement; the *standing person emoji* 🧑 when they cannot think of anything else to say or as a response to something absurd; and the *person tipping hand emoji* 🙄 to punctuate a sarcastic comment (Däuwel 2024).

5.2.4. Memes

Memes are another popular way for Generation Z to express their feelings and manage their emotional state. According to Katz et al., Many Gen Zers see memes as a defining part of their generation (2021: 112). They utilise memes to communicate with their peers, sharing inside jokes that are exclusive to their group. Additionally, they use memes to parody and criticise the flaws they see in today's society.

Among the many types of memes that are popular among Gen Zers, “deep-fried” memes stand out because they distort the original image beyond recognition (Bhattacharya 2023). Another type of meme that is widespread among Gen Z is the “hair meme” which features images of random individuals with the “Zoomer Perm,” a trendy haircut among the younger generation (ibid.). The “distracted boyfriend” meme portrays a man looking at another woman while his girlfriend disapproves (Sessoms 2023). This meme is often used to convey the idea of being tempted by something new or exciting. Furthermore, the “Wojak” meme features a drawing of a sad-looking man and is used to express feelings of sadness or empathy (ibid.).

Another type of meme that Gen Zers frequently post is known as a corypasta. Essentially, corypastas are pieces of text that have been rewritten and often include a plethora of emojis to make the message clear (Katz et al. 2021: 116). These rewrites are often imbued with a sense of sarcasm and irony and are used to poke fun at the original author’s earnestness (ibid.).

5.2.5. Slang

The chat platform is the best place for people to use informal language with ease. McCulloch notes that teenagers' language is heavily influenced by the slang of their peers when they start using social media (2020: 29). Tagliamonte adds that teenagers deliberately use slang to achieve a sense of belonging to their peer groups while keeping their parents and teachers out of the loop (2016: 3). McCulloch also refers to a study conducted by Sali Tagliamonte and Derek Denis in 2008. In this study, the two linguists analysed teenagers' written records of their instant messaging and found that teenagers did not use internet slang very often. Instead of slang, they used informal features, such as smiley faces and acronyms, along with formal words like *must* and *shall* (2020: 59). However, according to a survey conducted in 2023 in which 1,500 Americans were asked about their use of slang, it was revealed that almost everyone nowadays uses slang. Approximately 94% of Americans use slang in some way, and over 54% of respondents use slang in the majority of their conversations (Zajechowski 2023). The survey also discovered that most Americans learn slang from social media sites, especially *TikTok* and *Twitter*. In addition, almost all of the Gen Z Americans surveyed, precisely 98%, use slang (ibid.).

According to Zajechowski (2023), 68% of respondents said they use slang when talking to friends. In addition, 79% of Americans use slang when speaking with family and friends at home, and 73% use slang during social events (ibid.). When communicating with Gen Z, older generations may experience misunderstandings. 90% of Gen Z had to explain the meaning of a slang term to someone else, while 62% of Baby Boomers have asked a younger person to explain a term to them (ibid.).

Although Gen Z slang circulates rapidly on social media, many of the terms have much older origins. Just because the Internet is often the medium through which new words spread, it does not necessarily mean that it is always the source of them (McCulloch 2020: 273). According to Cramer (2023), many popular words and phrases used by Gen Z that are gaining popularity on social platforms come from African American and queer vernacular.

Now it is time to look at some specific examples of slang associated with this generation. Knott (2021) discusses the lexicon used by Generation Z and points out that some phrases and terms, such as *GG* [good game], *noob* [a novice player], or *camping* [hiding in a strategic location] are part of the gaming slang (2021: 19–20). Moreover, Gen Zers also use people's names as punchlines for jokes. One such example is the pejorative term *Karen*, which refers to

people who feel wronged by everyone and have an unstrained sense of entitlement (2021: 37). Another example is the term *Chad*, which describes a man who embodies a strong alpha persona (2021: 39). In addition, the Gen Z vocabulary also includes several slang terms related to dating. Knott mentions terms like *aromantic* [someone who does not conform to the romantic aspect of a relationship] (2021: 46), *catfishing* [pretending to be someone online while being different in the offline world] (2021: 47), and *thirst trap* [posting provocative and seductive content online] (2021: 56). Furthermore, Sarah Ogilvie's lexical list includes words related to gender and sexual identities, such as *enby* [derived from the abbreviation *nb* for non-binary] or *pass* [presenting as the gender one identifies with], that are perceived by Generation Z to be characteristic of their generation (Katz et al. 2021: 46–47).

According to Zoghlami's article (2022), some other examples of the terms frequently used by Generation Z also include *big mad* [be mad about something that has triggered you], *catch these hands* [wanting to fight someone], and *snack* [someone extremely attractive]. Kato (2023) mentions more examples like *to serve* [to look extremely good], *it's giving* [to emulate, often used as a comparison], *rizz* [short for *charisma*, to have natural charm], *menty b* [a nickname for *mental breakdown*], *delulu* [the colloquialism for *delusional*], *side eye* [a way to vocalize judgement], *common W* [agree with something done or said], and *common L* [disagree with something done or said]. Liles (2023) offers a list of 50 Gen Z slang words, which include *dank* [something of very high quality], *simp* [someone who puts too much effort to impress someone else], *sheesh* [hype someone up], and *this ain't it, chief* [giving disapproval for something].

6. Research Methodology

The objective of this thesis is to understand how well the slang terms used by Generation Z are understood by the preceding generations, namely Generation X and Millennials. To achieve this, a questionnaire survey was conducted to gather both qualitative and quantitative data on the comprehension of Gen Z slang. The following subchapters provide detailed explanations of the survey's purpose, questionnaire design, sample lexicon collection for the questionnaire, and data collection methods.

6.1. Purpose of the Survey

In order to effectively communicate with individuals of different age groups, it is important to be aware of how language and communication patterns have changed over time. This study focuses specifically on how slang terms used by Gen Z are perceived and understood by older generations, in particular Generation X and Millennials. The goal of this study is also to gain insight into the intergenerational dynamics of language and communication, and ultimately use this information to bridge linguistic gaps and improve cross-generational communication.

6.2. Questionnaire Design

The "Understanding Gen Z Slang: A Cross-Generational Study" survey was created using Microsoft Forms. The questionnaire was divided into three distinct sections. The first section aimed to collect demographic information about the participants. It asked about which generation they belong to, their birth year, gender, and lastly, geographic location, asking whether they come from an English-speaking country or a non-native English-speaking country and which particular country they are from. To be eligible to take part in the survey, the participants had to belong to either Generation X (people born between 1965 and 1980) or the Millennial generation (people born between 1981 and 1996).

In the next section of the questionnaire, participants were asked about 40 Gen Z slang terms. This section was divided into three parts. Firstly, the "Yes/No Identification" part asked participants if they were familiar with the following specific terms. Secondly, the "Level of Familiarity" part required participants to indicate their level of familiarity with the terms using the Likert scale. Lastly, the "Additional Questions" part allowed participants to provide a definition or usage context for any terms they marked as "Yes, I'm familiar with this term." The participants could also add any terms that they were familiar with, but were not on the list.

Additionally, the participants were asked where they learned or encountered the Gen Z slang terms. The question about the definition or usage context was included to gather qualitative insights into how participants interpret and use these terms (whether they are interpreting and using them correctly). In contrast, the question about where they encountered the slang terms helped in understanding the spread of Gen Z slang terms from Generation Z to older generations.

The last section of the survey was focused on gathering information about “Intergenerational Communication.” Specifically, about how the use of Gen Z slang affects communication across different age groups. The first question asked the respondents if they had ever experienced misunderstandings or challenges in their communication with individuals from Generation Z due to the use of Gen Z slang. If the answer was “Yes,” they were asked to provide specific examples of these challenges. The second question asked respondents to share specific instances where the use of Gen Z slang facilitated communication with younger individuals. Finally, the respondents were asked how they adapt their communication style when interacting with Gen Zers to ensure effective mutual understanding. The full questionnaire is included in Appendix A.

6.3. Gen Z Slang Terms Used for the Questionnaire

6.3.1. Collection of the Slang Terms

The collection of slang terms began with the research of both online and offline sources. Various recent online articles focusing on Gen Z lingo, such as those written by Ahmed, Cramer, Kaplan, Kato, Klein, Liles, Monaghan, Spollen and Zoghiami, as well as printed Gen Z dictionaries by King and Knott were used as sources. Based on these sources, a list of 266 slang terms was compiled. These slang terms were organized in a chart, sorted out according to their frequency, and the terms that appeared in at least half of the sources were included in the narrowed-down list of 100 slang terms. The full list of 100 slang terms is to be found in Table B1 in Appendix B.

6.3.2. Preliminary Questionnaire

The 100 slang terms were then used to create a preliminary questionnaire “Most Frequently Used Gen Z Slang Terms.” This questionnaire was eligible to be filled out only by the members of Generation Z. This questionnaire aimed to reduce the list of 100 terms to 40 terms according to the frequency of use by Gen Z itself, as a sample of 100 terms could be too overwhelming for older generations. The questionnaire was distributed in various online

communities, including *Reddit* (r/SampleSize; r/takemysurvey; r/GenZ), *Facebook*, *TikTok*, and *Discord*. The questionnaire included the “demographic information” section, asking about the age, gender, and geographic location of the respondents (whether they come from an English-speaking country or non-native English-speaking country, and from which country in particular). In the following section, the respondents were asked to mark how frequently (Never; Rarely; Occasionally; Frequently; All the time) they used the specific slang terms from the list using the Likert scale. The last question was open-ended and asked the respondents whether they frequently use any other terms, which are not on the list. The full preliminary questionnaire can be found in Appendix A. The questionnaire collected data from September 19th to November 1st, 2023, and received 160 responses.

6.3.2.1. Analysis of the Data from the Preliminary Questionnaire

Based on the data collected from the questionnaire, the respondents born in 1997 (12%), 1999 (12%), and 2001 (11%) provided the most answers from the total of 160 responses. In contrast, the respondents born in 2010 (1%), 2011 (0%), and 2012 (0%) provided the least number of answers. Regarding gender identity, 73 respondents identified as women, 61 as men, 18 as non-binary, and 8 as other gender identity. Among the respondents, 115 came from English-speaking countries, predominantly from the United States and Canada, while 45 came from non-native English-speaking countries, predominantly from Germany and Sweden.

To reduce the original list of 100 lexical terms to 40, the data obtained from Microsoft Forms were downloaded and analysed in an Excel file. The Excel function “COUNTIF” was used to sum up the answers that indicated frequent or constant use (Frequently; All the time). Then percentage of frequent or constant use for each term was calculated. With the help of “Conditional Formatting,” highlighting the terms with a high percentage of frequent use to help reduce the list to 35 terms was possible. Finally, 5 additional terms (*So Real for That*, *Girlboss*, *Hot Take*, *SMH*, *IJBOL*) were selected based on their high frequency in the 42 answers to the open-ended question “What other Gen Z slang terms do you use?”.

The percentages for “Frequent” and “All the time” use for the terms were recorded in Table B2 (see Appendix B). It is interesting to note that among all the slang terms surveyed, the one that was used most frequently (either “Frequently” or “All the time”) was *Cringe*, which was used frequently by 61.88% of all the respondents. In contrast, the slang term with the lowest percentage of frequent use was *Cheugy*, which was not used frequently by any of the respondents.

6.3.3. The List of 40 Slang Terms Used for the Main Questionnaire

The preliminary questionnaire has resulted in the compilation of a list of 40 slang terms, which are presented in Table 1 below. Additionally, Table B3 (see Appendix B) has been created to provide explanations of the meanings of these slang terms.

Table 1: List of 40 Slang Terms Used for the Main Questionnaire

List of 40 Slang Terms Used for the Main Questionnaire	
1. Based	21. Low-key
2. Basic	22. Mid
3. Bestie	23. Mood
4. Bet	24. Salty
5. Bop	25. Ship (Someone with Someone)
6. Bruh	26. Sick
7. Cringe	27. Slaps
8. Deadass	28. Slay
9. Flex	29. SMH (Shaking My Head)
10. FR (For Real)	30. So Real For That
11. Fruity	31. (Someone/Something Is) Cancelled
12. Gatekeep	32. Sus
13. Ghosting	33. (Take an) L
14. Girlboss	34. TBH (To Be Honest)
15. High-key	35. That Ain't It
16. Hits Different	36. Touch Grass
17. Hot Take	37. Triggered
18. (I'm) Dead	38. Valid
19. IJBOL (I Just Burst Out Laughing)	39. Vibe
20. (Living in Your Head) Rent Free	40. Yikes

6.4. Data Collection

The list of 40 slang terms was included in the main questionnaire called “Understanding Gen Z Slang: A Cross-Generational Study,” which provided the data for the analytical part of this thesis. The data for the questionnaire were collected over 83 days, from December 8th 2023 to February 29th 2024. The questionnaire was shared on various online platforms, including *Reddit* (r/GenX, r/SampleSize, r/Millennials), *Facebook*, and *Discord*. It was reposted several times during the collection period until the desired number of responses was reached. In total, 174 responses were collected.

7. Presentation and Discussion of the Results

This chapter is a comprehensive presentation of quantitative and qualitative data that has been gathered through the main questionnaire. The data is presented in an organised format, using tables and charts. Furthermore, the results are interpreted and discussed in detail, providing a thorough analysis of the outcomes.

7.1. Data Analysis Techniques

To facilitate an efficient and effective analysis of the data collected via Microsoft Forms, the responses were downloaded and organised in an Excel file. This was done to ensure greater clarity and convenience in analysing the considerable number of answers. The data in the Excel file was sorted into four different sheets, with each sheet focusing on a different aspect of the survey.

The first sheet “Participants” offered an analysis of all the demographic information about the participants. The second sheet focused on the “Familiarity with the Slang Terms” part of the survey. The third sheet analysed the “Additional Questions about the Terms.” Finally, the last sheet presented an analysis of the responses to the questions on “Intergenerational Communication.”

The coded data was checked for inconsistency before analysis. There were a few slightly inconsistent answers in the second sheet, which focused on "Familiarity with the Slang Terms." In this sheet, respondents were asked if they were familiar with certain terms, with answers being either “Yes” or “No.” Afterwards, they were asked to rate their level of familiarity with the terms, ranging from “Not at all familiar” to “Extremely familiar.” Some respondents marked that they were not familiar with the term in the first part, but then marked it as “Slightly familiar” or “Moderately familiar” in the second part. The decision to keep these answers in the analysis was made, as the issue might have arisen due to the fact that respondents had to mark their answers in the general familiarity part first and then scroll down to mark their level of familiarity. During this process, they may have remembered that they actually knew the term and therefore not gone back to the first part to change their answer. Alternatively, they may have been filling out the survey in a rush or been distracted during the process, marked one answer in the first part, and not double-checked it against their answer in the “level of familiarity” part.

I chose not to eliminate the answers provided by the “inconsistent” respondents in the “Familiarity with the Slang Terms” section. Although their responses were slightly inconsistent, they provided relevant and sincere answers to the open-ended questions in the subsequent sections. I believe their inconsistent answers in the “Familiarity” section were thus the result of carelessness or distraction and not an intentional act. Therefore, I decided to keep their responses in the analysis.

The questionnaire data were processed by converting it into comprehensive tables. In these tables, the number of respondents who selected a particular answer was noted, and the percentages of each chosen answer were calculated using the “COUNTIF” function in Excel. To make it easier to identify patterns in the answers, the data was highlighted using “Conditional Formatting.” Additionally, graphs were also created to help visually represent the analysed data.

Graphic 1: Example of Data Processing 1

1. Based2	2. Basic2	3. Bestie2	4. Bet2	5. Bop2	6. Bruh2	7. Cringe2	8. Deadass2	9. Flex2	10. FR (For Real)2
Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Very familiar	Slightly familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar
Moderately familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Moderately familiar	Extremely familiar
Not at all familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Not at all familiar	Not at all familiar	Very familiar
Moderately familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Not at all familiar	Not at all familiar	Extremely familiar	Moderately familiar	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Not at all familiar
Very familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Extremely familiar	Very familiar	Moderately familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar
Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Moderately familiar	Slightly familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar
Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar
Not at all familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Moderately familiar	Extremely familiar	Slightly familiar	Very familiar	Slightly familiar
Slightly familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Very familiar	Not at all familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Extremely familiar
Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Very familiar	Not at all familiar	Very familiar	Very familiar	Slightly familiar	Very familiar	Moderately familiar
Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar
Slightly familiar	Slightly familiar	Very familiar	Not at all familiar	Very familiar	Slightly familiar	Extremely familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar
Not at all familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Not at all familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Very familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Moderately familiar
Very familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Not at all familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar
Moderately familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar
Slightly familiar	Slightly familiar	Slightly familiar	Not at all familiar	Not at all familiar	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Not at all familiar	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar
Slightly familiar	Slightly familiar	Extremely familiar	Not at all familiar	Not at all familiar	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar	Slightly familiar	Not at all familiar	Moderately familiar

Graphic 2: Example of Data Processing 2

How many	1	2	3	4	5	6
Not at all familiar	32	8	4	39	67	5
Slightly familiar	36	11	4	31	17	10
Moderately familiar	42	37	18	39	26	29
Very familiar	36	53	60	38	26	51
Extremely familiar	28	65	88	27	38	79
	174	174	174	174	174	174
%						
Not at all familiar	18	5	2	22	39	3
Slightly familiar	21	6	2	18	10	6
Moderately familiar	24	21	10	22	15	17
Very familiar	21	30	34	22	15	29
Extremely familiar	16	37	51	16	22	45
100	100	100	100	100	100	100

7.2. Analysis of Questionnaire Survey Results

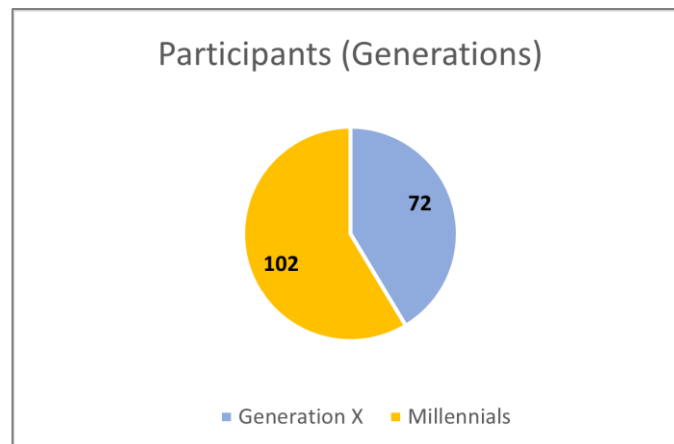
In the upcoming sub-chapters, survey results organised according to the four sheets of the Excel file (“Participants,” “Familiarity with the Slang Terms,” “Additional Questions,” and “Intergenerational Communication”) are presented.

7.2.1. Participants

The survey was conducted to gather information about how Gen Z slang is perceived and understood among older generations. Both native and non-native English speakers were allowed to participate. To be eligible to take part in the survey, the participants had to belong to either Generation X (people born between 1965 and 1980) or the Millennial generation (people born between 1981 and 1996). Individuals born in 1964 or 1997 were thus not eligible to participate, as they did not belong to the desired generations.

The survey collected responses from 174 individuals. Of these, 72 (41%) respondents were from the Generation X and 102 (59%) were from the Millennial generation.

Chart 1: Participants According to Generations



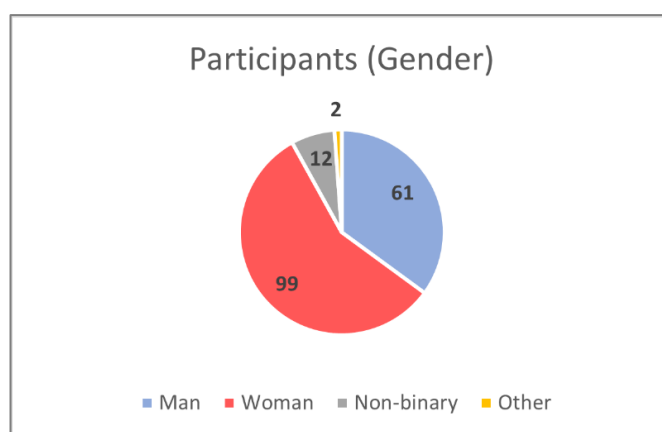
The participants were also requested to provide their years of birth. Among the 72 Gen Xers who participated in the survey, a substantial number of them were born in 1968 (11%) and 1978 (11%). On the other hand, the least number of respondents were born in 1973 (3%) and 1966 (1%). Among the 102 Millennial respondents, a high number of them were born in 1996 (18%) and 1995 (14%). Conversely, the least number of respondents were born in 1987 (3%) and 1988 (2%). The responses received are presented in Table 2. The graphical representation of this table can be found in Chart B1 and Chart B2 (see Appendix B).

Table 2: Overview of the Participants' Birth Years

Birth Years					
Generation X			Millennials		
Year	Number	In %	Year	Number	In %
1965	3	4	1981	6	6
1966	1	1	1982	6	6
1967	5	7	1983	4	4
1968	8	11	1984	4	4
1969	3	4	1985	4	4
1970	6	8	1986	6	6
1971	3	4	1987	3	3
1972	5	7	1988	2	2
1973	2	3	1989	5	5
1974	6	8	1990	5	5
1975	5	7	1991	5	5
1976	4	6	1992	6	6
1977	4	6	1993	5	5
1978	8	11	1994	9	9
1979	6	8	1995	14	14
1980	3	4	1996	18	18
	72	100		102	100

Out of the total 174 respondents, 99 individuals (57%) identified as women, 61 individuals (35%) identified as men, 12 individuals (7%) identified as non-binary, and 2 individuals (1%) identified as having other gender identities.

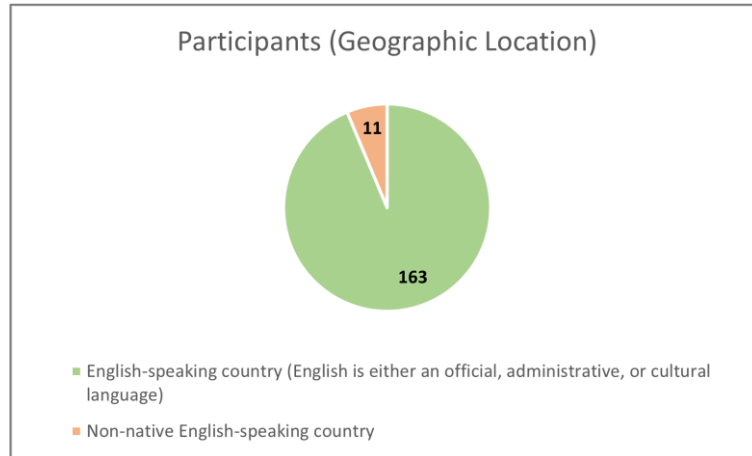
Chart 2: Participants According to Gender



The survey accepted responses from individuals from both English-speaking countries and non-native English-speaking countries. Out of the total 174 respondents, 163 (94%) respondents were from English-speaking countries, while the remaining 11 (6%) respondents were from non-native English-speaking countries.

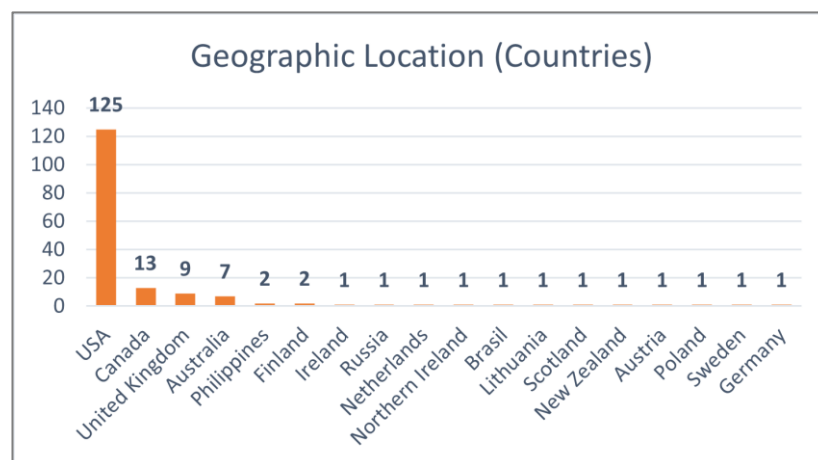
It would be interesting to further analyse and compare the understanding of Gen Z slang among those who are native English speakers compared to non-native speakers. However, as the vast majority of respondents (94%) came from native English-speaking countries, the comparison would not be possible.

Chart 3: Participants According to Geographic Location



As part of the survey, the participants were asked a non-obligatory question about their country of origin. A total of 170 responses was received, out of which the majority of respondents, i.e., 125 (74%), were from the United States of America. 13 (8%) participants were from Canada, 9 (5%) participants were from the United Kingdom, and 7 (4%) participants were from Australia. Additionally, non-native English speakers were, for instance, from Finland, Russia, or Brasil. The chart below includes all the countries mentioned by the participants.

Chart 4: Participants According to Specific Countries



7.2.2. Familiarity with the Slang Terms

After introducing the participants who engaged in the study, it is time to delve into the analysis of Generation X and Millennials' familiarity with the slang terms frequently used by Generation Z.

In the survey's section conducted to assess the familiarity of Generation X and Millennials with Gen Z slang terms, the respondents were presented with a list of 40 such terms that were selected through the preliminary questionnaire. The "Familiarity" part of the survey consisted of two questions. The first question aimed to determine whether the respondents were acquainted with the terms listed, with the answer options being either "Yes" or "No." The second question requested the participants to mark their level of familiarity with each term on a Likert scale, with the answer options ranging from "Not at all familiar" to "Extremely familiar." These options were defined as: "Not at all familiar" (if they had answered "No" in the previous "Familiarity" section); "Slightly familiar" (if they had heard the term before but were unsure of its meaning or usage); "Moderately familiar" (if they recognised the term and had a basic understanding of its meaning); "Very familiar" (if they could use the term in conversations themselves and explain its meaning to others); and "Extremely familiar" (if they used the term regularly and effortlessly in their conversations).

As was mentioned in Chapter 7.1. ("Data Analysis Techniques"), there were a few minor inconsistencies in the responses, where some participants marked that they were not familiar with the term in the first question ("Yes," or "No") but rated themselves as slightly or moderately familiar with the same term in the second question (Likert scale). However, these responses were not discarded from the analysis as the respondents also gave valuable feedback to open-ended questions, which indicated that the inconsistencies could be attributed to disruptions or haste while taking the survey. To retain these valuable insights and not disregard them completely, I chose to focus solely on the responses to the second "familiarity" question of the survey (Likert scale). This question asked the respondents to rate their level of familiarity with Gen Z slang, which was deemed more relevant to the research aimed at understanding how older generations are familiar with such slang.

A total of 12 tables was created to document the level of familiarity with 40 slang terms among (a) both generations, (b) Generation X only, and (c) Millennials only. These tables can be found in Appendix B (see Tables B4-B15; with their visual representation in Charts B3-B14). However, to better understand the differences and similarities in familiarity between

different generations, the data from smaller tables was combined into four complex tables. These four tables (Tables 3-6) show the familiarity percentages of each of the 40 slang terms, indicating overall familiarity, familiarity among Generation X, and familiarity among Millennials. In the following paragraphs, the most notable differences in familiarity with the terms among the two generations are highlighted.

The first section of 10 terms (Table 3) shows that out of the 174 people surveyed, 39% of them had never heard of the slang term *Bop*, making it the least familiar term for both generations. In contrast, 53% of the respondents found the term *Cringe* to be extremely familiar, making it the most familiar slang term. This suggests that while some slang terms are widely known, others may not be as commonly known and understood.

According to the survey results, when focusing on the two generations separately, 51% of the 72 Gen Xers were completely unfamiliar with the term *Bop*, making it the least familiar word to them. Similarly, although *Bop* was also the most unknown term to Millennials, only 29% out of the 102 respondents marked it as unfamiliar. This resulted in a 22% difference in the levels of unfamiliarity between the two generations. Therefore, Generation X was significantly more unfamiliar with the term meaning “a really good song” than the younger generation. The term *Deadass* was the most “slightly familiar” term for Gen Xers, with 15% of respondents marking it as such, while for Millennials, *Based* was the most “slightly familiar” term, marked by 21% of respondents. On the other hand, *Based* was the most “moderately familiar” term for Gen Xers, marked by 32% of respondents, while *Bet* was the most “moderately familiar” term for Millennials, marked as such by 25% of respondents. The term *Cringe* was most marked as “very familiar” by 43% of Gen Xers, while *Bestie* was the term that Millennials were most “very familiar” with, marked by 29% of them. Interestingly, Gen Xers were the most familiar with the term *Bestie*, marked as such by 40% of them, and Millennials were the most acquainted with the term *Cringe*, marked by 65% of respondents.

The data in Table 3 reveals that Generation X individuals were generally less familiar with these terms than their Millennial counterparts. The term that proved to be the most unfamiliar to Gen Xers was *Bop*, with 51% of them marking it as completely unfamiliar. In contrast, only 29% of Millennials were unfamiliar with this term. This difference could be attributed to the fact that Millennials are younger and closer in age to Gen Zers than Gen Xers, which means the gap in slang terminologies between the two younger generations might not be

as significant as with the older Generation X. Only one term, *Basic*, was more unfamiliar to Millennials than Gen Xers, but this difference was minimal. 4% of Gen Xers marked it as “Not at all familiar,” compared to 5% of Millennials. On the other hand, Millennials were found to be more “extremely familiar” with all the terms than Gen Xers. This further supports the statement that the linguistic gap between Generation Z and Millennials is not as substantial as the one between Generation Z and Generation X. Furthermore, the term *Cringe* showed the most significant difference in familiarity between the two generations, with 65% of Millennials marking it as “Extremely familiar” compared to only 38% of Gen Xers. The majority of Gen Xers instead marked this term as “Very familiar” (43%).

Table 3: Comparison of Familiarity with the Terms (1-10)

Comparison of Familiarity with the Terms (1-10)						
Term	Familiarity	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar
1. Based	Overall	18%	21%	24%	21%	16%
	Gen X	25%	11%	32%	21%	11%
	Ms	14%	27%	19%	21%	20%
2. Basic	Overall	5%	6%	21%	30%	37%
	Gen X	4%	7%	25%	38%	26%
	Ms	5%	6%	19%	25%	45%
3. Bestie	Overall	2%	2%	10%	34%	51%
	Gen X	3%	3%	13%	42%	40%
	Ms	2%	2%	9%	29%	58%
4. Bet	Overall	22%	18%	22%	22%	16%
	Gen X	31%	13%	18%	25%	14%
	Ms	17%	22%	25%	20%	17%
5. Bop	Overall	39%	10%	15%	15%	22%
	Gen X	51%	13%	11%	13%	13%
	Ms	29%	8%	18%	17%	28%
6. Bruh	Overall	3%	6%	17%	29%	45%
	Gen X	3%	4%	21%	39%	33%
	Ms	3%	7%	14%	23%	54%
7. Cringe	Overall	2%	2%	13%	29%	53%
	Gen X	3%	1%	15%	43%	38%
	Ms	2%	3%	12%	19%	65%
8. Deadass	Overall	15%	12%	20%	26%	28%
	Gen X	18%	15%	21%	24%	22%
	Ms	13%	10%	19%	27%	31%
9. Flex	Overall	6%	7%	16%	29%	42%
	Gen X	7%	8%	17%	29%	39%
	Ms	6%	6%	16%	28%	44%
10. FR (For Real)	Overall	11%	8%	17%	24%	40%
	Gen X	14%	10%	21%	26%	29%
	Ms	9%	7%	15%	22%	48%

Based on the data presented in Table 4 below, it can be inferred that 66% of the 174 respondents had no prior knowledge of the term *IJBOL*, indicating it was the most unfamiliar term among all the terms studied. However, the term *Ghosting* was extremely familiar to both Generation X and Millennials, as 53% of respondents recognised it.

Both Gen Xers and Millennials were largely unfamiliar with the term *IJBOL*, with 61% and 70% of respondents respectively marking it as unfamiliar. Surprisingly, Millennials were even less familiar (70%) with this term than Gen Xers (61%). This was unexpected, as one would think that the younger generation of Millennials would be less unfamiliar with this newer term that gained prominence recently. Furthermore, both generations were most “slightly familiar” with the term *Fruity*, with 17% of Gen Xers and 13% of Millennials marking it as such. In addition, the term *Hits Different* was also marked as most “slightly familiar” by 13% of Millennials. When it comes to moderate familiarity, Gen Xers were most “moderately familiar” with the term *Girlboss*, with 28% of respondents marking it as such. Meanwhile, Millennials were most “moderately familiar” with the term *High-key*, with 24% of respondents marking it as such. The term that Gen Xers marked as “very familiar” the most was *Ghosting*, which was marked by 42% of respondents. On the other hand, Millennials were “very familiar” the most with the terms *Gatekeep* and *Girlboss*, which were both marked by 29% of respondents. The term that both Gen Xers and Millennials were the most familiar with was *Ghosting*, which was marked by 39% of Gen Xers and 64% of Millennials.

Terms that were surprisingly more “Not at all familiar” to Millennials than Gen Xers were *Ghosting*, *Hot Take*, and *IJBOL*. Only 1% of Gen Xers found *Ghosting* completely unfamiliar, while 3% of Millennials did. A similar pattern was observed with *Hot Take*, which was marked as completely unfamiliar by 10% of Gen Xers and 11% of Millennials. However, the most significant difference was observed with *IJBOL*, which was completely unfamiliar to 61% of Gen Xers and 70% of Millennials. On the other hand, Millennials were more likely to be “extremely familiar” with all the terms except for *IJBOL*, where the difference was only 1%. However, it can be concluded that Gen Xers were a bit more familiar (6%) with the term *IJBOL* than Millennials (5%). The most significant difference in the “Not at all familiar” column was observed with *High-key*, which was unfamiliar to 46% of Gen Xers compared to only 22% of Millennials. Interestingly, *Ghosting* was the term that was the most familiar to Millennials with 64% of them being “extremely familiar” with it. In comparison, only 39% of Gen Xers marked it as “extremely familiar,” but it was still the term with which they were most familiar.

Table 4: Comparison of Familiarity with the Terms (11-20)

Comparison of Familiarity with the Terms (11-20)						
Term	Familiarity	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar
11. Fruity	Overall	48%	14%	13%	12%	13%
	Gen X	57%	17%	10%	8%	8%
	Ms	41%	13%	15%	15%	17%
12. Gatekeep	Overall	10%	5%	16%	30%	39%
	Gen X	11%	7%	19%	31%	32%
	Ms	10%	4%	13%	29%	44%
13. Ghosting	Overall	2%	3%	10%	31%	53%
	Gen X	1%	4%	14%	42%	39%
	Ms	3%	3%	7%	24%	64%
14. Girlboss	Overall	13%	6%	22%	28%	31%
	Gen X	18%	7%	28%	25%	22%
	Ms	10%	5%	19%	29%	37%
15. High-key	Overall	32%	7%	20%	18%	23%
	Gen X	46%	7%	15%	18%	14%
	Ms	22%	8%	24%	18%	29%
16. Hits Different	Overall	9%	13%	18%	22%	38%
	Gen X	11%	13%	21%	25%	31%
	Ms	7%	13%	17%	21%	43%
17. Hot Take	Overall	10%	7%	14%	28%	41%
	Gen X	10%	10%	18%	35%	28%
	Ms	11%	5%	12%	23%	50%
18. (I'm) Dead	Overall	12%	5%	17%	29%	37%
	Gen X	15%	7%	21%	33%	24%
	Ms	10%	3%	14%	26%	47%
19. IJBOL (I Just Burst Out Laughing)	Overall	66%	10%	10%	9%	5%
	Gen X	61%	8%	11%	14%	6%
	Ms	70%	11%	10%	5%	5%
20. (Living in Your Head) Rent Free	Overall	7%	6%	14%	29%	43%
	Gen X	8%	7%	18%	33%	33%
	Ms	7%	6%	12%	25%	50%

In the third section, which is represented in Table 5 below, it was found that almost half (47%) of the 174 respondents were entirely unfamiliar with the term *So Real For That*. Conversely, the term *Salty* was extremely familiar to 49% of those surveyed, making it the most commonly known term among both generations in this section.

The results in Table 5 further revealed that both Gen Xers and Millennials were largely unfamiliar with the term *So Real For That*, with 56% and 41% of respondents, respectively, marking it as unfamiliar. Interestingly, this term was also marked as the most “slightly familiar” by both generations, with 17% of Gen Xers and 14% of Millennials marking it as such. Therefore, it seems that neither generation commonly uses nor understands this particular term. Gen Xers were most likely to be “moderately familiar” with the term *Mid*, with 25% of respondents marking it as such. For Millennials, the term *Mood* was the most “moderately familiar,” marked as such by 24% of respondents. Gen Xers were most “very familiar” with *Slay*, with 40% of respondents marking it as such, while Millennials were most “very familiar” with *Slaps*, marked as familiar by 30% of respondents. Finally, the term that was “extremely familiar” to Gen Xers was *Salty*, marked by 44% of respondents, while Millennials were most familiar with *SMH*, marked by 54% of respondents.

Although Millennials were more “extremely familiar” with all the terms than Gen Xers, there were some terms that were more unfamiliar to Millennials than to Gen Xers. For instance, only 6% of Gen Xers were completely unfamiliar with the term *Low-key* compared to 7% of Millennials. Similarly, the term *Salty* was unfamiliar to 7% of Millennials in contrast to only 1% of Gen Xers. As was mentioned in the previous paragraph, 44% of 72 Gen X respondents marked *Salty* as the term they were most familiar with. Based on this information, it can be concluded that *Salty* was definitely not a problematic term for Generation X. The term *Ship (Someone with Someone)* was the most polarizing term, with the highest differences in percentages at both ends of the familiarity spectrum. While almost half of the Millennials surveyed (48%) marked it as “extremely familiar,” only 21% of Gen Xers did so. On the other hand, a higher percentage of Gen Xers (35%) marked the term as “not at all familiar” compared to Millennials (17%). This suggests that familiarity with this term may be linked to age demographics, as the term is more popular among the younger generation.

Table 5: Comparison of Familiarity with the Terms (21-30)

Comparison of Familiarity with the Terms (21-30)						
Term	Familiarity	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar
21. Low-key	Overall	6%	7%	22%	20%	44%
	Gen X	6%	10%	24%	29%	32%
	Ms	7%	6%	21%	14%	53%
22. Mid	Overall	20%	11%	22%	20%	27%
	Gen X	21%	10%	25%	22%	22%
	Ms	20%	12%	20%	19%	30%
23. Mood	Overall	13%	9%	20%	24%	34%
	Gen X	17%	14%	15%	28%	26%
	Ms	11%	5%	24%	22%	39%
24. Salty	Overall	5%	5%	13%	28%	49%
	Gen X	1%	10%	14%	31%	44%
	Ms	7%	2%	13%	26%	52%
25. Ship (Someone with Someone)	Overall	24%	6%	13%	20%	37%
	Gen X	35%	4%	15%	25%	21%
	Ms	17%	8%	11%	17%	48%
26. Sick	Overall	6%	10%	17%	23%	43%
	Gen X	8%	14%	18%	29%	31%
	Ms	5%	8%	17%	19%	52%
27. Slaps	Overall	14%	6%	16%	30%	34%
	Gen X	21%	7%	17%	31%	25%
	Ms	9%	5%	15%	30%	41%
28. Slay	Overall	5%	11%	16%	32%	36%
	Gen X	8%	10%	15%	40%	26%
	Ms	3%	12%	17%	25%	43%
29. SMH (Shaking My Head)	Overall	7%	8%	14%	24%	47%
	Gen X	8%	7%	18%	31%	36%
	Ms	6%	9%	12%	20%	54%
30. So Real For That	Overall	47%	15%	11%	13%	14%
	Gen X	56%	17%	7%	10%	11%
	Ms	41%	14%	15%	15%	16%

In the last section (Table 6), it was discovered that 27% of both Generation X and Millennial participants were not acquainted with the term *That Ain't It*. Conversely, the most familiar term among the 174 respondents was *TBH (To Be Honest)*, which was extremely familiar to 59% of the participants, making it the most well-known term overall in the study.

The data in Table 6 indicates that the term *That Ain't It* was least familiar to 35% of respondents from Generation X, whereas, for Millennials, the least familiar term was *(Take an) L*, marked by 24% of respondents. The survey revealed that 17% of respondents from Gen X were also most “slightly familiar” with the term *That Ain't It*, whereas, for Millennials, the term they were most “slightly familiar” with was *Valid*, marked by 8% of respondents. The term *(Someone/Something Is) Cancelled* was found to be most “moderately familiar” for 24% of respondents from the Gen X cohort, while for Millennials, the term *That Ain't It* was marked as the most “moderately familiar” by 25% of respondents. Furthermore, the survey revealed that 36% of Gen X respondents were most “very familiar” with the term *Triggered*, while for Millennials, the term *Sus* was most “very familiar,” marked by 28% of respondents. In addition, the survey found that the term *TBH* was “extremely familiar” to 40% of Gen X respondents, along with the term *Yikes*. For Millennials, *TBH* was also the most familiar term, marked by an overwhelming 72% of respondents.

It was found that Millennials were less familiar with the term *Sus*, as compared to Gen Xers, with 6% of Millennials being completely unaware of it, while only 4% of Gen Xers were unaware of it. On the other hand, Millennials were found to be more “extremely familiar” with all the terms mentioned in this section as compared to Gen Xers. The study revealed that 35% of Gen Xers were “not at all familiar” with the term *That Ain't It*, while only 22% of Millennials were unaware of it. This shows a difference of 13%, indicating that Millennials are more likely to be familiar with Gen Z slang than their older counterparts. Moreover, the biggest gap between the two generations was observed in the “Extremely familiar” column where the term *TBH* was marked as such by 72% of Millennials, while only 40% of Gen Xers were “extremely familiar” with it. Therefore, Millennials were significantly more familiar with the term *TBH* than Generation X, as the difference of 32% suggests.

Table 6: Comparison of Familiarity with the Terms (31-40)

Comparison of Familiarity with the Terms (31-40)						
Term	Familiarity	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar
31. (Someone/ Something Is) Cancelled	Overall	7%	5%	17%	26%	45%
	Gen X	10%	4%	24%	31%	32%
	Ms	5%	6%	12%	24%	54%
32. Sus	Overall	5%	9%	16%	30%	40%
	Gen X	4%	14%	17%	32%	33%
	Ms	6%	6%	16%	28%	44%
33. (Take an) L	Overall	26%	6%	16%	19%	34%
	Gen X	29%	8%	14%	25%	24%
	Ms	24%	4%	17%	15%	41%
34. TBH (To Be Honest)	Overall	4%	5%	13%	20%	59%
	Gen X	4%	11%	17%	28%	40%
	Ms	4%	1%	10%	14%	72%
35. That Ain't It	Overall	27%	10%	18%	20%	25%
	Gen X	35%	17%	8%	18%	22%
	Ms	22%	6%	25%	22%	26%
36. Touch Grass	Overall	24%	7%	13%	24%	32%
	Gen X	29%	8%	17%	28%	18%
	Ms	20%	7%	11%	22%	41%
37. Triggered	Overall	2%	3%	15%	28%	51%
	Gen X	4%	4%	18%	36%	38%
	Ms	1%	3%	13%	23%	61%
38. Valid	Overall	9%	11%	15%	22%	43%
	Gen X	10%	15%	14%	26%	35%
	Ms	9%	8%	16%	20%	48%
39. Vibe	Overall	7%	6%	18%	22%	47%
	Gen X	7%	8%	19%	29%	36%
	Ms	7%	5%	18%	17%	54%
40. Yikes	Overall	8%	9%	11%	23%	48%
	Gen X	8%	13%	7%	32%	40%
	Ms	8%	7%	15%	17%	54%

The previous paragraphs compared the familiarity of slang terms among members of Generation X and Millennials. However, during the analysis, it was intriguing to note the top 10 terms that were marked the most as “not at all familiar” and “extremely familiar.” The findings of this analysis revealed six tables highlighting the top 10 terms that were completely unfamiliar and extremely familiar to (a) both generations, (b) Generation X only, and (c) Millennials only. These six tables (Tables B16-B21 in Appendix B) were combined into two complex tables, namely Table 7 and Table 8, which are now further examined.

The results in Table 7 indicate that Millennials were generally more familiar with the terms than Generation X members. The only exception was the term *IJBOL*, which was unfamiliar to 61% of Gen Xers compared to 70% of Millennials. This term was almost equally unfamiliar to both groups which made it the overall number one least familiar term in the top ten, with 66% unfamiliarity. The second least familiar term for both Gen Xers (57%) and

Millennials (41%) was *Fruity*, followed by *So Real For That*, which tied for second place with 41% unfamiliarity among Millennials and placed third in Gen Xers' top ten, making it the third least familiar term overall. *Bop* was the fourth least familiar term for both Gen Xers and Millennials, but more Gen Xers (51%) reported unfamiliarity with it than Millennials (29%). The fifth least familiar term for Gen Xers was *High-key*, with 46% unfamiliarity, while Millennials placed it in sixth place, with *(Take an) L* (24%) being more unfamiliar to them. The term *That Ain't It* placed sixth in both tops, but Gen Xers were much less familiar with it (46%) than Millennials (22%). This term placed sixth overall. Two more terms shared the sixth place in both tops: for Gen Xers, it was *Ship (Someone with Someone)* (35%), while for Millennials, it was *High-key* (22%). The eighth least familiar term for Gen Xers was *Bet* (31%), which placed in the shared tenth place for Millennials with 17% unfamiliarity. Gen Xers' ninth least familiar term was *Touch Grass* (29%), which placed eighth in Millennials' top ten with 20% unfamiliarity. The ninth place in Gen X's top ten was also taken by *(Take an) L* (29%), while the shared eighth place in Millennials' top ten was taken by *Mid* (20%), which was completely absent from Gen Xers' top ten. Finally, the shared tenth place in Millennials' top ten was also occupied by *Ship (Someone with Someone)* (17%), which was, as previously mentioned, unknown to 35% of Gen Xers.

Table 7: Comparison of Top 10 "Not at all familiar" Terms

Comparison of Top 10 "Not at all familiar" Terms								
Overall Top 10			Generation X's Top 10			Millennials' Top 10		
1.	IJBOL (I Just Burst Out Laughing)	66%	1.	IJBOL (I Just Burst Out Laughing)	61%	1.	IJBOL (I Just Burst Out Laughing)	70%
2.	Fruity	48%	2.	Fruity	57%	2.	So Real For That	41%
3.	So Real For That	47%	3.	So Real For That	56%	=	Fruity	41%
4.	Bop	39%	4.	Bop	51%	4.	Bop	29%
5.	High-key	32%	5.	High-key	46%	5.	(Take an) L	24%
6.	That Ain't It	27%	6.	That Ain't It	35%	6.	That Ain't It	22%
7.	(Take an) L	26%	=	Ship (Someone with Someone)	35%	=	High-key	22%
8.	Touch Grass	24%	8.	Bet	31%	8.	Touch Grass	20%
=	Ship (Someone with Someone)	24%	9.	Touch Grass	29%	=	Mid	20%
10.	Bet	22%	=	(Take an) L	29%	10.	Ship (Someone with Someone)	17%
						=	Bet	17%

After analysing the "extreme" familiarity of certain terms among the two generations in Table 8, it was discovered that Millennials were more acquainted with all terms than Gen Xers. The term *TBH* secured the top spot in the Millennials' list, marked as "extremely familiar" by 72% of respondents. In contrast, the top spot in Gen Xers' list was occupied by the term *Salty*,

marked as “extremely familiar” by 44% of respondents. Due to a significantly higher percentage of respondents marking *TBH* as familiar, and the complete absence of the term *Salty* in Millennials’ top 10, *TBH* earned the overall highest top spot with an average percentage of 59%. The second spot on Gen Xers’ list was taken by the term *Yikes*, which was recognised by 40% of respondents, whereas on Millennials’ list, it shared the sixth spot with 54%. The shared second place in Gen Xers’ top was also occupied by *Bestie* and *TBH*, both marked “Extremely Familiar” by 40% of respondents. In contrast, *Bestie* took the fifth spot on the Millennials’ list with 58%. *Flex* secured the fifth spot on Gen Xers’ list with 39%, but it was nowhere to be found in Millennials’ top ten. *Ghosting* also shared the fifth spot on Gen Xers’ list with 39%, but it secured the third spot on Millennials’ list with 61%. *Cringe* came in sixth in the Gen Xers’ top with 38%, whereas on the Millennials’ list, it was ranked second with 65%. *Triggered* was marked as “Extremely familiar” by 61% of Millennials and secured the fourth spot on both Millennials’ and the overall list, whereas it shared the sixth spot with 38% on Gen Xers’ list. *Vibe* took the ninth spot in the Gen X’ top with 36% and shared the sixth spot with 54% in the Millennials’ top. *SMH* was also marked as “Extremely familiar” by 36% of Gen Xers and shared the sixth spot with 54% on the Millennials’ list. Finally, the term *Bruh* was nowhere to be found on the Gen Xers’ list but shared the sixth spot with 54% on the Millennials’ list and placed in the shared tenth place in the overall top. The term *(Someone/Something Is) Cancelled* also secured the shared tenth spot in the overall top with 45% of respondents marking it as “Extremely familiar,” while placing in the shared sixth place on the Millennials’ list with 54%.

Table 8: Comparison of Top 10 “Extremely familiar” Terms

Comparison of Top 10 “Extremely familiar” Terms								
Overall Top 10			Generation X’s Top 10			Millennials’ Top 10		
1.	TBH (To Be Honest)	59%	1.	Salty	44%	1.	TBH (To Be Honest)	72%
2.	Ghosting	53%	2.	Yikes	40%	2.	Cringe	65%
=	Cringe	53%	=	Bestie	40%	3.	Ghosting	64%
4.	Triggered	51%	=	TBH (To Be Honest)	40%	4.	Triggered	61%
=	Bestie	51%	5.	Flex	39%	5.	Bestie	58%
6.	Salty	49%	=	Ghosting	39%	6.	(Someone/Something Is) Cancelled	54%
7.	Yikes	48%	=	Cringe	38%	=	Bruh	54%
8.	Vibe	47%	=	Triggered	38%	=	SMH (Shaking My Head)	54%
=	SMH (Shaking My Head)	47%	9.	Vibe	36%	=	Vibe	54%
10.	(Someone/Something Is) Cancelled	45%	=	SMH (Shaking My Head)	36%	=	Yikes	54%
=	Bruh	45%						

7.2.3. Additional Questions about Gen Z Slang

After indicating their familiarity with the lexicon commonly used by Generation Z, survey participants were asked three additional questions. The answers to these questions are now presented and discussed.

7.2.3.1. Short Definition or Usage Context

As part of the questionnaire, the participants were firstly asked to provide a brief definition or usage context for any of the 40 slang terms that they marked as “Yes (I’m familiar with this term).” The primary objective of including this question was to gain qualitative insights into the participants’ levels of understanding and usage of these terms. The aim was to determine whether the participants understood the terminologies and were interpreting them correctly.

A total of 125 responses were gathered for this question. Out of them, 88 responses were deemed as genuine answers and the participants provided brief definitions or contextual usage of slang terms with which they were well-acquainted. What is noteworthy is that all of their definitions were very similar to the ones provided in Table B3 (Appendix B), which contained 40 slang terms with their respective definitions. The data gathered from the survey reveals that the respondents displayed an impressive level of familiarity with the specific terminologies mentioned. Moreover, they demonstrated a remarkable ability to offer meaningful explanations of the terms in their own words, along with providing appropriate contexts for their usage. These results thus strongly suggest that the majority of participants had a thorough understanding of the terms in question.

The rest of the 37 respondents either apologised stating they did not have sufficient time to provide definitions, or provided interesting insights about the origins of the terms on the list. Some respondents pointed out that a few of the terms on the list were not coined by Gen Z and had been around for a longer time. For example, a Millennial woman born in 1992 (respondent 49) mentioned that she has been using terms like *Bestie*, *Ghosting*, *Hot Take*, *I’m Dead*, *Sick*, *SMH*, *TBH*, and *Yikes* since her childhood. Likewise, a Gen X man born in 1965 (respondent 127), observed that terms like *Salty*, *Low-Key*, and *Bruh* were in use before Gen Z came into existence.

These findings are consistent with several researchers’ observations, including those of Borge and Nicolaou (2021), Debczak (2023), Tagliamonte (2016), and McCulloch (2020). All

of these authors have observed that many slang terms frequently used by one generation may not have originated with that generation. Tagliamonte emphasised that language variation and change cannot be attributed solely to teenagers [thus younger Gen Zers] but are rather a natural part of language evolution (2016: 256). Furthermore, certain words commonly used by teenagers can be traced back to much older generations (2016: 257). McCulloch also noted that although Gen Z slang spreads rapidly on social media, many of the terms have much older origins (2020: 273). Therefore, it is important to recognise that many of the terms on the list were actually coined by earlier generations, and are not solely the product of Gen Z's linguistic innovation.

The words that people use in their daily communication do not simply vanish over time. When a new generation takes over, the vocabulary of the previous generation continues to exist and might overlap with the newer one. Despite the common belief that slang terms have a short lifespan, many of them have proven to be long-lasting (Tagliamonte 2016: 2). These terms are still in use by members of different generations, both offline and online, for instance, in communication with family members or in internet conversations. Holmes also mentioned that the way people speak is heavily influenced by their interactions with others, and people tend to adopt the language and communication styles of those around them (2013: 197). Therefore, it might not be unusual for a Gen Z individual to adopt terms that originated with older generations and frequently use these terms in their conversations. It is important to emphasise that although these terms are referred to as "Gen Z slang," they are not necessarily created by individuals belonging to this generation, but have become commonly used by them.

Moreover, some participants suggested alternative expressions that were more commonly used by previous generations. According to the feedback of a male member of Generation X born in 1965 (respondent 127), the phrase *so last year* was frequently employed by individuals within his age bracket to convey a similar sentiment as the term *cringe*, which is popular among today's younger generations. This viewpoint was also shared by Tagliamonte, who stated that not only do teenagers use words that can be traced back to older generations, but some terms can also be new variations of the terms used by older generations (2016: 257).

Two individuals belonging to the Gen X cohort, a woman born in 1968 (respondent 75) and a man born in 1977 (respondent 77), expressed their uncertainty regarding the use of slang terms by Generation Z. They were unsure whether such words were unique to Gen Z or if they were simply a part of internet slang. In response to their query, it can be pointed out that

language and phrases can gain widespread recognition in a matter of hours, thanks to the power of the Internet (Crystal 2011: 57). Additionally, as previously mentioned, words commonly used by young people can be traced way back to older generations (Tagliamonte 2016: 257), and thus to the early days of the Internet. It can be suggested that terms which were popular in the early days of the Internet never left the online realm and could thus be rediscovered and adopted by younger generations. Therefore, it is entirely possible that words and phrases that were popular many years ago could find a new life in contemporary conversations.

A Millennial Black woman born in 1994 (respondent 62) also mentioned that she had grown up using the terms in the survey and that they were commonly used within the African-American community. This statement is supported by several articles, including those by Borge and Nicoleau (2021), Debczak (2023) and Cramer (2023). All of these sources have recognised that a sizeable portion of modern slang terms have origins in either African American or queer communities.

7.2.3.2. Other Gen Z Slang Terms Not on the List

The participants were also asked a second question regarding their familiarity with any other Gen Z slang that was not included on the list of 40 slang terms provided earlier. The survey received 66 responses, and the data was analysed to identify the most frequently mentioned slang terms. The findings of this analysis have been summarized in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Other Gen Z Slang Terms Mentioned by Generation X & Millennials

Terms	Number of mentions
Rizz	29
(No) Cap	21
Bussin'	6
Yeet	5
Gyatt; Cheugy; Drip	4
Fire	3
On God; OK Boomer; AF (As Fuck); Fax/Facts; Fam; Delulu; Spicy; Ick	2
Let Him Cook; Truthfully; Simp; Periodt; Sheesh; NGL (Not Gonna Lie); Lit; Skibidi; Dog Water; Ate; Extra; It's Giving; It's the X for Me; Squad; Banger; GOAT; IFKYK (If You Know You Know); Smacks; Cope; Chat Slang (Chat, be nice; Chat, is this real?); TBF (To Be Fair); Fleek; Whack; Clout Chasing; Stan; Meta; Boho; Emo; Glizzy; Fit; Yurr; Sucks ass; FAFO (Fuck Around & Find Out); Sona; Kin; Jover; Gas; KMS (Kill Myself)	1

During the data analysis, a few terms emerged as the most frequently mentioned ones. These terms were *Rizz* [short for *charisma*], *Gyatt* [an abbreviation for *goddamn*], and *Bussin'* [African-American slang for something *extremely good*] (Hatch & Falcon 2024).

Interestingly, some of these terms, namely *Rizz*, *(No) Cap*, *Bussin'*, *Yeet*, *Cheugy*, and *Drip*, were already included on the initial list of 100 terms (see Table B1 in Appendix B), from which Gen Zers were asked to select the ones they use most frequently in the preliminary questionnaire. These terms were recognised by Gen X and Millennial respondents, indicating that they have become increasingly popular and influential across generations. This suggests that despite not being marked as the most frequently used terms by Gen Zers, they are still widely known and recognised by older generations.

It is worth noting that despite being widely popular, certain terms such as *Rizz*, which was named the 2023 Word of the Year by Oxford University Press (Schuessler 2023), did not make it to the list of 40 slang terms used in the main questionnaire. While various sources (from which the list of 100 terms was assembled) had mentioned its popularity, only 12.5% of Gen Z respondents (out of 160) claimed to use the term “frequently” or “all the time” in the preliminary questionnaire. This raises the question of why the Word of the Year 2023 did not even make the top 40.

It is possible that the results of the preliminary questionnaire were influenced by the age range of the participants. The majority of the respondents belonged to the older members of Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2004) who still share some characteristics with Millennials. In contrast, those born in the later years of Generation Z (2005-2012) participated significantly less in the survey. As a result, terms like *Rizz* or *(No) Cap*, which are nowadays more relevant to younger Gen Z individuals (and the individuals on the cusp with the Alpha generation), did not receive high percentages of frequent use in the preliminary survey.

7.2.3.3. Encounter of Gen Z Slang

The survey's third additional question aimed to gain a better understanding of how older generations are exposed to Gen Z slang. Participants were asked to identify all the channels or mediums (“select all that apply”) through which they typically encountered or learned terms commonly used by Gen Z. The ultimate goal of this question was to explore how these terms are spread to older generations and the results can be found in Table 10.

Table 10: Encounter of Gen Z Slang

Encounter of Gen Z Slang	Number of answers
I typically don't encounter/learn any Gen Z slang terms	6
Social media platforms (e.g., <i>Instagram</i> , <i>TikTok</i> , <i>Twitter</i>)	127
Online forums or communities	112
Movies and TV shows	52
Music and lyrics	44
Family conversations	53
Conversations with friends	66
Work environment	59
Other	15

The data organized in Table 10 reveals that the highest number of respondents (127) came across Gen Z terminologies most frequently through social media platforms such as *Instagram*, *TikTok*, or *Twitter* (now *X*). This comes as no surprise as social media and the Internet have become integral parts of people's daily lives. With people of all ages sharing their opinions or experiences online, the usage of slang terms has become widespread on these platforms. The second most common place where respondents came across these terms were online forums and communities, marked by 112 respondents.

In the third place were conversations with friends, marked by 66 respondents. This is not an unexpected result as slang terms are commonly used in both online and offline conversations. However, given that only 66 respondents marked this option, compared to 127 responses recorded for the social media option, a conclusion that Gen Z slang is encountered more frequently in the online realm than in the offline realm can be suggested.

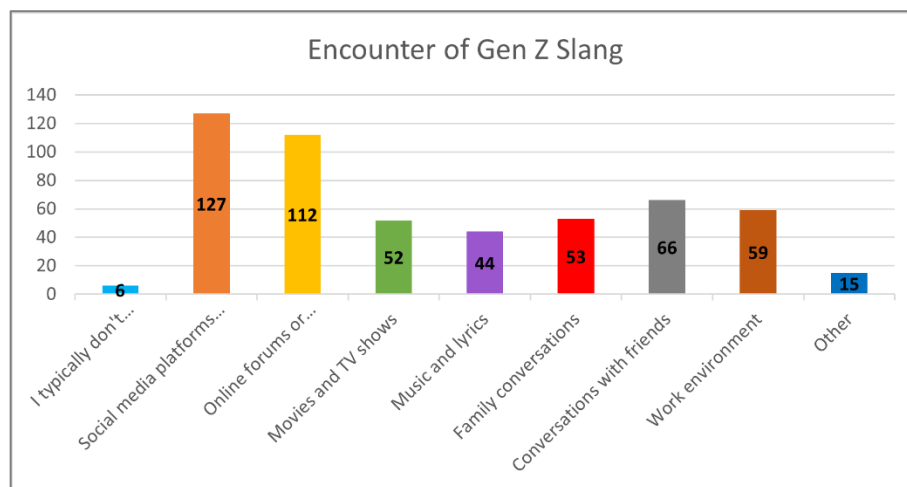
The use of slang terms is also becoming more prevalent in the workplace environment (59 responses) as Gen Z employees begin to fill positions previously held by older, more formal, and conservative generations.

Conversations with family placed in the fifth place (53 responses). It can be concluded that conversations with family members were a less frequent source of slang encounters compared to conversations with friends (66 responses). One possible explanation for this phenomenon is that the younger demographic tends to feel more at ease using colloquial or informal language, such as slang, when conversing with their peers, regardless of the generation they belong to. On the other hand, when interacting with older family members, the use of such language may not be received as favourably, as these individuals may not appreciate the casual nature of slang in conversations.

Older generations are also becoming familiar with Gen Z slang through movies and TV shows (52 responses) and music and lyrics (42 responses). This can be attributed to the fact that contemporary movies and TV shows often feature actors belonging to Generation Z, and young singers and songwriters are gradually making their mark in the music industry.

The survey also collected 15 responses through the “Other” section. Some of the survey respondents shared their experiences with encountering Gen Z slang on different social media platforms that were not listed in the selection option. These platforms included *Reddit*, *Twitch*, *YouTube*, and *Discord*. Interestingly, two of the respondents were teachers who learned Gen Z slang from their students, while two others had encountered it while talking with their children [which would be classified as family conversations]. In addition, a handful of respondents said that they overheard the slang terms in conversations outside of their social circle. One respondent also mentioned coming across Gen Z slang in memes. This indicates that Gen Z slang has become a ubiquitous part of both online and offline conversations. To provide a clearer representation of the data, Chart 5 has been included below for visual reference.

Chart 5: Encounter of Gen Z Slang



7.2.4. Intergenerational Communication

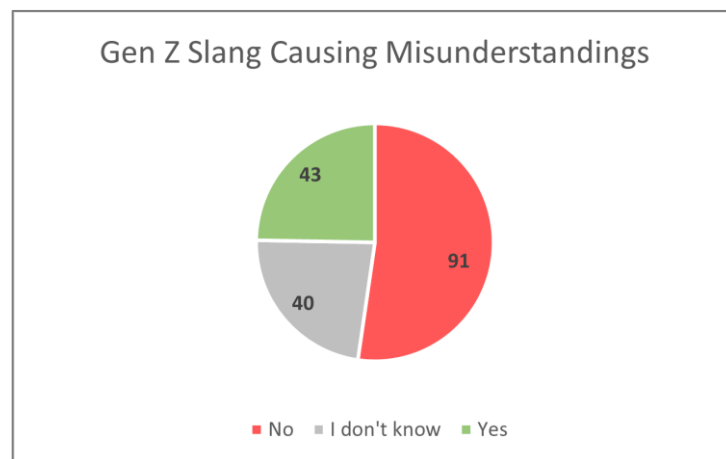
In the final part of the survey, Generation X and Millennial individuals were presented with a set of open-ended questions. These questions were optional to answer and were aimed at gathering qualitative data about the communication strategies used by these older generations when communicating with Generation Z. The main objective of this section was to gain insights into how the older generations communicate with the younger Generation Z.

7.2.4.1. Gen Z Slang Causing Misunderstandings or Challenges

As part of a survey, the participants were asked to share their experiences in communicating with Generation Z. This section began by asking the participants whether the use of Gen Z slang terms (by either Gen Z or Gen X and Millennials themselves) had ever resulted in any misunderstandings or communication challenges with younger individuals. To answer this question, participants were given three options to choose from: “Yes,” “No,” and “I don't know.”

The survey conducted among 174 individuals revealed that the use of Gen Z slang was causing some challenges (answered “Yes”) in mutual communication for 43 respondents (25%), while 91 respondents (52%) did not experience any misunderstandings (answered “No”). The remaining 40 respondents (23%) were uncertain about the impact of Gen Z slang on communication (answered “I don't know”). The data is visually represented in Chart 6 below and in the form of a table in Appendix B (Table B22).

Chart 6: Gen Z Slang Causing Misunderstandings



If the participants answered “Yes,” they were asked to elaborate by describing any specific misunderstandings or challenges they have faced when communicating with members of Generation Z in an open-ended question. A total of 38 responses were received.

The data collected was sorted into four frequently reoccurring themes to facilitate the analysis process. These themes mainly highlight the location or situation where the misunderstandings or challenges occurred. The data is presented in Table 11, with one column representing the common themes and the second column displaying the number of participants who responded in that manner.

Table 11: Specific Misunderstandings Caused by Gen Z Slang

“What misunderstandings or challenges have you faced in your communication with Generation Z?”	
Reoccurring themes	Number of responses
1. Misunderstandings in teaching	1
2. Misunderstandings when communicating with own children, family members, and younger individuals	16
3. Misunderstandings in the workplace	5
4. General observations about misunderstandings in communication with Gen Z	16

The majority of misunderstandings (16) occurred when Gen Xers and Millennials communicated with their children, family members, and other younger individuals. Moreover, the same number of respondents (16) shared some of their general observations about misunderstandings with Gen Zers. Among the respondents, 5 mentioned experiencing misunderstandings in the workplace, and one respondent mentioned challenges while teaching.

7.2.4.1.1. Misunderstandings in Teaching

Concerning misunderstandings that took place in the classroom while tutoring children, respondent 3 (a Millennial woman born in 1992) noted that she sometimes had problems understanding the children she was teaching. This is not surprising as misunderstandings can arise between teachers belonging to Generation X or Millennial generation and their students belonging to Generation Z. According to Lisetti, Gen Zers are commonly referred to as “digital natives” who spend a significant amount of time browsing the Internet and using various social media platforms for communicating with other people (2023: 63). With this constant exposure to technological advancements and distinct linguistic features, such as new slang terms, Gen Zers might incorporate these emerging terms into their vocabularies. However, for older generations, keeping up with all these terms emerging from social media platforms can be challenging, as one survey respondent (number 32; a Millennial man born in 1994) pointed out.

According to the research conducted by Twenge, it can also be suggested that the reason older generations tend to use less slang in their communication is because they already had a well-established communication style before the rise of social media (2023: 28). On the other hand, Gen Zers, who grew up alongside the boom of social media, have been more influenced by it and have incorporated more slang into their communication style (ibid.). Thus, the impact of social media has been more significant on individuals building their communication skills in recent years. This communication gap could be a contributing factor to the misunderstandings

that occur between teachers and students. Therefore, educators should be aware of these challenges and find effective ways to communicate with their students. It is also important to note that misunderstandings can happen in any interaction. Hence, it is crucial to exercise patience and have an open-minded approach while trying to resolve them.

7.2.4.1.2. Misunderstandings with Family Relatives and Other Individuals

The second reoccurring theme was related to misunderstandings that took place when communicating with (a) own children, (b) other family members, and (c) other young individuals. In total, 16 such answers were collected.

When communicating with (a) their own children, respondent 10 (A Millennial man born in 1982) shared that he had difficulty interacting with his teenage son. He had made an effort to understand the terminologies his son used while not adopting them into his own speech. This is in line with what Holmes previously noted, which is that older speakers tend to adhere to the more traditional forms of language that they learned during their youth (2013: 219).

Concerning conversations with (b) other family members, respondent 23 (A Millennial woman born in 1996) stated that she felt that “slang has progressed faster because of social media use.” This finding correlates with the statements made by Katz et al. (2021: 82–83) and Crystal (2011: 57), who have noted that the Internet has made it easier for slang to spread rapidly and gain worldwide recognition in a very short time. The same respondent further added that there were differences in the use of slang between her and her older sister as compared to her and her younger sister. She said, “I feel like I use slang more similarly with my older sister born in 1991 compared to me and my younger sister born in 2001.” Respondent 33 (A Millennial woman born in 1995) mentioned that she had difficulty understanding terms used by her 21-year-old sibling and had been confused about their meaning. Despite the relatively small age gap, respondents and their relatives still experienced communication issues. This highlights the rapid evolution of slang and how each generation may face challenges trying to keep up with the latest language trends.

There were also different reactions from the respondents when they encountered misunderstandings while communicating with (c) other younger individuals not necessarily related to them. For instance, respondent 8 (A Millennial woman born in 1988) reported feeling like she was deciphering a foreign language, which can take both time and effort to learn and comprehend, when she said, “I do not know if what they are saying is good or bad. It is like a foreign language.” Another respondent (number 24; A Millennial woman born in 1984) shared

that when misunderstandings occurred online, she simply ignored them and did not engage in any further interactions. However, when they happened in a face-to-face situation, she admitted not understanding and requested an explanation. Respondent 101 (A Millennial non-binary born in 1996) also had a similar experience, but they were able to avoid misunderstandings by researching the unfamiliar words they came across online. In this digital era, several online resources such as the *Urban Dictionary* provide explanations for different terms used in the digital realm. Some Millennial writers have also created their dictionaries, offering a comprehensive list of terms with their definitions. For this thesis, dictionaries by Knott and King were used. Meanwhile, respondent 69 (A Gen X woman born in 1975) shared that it took her a while before she finally understood the meaning of the word “cheugy.” She believes that it is a part of the intra-generational language of younger people and it is something she did not need to fully understand. She had not encountered any significant misunderstandings due to this and had only experienced mild confusion.

The responses from this section revealed that while some individuals may feel lost and confused when encountering unfamiliar words and phrases, others may choose to research them or ignore them entirely. Ultimately, the study suggests that individuals might need to make a conscious effort to understand the language used by younger generations to communicate effectively and avoid confusion.

7.2.4.1.3. Misunderstandings in the Workplace

As per the feedback shared by 5 of the participants, it was also observed that the utilisation of slang language in the workplace can lead to misunderstandings and difficulties as well. One respondent (number 140; A Millennial man born in 1989) mentioned that his co-workers often used phrases that he did not understand and had to ask for their meaning. He also added that he feels like “the Gen Z slang is a lazier abbreviated version of words.” Respondent 171 (A Gen X man born in 1974) concluded that Generation Z is “more prone to using slang in formal or work situations than previous generations.”

Some respondents mentioned uncomfortable situations caused by using Gen Z slang in the workplace. One respondent (number 152; A Gen X man born in 1975) stated that he had occasionally come across slang terms in professional emails. While he did not mind when the terms were used in emails sent directly to him, he had Gen Z employees who used slang in emails sent to clients as well. This created an uncomfortable situation as he had to explain to the client what the Gen Z employee meant, “it was an uncomfortable situation for the client and

myself, completely unnecessary and unprofessional.” Similarly, respondent 166 (A Millennial non-binary born in 1996) recalled a situation where someone had used the term “sickening” in a promo post about food for a restaurant where they had worked. They said, “The term was obviously not appropriate for describing food to an intergenerational audience.”

It can be inferred that while the younger generation brings a more relaxed and informal approach to formal work situations, the use of Gen Z slang in professional settings can be perceived as unsuitable and unprofessional. Therefore, Gen Z individuals should be aware of their use of slang terms and consider the potential impact on their colleagues and potential clients.

7.2.4.1.4. General Observations about Misunderstandings

In total, 16 respondents also shared general observations about misunderstandings that occur in communication with Gen Z, which were not necessarily related to their own experiences.

One respondent (number 32; A Millennial man born in 1994) pointed out that new slang terms are constantly emerging which makes it quite challenging to keep up with the latest lingo, when he said that understanding certain terms from *TikTok* might be problematic because there were new terms every week. Respondent 138 (A Gen X man born in 1974) mentioned that “every generation has its own slang that changes the culture and language, and there is always a gap until some form of commonality is achieved.”

Some respondents have expressed their difficulties with learning the meanings of new terms and also highlighted the importance of knowing them. Respondent 98 (A Millennial woman born in 1994) said, “It can take a while to learn what certain terms mean, especially when they do not have obvious context.” Another respondent (number 123; A Gen X man born in 1970) highlighted that not knowing the meaning of one term can cause more trouble in understanding the meaning of other terms, “when new slang erupts, ... it becomes overused immediately. Not knowing the meaning to one can inadvertently impact meaning for others.” This implies that failing to keep up with the meanings of the terms frequently used by the younger generation, both online and offline, can indeed cause communication barriers between different age groups.

Furthermore, one of the respondents (number 147; a Gen X man born in 1965) correctly pointed out that using words with new meanings, such as “basic” to describe individuals only

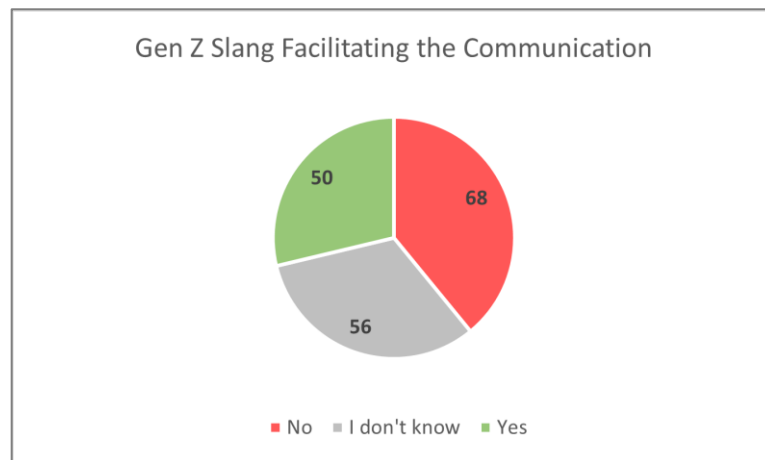
interested in mainstream trends, could unintentionally come off as rude. Hence, it is essential to consider the potential impact of using such terms with people who might not be familiar with them, as this could lead to unwanted misunderstandings.

7.2.4.2. Gen Z Slang Facilitating the Communication

The second question posed to the respondents aimed to determine whether the use of slang commonly associated with Generation Z had ever resulted in a better understanding and connection with individuals belonging to this generation.

Out of the 174 respondents, 68 individuals (39%) reported that they had not experienced any improvement in mutual communication by using Gen Z slang (answered “No”), 56 individuals (32%) were unsure about the impact (answered “I don’t know”), and 50 individuals (29%) reported that using slang did indeed improve their conversations with Gen Z individuals (answered “Yes”). The data is visually represented in Chart 7 below and in the form of a table in Appendix B (Table B23).

Chart 7: Gen Z Slang Facilitating the Communication



If the respondents answered “Yes,” they were asked to provide specific examples of situations where the use of Gen Z slang facilitated their communication. In total, 38 responses were collected. To provide a comprehensive overview of the collected data, the answers were also divided into the same four common themes (see Table 12) as in the previous section.

Table 12: Specific Instances of Gen Z Slang Facilitating Communication

“Can you provide specific examples of instances where the use of Generation Z slang facilitated your communication with younger individuals?”	
Reoccurring themes	Number of responses
1. Facilitating communication in teaching	3
2. Facilitating communication with own children, family members, and other younger individuals	16
3. Facilitating communication in the workplace	7
4. General observations about facilitating communication with Gen Z	12

It was found that the use of Gen Z slang has been beneficial in facilitating communication for some teachers. Specifically, 3 respondents noted that incorporating Gen Z slang into their teaching has helped them connect with their students on a deeper level. Additionally, many respondents (16 in total) mentioned that using Gen Z slang has made their communication with family members and other young individuals easier and more effective. In the workplace, 7 respondents reported that incorporating Gen Z slang into their communication has been helpful, while 12 respondents made general observations about the benefits of using Gen Z slang when communicating with this demographic group.

7.2.4.2.1. Facilitating Communication in Teaching

In the first section, three answers related to Gen Z slang facilitating communication in the classroom were collected. Respondent 3 (A Millennial woman born in 1992) admitted that being able to understand terms used by Gen Z improved her relationships with her students: “Once I got the hang of it, it was easier for me to better the relationships I have with my students.” Another respondent (number 85; A Gen X woman born in 1979) said that she had purposely used or misused slang terms to make her students more engaged in listening. She also used slang to make older or obscure reading passages more accessible for her younger students. The last of the three respondents (number 131; A Millennial woman born in 1995) who teaches undergraduate psychology students, said that understanding and using these terms helped to gain mutual understanding with her students. However, she also acknowledged that as a person at the end of the Millennial age bracket, it was not that difficult for her to understand the terms and use them herself.

To discuss the results, the research findings indicate that incorporating Gen Z slang into teaching strategies can enhance communication between teachers and students. This is because such terms might help create a sense of understanding and connection between the teacher and

the students, especially given the power dynamic and sense of authority that exists between them. It might allow the students to feel more at ease, and they would be less likely to hold back on expressing their thoughts and opinions. Additionally, as one teacher noted, using slang can make complex reading passages more accessible to younger students. The language used in many older literary works can be difficult to understand for students encountering it for the first time. However, using terms that students are already familiar with and use almost daily can help make the text more relatable and accessible. Based on the responses from the three respondents, it can be suggested that incorporating Gen Z slang into the teaching environment can have a positive impact on the learning process. It can make the lessons more engaging, and accessible, and foster better relationships between teachers and students.

7.2.4.2.2. Facilitating Communication with Family Relatives and Other Individuals

Cross-generational communication can be challenging at times, particularly when it comes to conversations between family members from different generations. This might be especially true for Gen X or Millennial family members who may struggle to communicate effectively with their younger Gen Z family members. In total, 16 respondents shared their experiences of using Gen Z terms while communicating with (a) their own children, (b) family members, and (c) other younger individuals.

Concerning (a) communication with their own children, one of the respondents (number 68; A Gen X woman born in 1978) said that using Gen Z terms served as a short-hand between her and her children when they were around older people. Another respondent (number 79; A Gen X woman born in 1970) mentioned that her son taught her these terms and she then used them very ironically with his friends or with younger co-workers to make them smile. Respondent 151 (A Gen X woman born in 1976) said that her daughter was so proud of her when she used a slang term correctly in conversation: “I think it helps her to feel that I ‘get’ her.”

Regarding the use of slang as a way to facilitate communication among (b) family members, respondent 139 (A Millennial woman born in 1993) mentioned that the members of Gen Z she communicated the most with were her younger siblings (born in 1998, 2004, and 2005). Despite being close in age to her siblings, she sometimes found it difficult to understand their slang, but learning these terms and using them helped her feel more included in their conversations and also enabled her to quickly grasp the facts without needing to ask for an explanation. Another respondent (number 6; A Millennial man born in 1987) shared an example

of how he used the term “weird flex but ok” while talking to his wife when she shared an accomplishment.

When communicating with (c) other younger individuals, respondent 12 (A Millennial man born in 1993) would automatically code-switch without thinking about it. He also mentioned that he had picked up some slang terms used among Black people living near him in the US Mid-Atlantic region. However, it is important to note that people should be cautious in using such terms, as many of them may be deemed offensive or derogatory by the Black community (Zajechowski 2023). Respondent 19 (A Millennial woman born in 1993) said that communication with younger individuals had been easier than expected, as many of the slang words from Gen Z were also used by younger Millennials. This made them more comfortable to adapt in environments that are dominated by older and more formal generations. Another respondent (number 80; A Gen X woman born in 1971) said that using slang terms typical for Gen Z in forum communications helped to avoid being written off as a “Boomer” and having one’s contribution discounted. Lastly, respondent 87 (A Millennial woman born in 1981) said that knowing some Gen Z terms had helped her to get to know her new neighbours’ college-bound daughter and better understand her viewpoints on some things.

According to the survey’s results, many respondents found that incorporating Gen Z slang in conversations with their younger family members could help them build a better mutual understanding. Incorporating Gen Z slang terms can serve as a bridge to close the communication gap between generations, particularly between parents and their children. This approach can also help younger individuals feel more valued and appreciated by their elders. Additionally, it can make older individuals feel more included and up-to-date in their conversations with their younger relatives.

7.2.4.2.3. Facilitating Communication in the Workplace

Seven responses were collected regarding the use of Gen Z slang in workplace communication, and it appears that incorporating slang can be beneficial in building stronger connections with younger clients and reaching younger audiences through promotional material posted on social media. The response from a Millennial woman born in 1995 (respondent 38) who mentioned that when managing a *TikTok* account for a large restaurant chain, they had used Gen Z slang to appeal to younger audiences they would not normally reach, supports this claim.

Another respondent (number 73; A Millennial woman born in 1985) said that using the word “sick” instead of “cool” had helped her gain the trust of her younger client. Similarly, respondent 96 (A Millennial woman born in 1990) said that she had used the words “mid” and “vibes” to describe a social situation to a Gen Z colleague, and they were able to establish that they both felt the same way about the situation. Lastly, respondent 145 (A Gen X woman born in 1975) shared that thanks to her teenage children, she was familiar with many slang terms and was able to communicate with her young employee, as she also understood the words that the employee used.

In conclusion, incorporating Gen Z slang into workplace communication might help create a more inclusive and effective work environment, as the respondents noted that using slang can create a sense of shared understanding between older employees and younger clients, and being familiar with Gen Z slang can also help bridge the generation gap and improve communication between older and younger colleagues.

7.2.4.2.4. General Observations about Facilitating Communication

The following section contains some responses from participants about how Gen Z slang generally helps in communication. In total, 12 such answers were collected.

Some respondents highlighted the importance of using abbreviations and acronyms. For instance, respondent 39 (A Millennial man born in 1982) stated that the use of various acronyms helps to keep up with the pace at which Gen Z individuals are communicating. Another respondent (number 152; A Gen X man born in 1975) mentioned that using slang in text communication is very important as Gen Zers would instantly judge you if you did not use at least basic text slang, such as “ikr,” “wtf,” or “lol.”

Other respondents also provided their general observations. For instance, respondent 69 (A Gen X woman born in 1975) mentioned that “A lot of Gen Z slang reflects their perspective on a changing world, and I think some of their words are coined to express concepts that have only recently come to exist. ... Language is fun, and I like the opportunity to understand new ideas, or revisit old ones by the way language changes in the hands of young people.” Another respondent (number 149; A Millennial non-binary born in 1991) said, “As much as I detest Gen Z slang and their overall attitude to typing, once you know their alien tongue you realise they have very little to say.” Both respondents 169 and 170 (two Gen X women born in 1974 and 1970, respectively) emphasised the importance of being open to understanding or trying to understand what Gen Zers are trying to say or refer to.

Based on the general observations, it was revealed that the slang used by Gen Z has become an essential component of communication, particularly in text messaging. Some respondents found it challenging to keep up with the fast pace of Gen Z communication, while others welcomed the innovative ideas and concepts that are reflected in the language used by this generation. Moreover, it was evident that using basic text slang is essential in text communication with Gen Zers, and failing to do so may result in negative judgments from them. The participants also highlighted the significance of being receptive to understanding and attempting to grasp what Gen Zers are saying or referring to, which is crucial in fostering effective communication.

7.2.4.3. Adapting of Communication Style

In the last question, individuals from both Generation X and Millennials were requested to provide their approaches for communicating efficiently with members of Generation Z. The purpose of this inquiry was to collect insights into whether individuals from Gen X and Millennials adjust their communication styles while interacting with individuals from Gen Z to ensure that both parties understand each other better.

A total of 134 responses were collected. The data was categorised into three repeated themes and sub-themes, as shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Adapting of Communication Style

“How do you adapt your communication style when interacting with members of Generation Z to ensure effective mutual understanding?”	
Reoccurring responses	Number of responses
1. I do not really interact with Gen Z	6
2. I do not adapt / Adaptation is not needed – I completely avoid using slang terms	86
3. I adapt my communication – I add slang terms to my vocabulary – I ask for a clarification of meaning	42

Out of the total of 134 responses, 6 respondents reported that they do not interact with Gen Zers. 86 respondents indicated that they do not modify their communication style while interacting with Gen Zers or do not believe that it is necessary to do so. On the other hand, 42 respondents reported that they do adapt their communication style to better connect with Gen Zers.

7.2.4.3.1. No Interaction with Generation Z

According to the survey's results, it was found that older generations do not necessarily have frequent in-person interactions with Gen Zers in their daily lives. The survey revealed that 6 respondents had no direct contact with any Gen Z individuals. However, it was observed that the older generations tend to come across the content produced by Gen Zers while consuming media, such as watching TV shows, reading their tweets or blogs, and watching their videos online. For instance, respondent 18 (A Millennial woman born in 1991) does not interact with Gen Zers offline but only comes in contact with them online. She shared an experience where she watched *Big Brother* episodes featuring Gen Z contestants, but did not understand their slang: "This year a girl kept saying 'Kitty kitty purr' and 'Kitty kitty purr boots down' and apparently these things mean different things and I heard it for 100 days and I still do not understand. Please send help." Another respondent (number 135; A Gen X non-binary born in 1970) said that they do not often interact with Gen Zers but watch their videos on *YouTube* or read their blogs and tweets. These findings imply that older generations might primarily come across Gen Z slang via digital platforms rather than traditional face-to-face interactions. Similar findings were also highlighted in Table 10, where most of the respondents revealed that they come across slang via social media and online forums.

7.2.4.3.2. Communication Style Was Not Adapted

The majority of respondents (86) indicated that they do not adapt their communication styles, either consciously or unconsciously. They believed that no adaptation was necessary, or they simply lacked the need to do so.

Some respondents mentioned that they are not modifying their style to stay true to themselves, as they are not trying to be cool or act like someone they are not. For instance, respondent 10 (A Millennial man born in 1982) noted that as "a 41-year-old father, I am not trying to be 'cool' or pass myself off as younger than I am." Similarly, respondent 87 (A Millennial woman born in 1981) said that she did not adapt her communication style nor used Gen Z slang as "at my age using Gen Z slang terms comes off as fake and condescending."

While some respondents did not find it necessary to alter their style, others believed that the age gap between these generations was not significant enough to warrant any special adjustments. For instance, respondent 23 (A Millennial woman born in 1996) stated that as a Zillennial she did not have to adapt her communication style with Gen Z, although acknowledging that "talking to them often makes me feel older than I am." Respondent 26 (A

Millennial woman born in 1983) felt that the gap between generations is not significant enough to warrant any special adjustments. Another respondent (number 29; A Millennial woman born in 1995) stated that she thought that she spoke similarly enough the way older Gen Zers did, so she did not have to adapt her speech. However, if anything, she had to adapt her communication style when speaking to older Millennials and Gen Xers. Respondent 61 (A Millennial woman born in 1982) said that she did not need to modify her communication style since she had no problems understanding the slang terms used by Gen Z. This viewpoint was shared by respondent 62 (A Millennial woman born in 1994) who also said she did not change her communication style as “we are using the same slang most of the time.” Respondent 96 (A Millennial woman born in 1990) stated that she did not consciously adapt as “the age gap is not always so wide, and some of the vocabulary does overlap,” and that she was usually familiar with the vocabulary thanks to social media. Respondent 81 (A Gen X woman born in 1973) said, “Their generation and my generation each has its own slang terms that we commonly use when communicating amongst peers but we are each able to communicate effectively without using slang so to avoid misuse of a term or a misunderstanding.” Respondent 166 (A Millennial non-binary born in 1996) noted that they did not have to adapt their communication style as they are only a year outside of Gen Z. They also refrain from using terms that originated from drag and AAVE as some Black people consider them inappropriate.

Many respondents felt that they were already familiar with the slang terms used by Gen Z and therefore did not need to modify their communication style. However, there were also a few respondents who acknowledged that they had to explain their own slang to Gen Zers while using terms from their own era or country. For instance, respondent 118 (A Gen X woman born in 1969) said that she usually understood the point that Gen Zers were trying to make with their slang, but she often had to explain her own slang to them when using terms from her Gen X era or Australian colloquialisms.

Out of the 86 answers received, 14 respondents specifically mentioned that they avoid adopting slang terms while communicating with Gen Zers. This suggests that using slang terms while communicating with Gen Zers is a topic of concern for some individuals. For instance, respondent 8 (A Millennial woman born in 1988) stated that she refrained from using slang to avoid conveying the wrong ideas and to ensure that she was understood correctly. Similarly, respondent 33 (A Millennial woman born in 1995) said, “I do not really overuse slang words when talking to Gen Zers. I let it come out naturally in conversations rather than force it.” Respondent 69 (A Gen X woman born in 1975) mentioned that she interacted with Gen Zers

frequently as she worked with college undergraduates and generally avoided using slang to prevent confusion and to maintain a degree of authority and professionalism. Respondent 84 (A Gen X woman born in 1968) also noted that she tried not to use too much slang when communicating with Gen Zers as she did not want to appear desperate. In summary, while some respondents refrained from using slang words to maintain professionalism and avoid confusion, others let it come out naturally in conversations. It is worth noting that avoiding the overuse of slang terms can be seen as a way to convey the right ideas and maintain a certain level of authority.

7.2.4.3.3. Communication Style Was Adapted

On the other hand, 42 respondents answered that they adapt their communication styles. The responses from Gen Xers and Millennials indicated that their communication styles were often modified to connect with younger generations.

Some respondents mentioned avoiding using pop culture references when communicating with Gen Zers, while others mentioned that pop culture and online references were effective in connecting with them. For instance, respondent 4 (A Gen X man born in 1969) said that he tried to avoid using pop culture references, however, he had been amazed at how many Gen Zers knew about '60s sitcoms or music groups. Respondent 15 (A Millennial woman born in 1994) also mentioned pop culture saying: “I know they know more about memes, online culture and pop culture than older people so I will reference that stuff more often.”

Many respondents code-switch without thinking about it to endear themselves to Gen Zers. Respondent 12 (A Millennial man born in 1993) noted that he code-switched without thinking about it: “It is just what you do if you want to endear yourself to people,” he said. Similarly, respondent 139 (A Millennial woman born in 1993) said that she tended to code-switch when speaking to Gen Xers and Boomers compared to Millennials and Gen Zers: “I would say that my more ‘natural’ way of speaking is using more internet slang and that I have to ‘church up’ my language when talking to older folks.” Conversely, respondent 43 (A Millennial woman born in 1995) relied on contextual clues which helped her to know what the terms might mean: “When talking to peers, someone says ‘it is a vibe,’ are they smiling or frowning? Usually, I am able to tell if it is positive or negative.”

Respondents also noted that a more casual approach with Gen Z helps them to express their views and become more engaged. For instance, respondent 19 (A Millennial woman born in 1993) said, “Adapting to a more informal approach with Generation Z helps them become

more comfortable in expressing their views and becoming more engaged in their setting. Being a mediator between Millennials and Gen Z has helped stabilize misunderstandings in the past and has allowed the younger members to engage in areas that are in need of younger members, but are met with too much formality from the older generations.”

One respondent (number 137; A Gen X man born in 1968) emphasised the importance of using non-gendered pronouns and language, recognising that it is becoming increasingly important in communication. This is consistent with Katz et al.’s research, which suggests that Gen Zers are committed to recognising and respecting differences in gender and sexual orientation and that the digital landscape has a significant impact on how they perceive their identities (2021: 45).

It is also important to note that different generations prefer different communication channels. For instance, respondent 144 (A Gen X woman born in 1978) mentioned that she used Instant Messaging (IM) channels to communicate with her younger colleagues instead of traditional emails to ensure comfortable mutual communication.

Incorporating Gen Z terminology into the lexicon is a natural evolution, as is using more internet slang in informal conversations (Zajechowski 2023). Out of the 42 respondents, 13 Gen Xers and Millennials have shown an effort to incorporate Gen Z slang terms into their communication style. For instance, respondent 59 (A Gen X woman born in 1978) had adopted modern slang and mixed it into her vocabulary. Respondent 73 (A Millennial woman born in 1985) admitted that she had used more Gen Z slang when talking to Gen Z members. Respondent 80 (A Gen X woman born in 1971) adapted her language to suit the situation and audience, incorporating Gen Z terminology as a natural evolution: “Gen X’s speech patterns have had to evolve many times over the last 40+ years (disco, valleyspeak, hip-hop); language, post-modern referentiality, self-deprecation, and irony are what we do. Incorporating Gen Z terminology into the lexicon is a natural evolution and a no-brainer.” Respondent 108 (A Millennial woman born in 1996) believed that using abbreviations makes conversations more relaxed. Respondent 169 (A Gen X woman born in 1974) said, “I will incorporate certain Gen Z slang terms when talking with my coworkers that I do not use around my family or Gen X or Millennial friends.”

Moreover, 8 respondents expressed their willingness to adjust their communication strategies by seeking clarification to ensure mutual understanding with Gen Zers. Respondent 6 (A Millennial man born in 1987) said that he would ask his younger coworkers to explain to

him what they had just said. Respondent 120 (A Gen X man born in 1978) also mentioned that he always had to ask his young grandson about what he was talking. Similarly, respondent 128 (A Gen X woman born in 1969) had to ask her children what their terminology meant. Respondent 150 (A Gen X man born in 1972) also noted that he had to *Google* what they said, using it almost like *Google Translate* for their generation. These findings can be seen as a positive sign of cross-generational communication, where individuals from different age groups are open to adjusting their communication strategies to accommodate the communication styles of Gen Z individuals.

7.2.5. Conclusion to the Data Analysis

In this chapter, the main objective was to present, analyse, compare, and discuss the results obtained through the questionnaire. Firstly, the data from the “Familiarity with the Slang Terms” was analysed. The findings revealed that some slang terms were more recognisable to either Generation X or Millennials, while others were not. However, in general, the Millennial generation had less difficulty in recognising the slang terms.

Secondly, the responses to the "Additional Questions" were analysed and discussed. The findings revealed that most of the respondents had a great understanding of the meanings of various terms. Moreover, the study also found that some newer Gen Z slang terms, which were not included in the survey, were recognised, and understood by older generations, indicating their increasing popularity and influence.

Thirdly, the responses to "Intergenerational Communication" were further discussed. The survey conducted revealed that the use of Gen Z slang is causing communication challenges for many individuals. Misunderstandings can arise between teachers and students, family members, and colleagues in the workplace. The younger generation tends to use more slang terms due to exposure to social media. However, older generations may struggle to understand them. Nevertheless, the use of Gen Z slang has also been found to be beneficial in facilitating communication for some educators, family members, and colleagues. Incorporating this type of slang into teaching strategies can significantly enhance communication between teachers and students, and create a sense of understanding and connection. The survey also aimed to collect insights on whether individuals from Gen X and Millennials modify their communication styles when interacting with members of Generation Z. The majority of respondents indicated that they do not modify their communication style while interacting with Gen Zers or do not believe

that it is necessary to do so. On the other hand, over forty Gen Xers and Millennials indicated that their communication styles were often modified to better connect with younger generations.

In conclusion, the results of the survey highlight the fact that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to communication, and different people have different preferences and styles when it comes to interacting with others. However, it is crucial to be aware of the cultural and generational differences that exist in today's society and to be respectful and mindful of them when communicating with others.

Conclusion

The objective of this thesis was to investigate the familiarity of Generation X and Millennial cohorts with the common slang terms used by Generation Z. The study aimed to uncover any generational differences in their knowledge and understanding of such terms. To collect quantitative and qualitative data for the study, a questionnaire-based approach was employed.

The main research question of this thesis aimed to determine whether individuals belonging to older generations, specifically Generation X and Millennials, possess adequate familiarity and understanding of the slang terms commonly used by individuals belonging to Generation Z. To answer the first part of the research question, the study discovered that both generations were relatively familiar with the slang terms. However, the data analysed in the “Familiarity with the Terms” section showed that Millennials were more familiar with almost all of the slang terms than their Generation X counterparts. The “extremely familiar” percentages were higher for Millennials than for Generation X, and Generation X was more likely to have higher percentages for “not at all” familiarity with the terms than Millennials. Nonetheless, these results cannot be fully generalised since some respondents were more familiar or less familiar with the terms regardless of the generation they belonged to. The distinct levels of familiarity between Gen Xers and Millennials may reflect differences in cultural exposure, social circles, or social media consumption habits.

The “Additional Questions” section of the survey was also crucial to collect valuable data for the research. In this section, participants were asked to give contextual usage and definitions of the terms on the list. The data collected from this section helped to answer the second part of the research question. Respondents showed a prominent level of knowledge of the slang terms, providing accurate explanations and contexts for them. In addition, it was surprising to find that some members of Gen X and Millennial generations were up-to-date on new Gen Z slang terms, such as *Rizz* and *(No) Cap*. These terms were not included on the main questionnaire list since they were not marked as frequently used by Gen Z individuals. This was unexpected because it was assumed that these newer expressions would have higher percentages of frequent use by Gen Zers in the preliminary questionnaire. However, as explained in Chapter 7, the results from the preliminary questionnaire may have been skewed by the fact that more older members of Generation Z participated in the survey than younger ones, which may have affected the final list of 40 slang terms used in the main questionnaire.

The findings have also revealed that Generation X and Millennials are more likely to come into contact with Gen Z slang terms through online forums, social media platforms, and other virtual communities. In contrast, they tend to hear less of this slang in face-to-face conversations with their Gen Z family relatives and friends.

The “Intergenerational Communication” section also delved into the impact of using Gen Z slang in conversations between individuals from different generations. The study collected responses from participants who mentioned that the use of Gen Z slang in their intergenerational conversations with members of Gen Z had both caused misunderstandings and facilitated the conversations. A significant number of both Gen Xers and Millennials experienced misunderstandings when communicating with Gen Z individuals using slang. However, the use of Gen Z slang also facilitated communication between the older generations and Gen Zers for a considerable number of respondents. This suggests that while slang may initially create barriers to understanding, it can also serve as a tool for bridging intergenerational communication gaps.

Furthermore, the study aimed to investigate whether older generations modify their communication styles during conversations with younger generations to ensure mutual understanding. Most respondents indicated that they did not feel the need to modify their communication styles, implying that the use of slang did not create significant gaps in intergenerational communication. However, a considerable number of respondents admitted to adapting their communication styles by adopting Gen Z slang into their dictionary or seeking clarification on the meanings of the terms to improve their conversations with younger individuals. In conclusion, although the majority of respondents do not modify their communication styles when interacting with Gen Z individuals, a considerable number acknowledged making adjustments. This indicates that communication is a nuanced approach, where some individuals recognise the need to adapt their language or communication strategies to better connect with the younger generation, while others may rely on more traditional communication styles. This suggests that communication patterns are influenced by a variety of factors, including individual preferences, situational context, and perceived effectiveness.

The acknowledgement of communication modifications by a large number of respondents suggests an openness to improving communication across generations. This presents an opportunity for initiatives aimed at enhancing intergenerational understanding and communication effectiveness, such as workshops or educational resources.

To reflect on the research process, the decision to employ a questionnaire as a method to collect data for the research was a wise one, as this method allowed for the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, which yielded interesting results and helped bring more clarity to the research question. What was found effective was the use of a preliminary questionnaire aimed at gathering data from Generation Z respondents. The information gathered from this survey was then used to construct a list of forty slang terms that were later incorporated into the main questionnaire aimed at older generations. This process felt like a fascinating and secretive collaboration between these different generations.

However, the research has some limitations that are worth mentioning. Firstly, no previous academic research analysing the levels of understanding of Gen Z slang among Generation X and Millennials was conducted, which would have provided more comprehensive insights into the research topic. In addition, certain aspects of the research would be approached differently if given the chance. For instance, the preliminary questionnaire could be improved by ensuring that respondents born in both the older (1997-2003) and younger (2004-2012) years marking Generation Z are represented equally. The preliminary questionnaire received a substantial number of responses from older Gen Zers, which might have influenced the selection of terms from the preliminary questionnaire to the main one. As a consequence, certain slang terms more typical for younger Millennials were commonly used by older Gen Zers, which led to confusion among Gen X and Millennial respondents, who mentioned that the terms on the list were not typical for Gen Zers but for their generations. Additionally, another issue that may arise with the use of printed dictionaries in the research is the inclusion of outdated slang terms. This could be because many dictionaries are written by Millennials for Millennials and older generations. Millennials might thus tend to include terms that are more typical of their own vocabulary, while also overlapping with the vocabulary of Gen Z. The problem is compounded by the fact that slang is constantly evolving, making printed sources prone to be outdated by the time they are published. To avoid such confusion, a recommendation is to research the most up-to-date online sources and create a list of terms which have been coined or appeared in recent years, thus reflecting the current state of slang.

To suggest more potential improvements for future research, it is worth noting that while the number of respondents belonging to each generation was fairly balanced (102 Millennials and 72 Gen Xers), there is still room for further exploration on the same topic regarding the familiarity and comprehension of Gen Z slang by older generations. One potential avenue for improvement could involve replicating the study on a larger and more balanced sample size.

Additionally, instead of limiting the survey to a list of only forty slang terms, the list could be expanded to include a higher number of lexical items. However, it is important to note that the assumption that Gen Xers and Millennials would not be interested in participating in the survey with a significantly higher number of lexical items influenced the decision to limit the list of terms to only forty items in this research.

It has been revealed in the research that the disparity in comprehension of language between Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z is not as significant as previously thought. This has led to the suggestion that further investigations can be conducted to explore the understanding of the slang used by the younger Gen Z demographic among even older generation, such as Baby Boomers. I would assume that the level of familiarity and comprehension of these terms would not be as high among Boomers as it is among Gen Xers and Millennials.

Additionally, if a greater number of survey respondents who were non-native English speakers participated in a similar survey, and their responses were balanced with those of English-speaking respondents, it would enable more in-depth analysis and comparison of the understanding and comprehension of Gen Z slang terms by people of diverse origins and cultures. Such an approach could potentially provide valuable insights into how slang is understood and used by people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Lastly, it would also be interesting to conduct an in-depth analysis of the levels of familiarity and comprehension of different slang terms based on gender. It might be intriguing to discover whether women, men, or individuals of other genders are more inclined to be familiar with and understand these slang terms.

The data collected in this thesis can be considered a valuable source for potential future research aimed at comprehending the slang used by one generation as perceived by other generations. To summarize, the thesis has contributed interesting insights into the familiarity and levels of comprehension of Generation X and Millennials with the frequently used terms of Generation Z and also whether the use of slang has had any impact on intergenerational communication. Additionally, it has also suggested potential gaps and areas of research that could be explored by those interested in the slang of Generation Z or slang in general.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaires

Questionnaire 1

Preliminary Questionnaire: Most Frequently Used Gen Z Slang Terms

Dear respondents,

My name is Tereza Ebertova, and I am a student at the University of South Bohemia, Czech Republic.

My bachelor's thesis focuses on how much older generations (in particular Gen X and Millennials) understand slang terms used by Gen Z, i.e. people born between 1997 and 2012. Most of the slang terms by Generation Z come from social media (TikTok, Twitter or YouTube) or have been used in African-American Vernacular English and have now become more mainstream.

Having researched social media, online and printed dictionaries, I've compiled a list of 100 slang terms specific to this generation. However, I would now like to reduce this list to a number which will be sufficient for a survey aimed at the older generations, as I will work with slang words most frequently used by our generation in my following research.

I am asking you, members of Generation Z, to help me by completing this questionnaire. The questionnaire starts

with some introductory questions about the year, you were born, your gender and where you come from. Following is a list of 100 slang terms with a Likert scale, and **your task is to indicate how often you use the slang term in question.**

Completing the questionnaire should take about 10 minutes. The data collected will remain anonymous, and the results will be used solely for academic purposes.

Thank you for your participation! (Your help will be greatly appreciated!)

*Required

Demographic Information

1. In what year were you born?*

The number must be in the range from 1997 to 2012.

2. What is your gender?*

- Man
- Woman
- Non-binary
- Other

3. Which country are you from?*

- English-speaking country (English is either an official, administrative, or cultural language)
- Non-native English-speaking country

4. What country are you from?

100 Gen Z Slang Words/Phrases

In this section, 100 Gen Z Slang Words/Phrases collected during my research, are presented. Your task is to mark how frequently you use the particular term.

Never=I never use this term in my conversations; **Rarely**=I don't use this term very often; **Occasionally**=I use this term only at certain times; **Frequently**=I use this term often; **All the time**=I use this term all or most of the time

5. How often do you use these terms in your offline/online conversations?*

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	All the time
1. (Sip) Tea	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Vibe	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. (No) cap	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Drip	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Simp	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Stan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. (It) Slaps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Wig	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Bop	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Drag	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Finesse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. (It) Hits Different	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Sus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. High-key	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Low-key	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Periodt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. MC (Main Character)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Fam	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. Sis
20. Ghosting

6. How often do you use these terms in your offline/online conversations?*

- | | Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | All the time |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 21. Situationship | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 22. (I'm) Shook/ Shooketh | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 23. Bet | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 24. Yeet | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 25. (Big) Yikes | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 26. Slay | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 27. Cheugy | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 28. Fit | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 29. Glow Up | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 30. (Someone/ something) Is Canceled | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 31. Finna | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 32. Boujee | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 33. Let Him Cook | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 34. Someone Cooked Here | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 35. Cringe | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 36. (I'm) Dead | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 37. Lit | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 38. Salty | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 39. Woke | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 40. That/This Ain't It | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

7. How often do you use these terms in your offline/online conversations?*

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	All the time
41. Catch These Hands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
42. It's Giving	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
43. Rizz	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
44. Bussin'	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
45. G.O.A.T.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
46. Mood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
47. Flex	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
48. Go Off	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
49. Out of Pocket	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
50. (Take an) L	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
51. Basic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
52. Deadass	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
53. (And) I Oop	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
54. (It's) Sending Me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
55. Pressed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
56. In My X Era	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
57. Touch Grass	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
58. (Living in Your Head) Rent Free	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
59. Understood the Assignment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
60. OK Boomer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. How often do you use these terms in your offline/online conversations?*

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	All the time
61. Sheesh	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 62. Zaddy | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 63. Mid | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 64. NPC | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 65. Bae | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 66. (Have/ Chase) Clout | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 67. Homie | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 68. (Be a) Clown | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 69. Do You Dirty | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 70. Flop | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 71. Get This Bread | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 72. Ship (Someone with someone) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 73. Square Up | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 74. Throw Shade | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 75. Sick | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 76. Triggered | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 77. Bruh | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 78. (You're) Trippin' | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 79. TBH (To Be Honest) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 80. (It's) Cuffing Season | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

9. How often do you use these terms in your offline/online conversations?*

- | | Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | All the time |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 81. Thirst Trap | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 82. Based | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 83. Gatekeep | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 84. Sleep on (Something/ Someone) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

- | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 85. CEO (of Something) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 86. (Be a) Karen | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 87. Pushin' P | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 88. FR (For Real) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 89. Ate (And Left No Crumbs) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 90. Bestie | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 91. (It's a) Canon Event | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 92. Ratio | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 93. On God | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 94. Opp | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 95. Valid | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 96. Fruity | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 97. Side Eye | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 98. (It) Altered My Brain Chemistry | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 99. Caught in 4K | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 100. Gagged | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

10. What other Gen Z slang terms (that are not on the list) do you frequently use?

The End

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! Have a great day!

Questionnaire 2

Main Questionnaire: Understanding Gen Z Slang: A Cross-Generational Study

Dear respondents,

My name is Tereza Ebertova, and I am a student at the University of South Bohemia, Czech Republic.

My bachelor's thesis focuses on **how much Generation X (people born between 1965 and 1980) and Millennials (1981-1996) understand slang terms used by Generation Z (1997-2012)**. Gen Z slang is specific in that most terms come from social media (TikTok, Twitter or YouTube) or have been used in African-American Vernacular English and have become more mainstream. My goal is **to determine the extent of the comprehension of selected Gen Z slang terms by Generation X and Millennials and to discover if the use of Gen Z slang impacts communication across ages**.

Completing the questionnaire should take about 10-15 minutes. The data collected will remain **anonymous**, and the results will be used solely for academic purposes.

Thank you for your participation!

*Required

Demographic Information

1. To which generation do you belong?*

Generation X (1965-1980)

Millennials (1981-1996)

2. In what year were you born? (for detailed analysis of the results)*

The number must be in the range from 1965 to 1996.

3. What is your gender?*

Man

Woman

Non-binary

Other

4. Which country are you from?*

English-speaking country (English is either an official, administrative, or cultural language)

Non-native English-speaking country

5. What country are you from?

40 Gen Z slang terms

In the following section, 40 Gen Z terms collected during my research are presented.

Your task has three parts, please:

First, indicate **whether you are familiar with the Gen Z slang terms listed**.

Second, use the Likert scale to **indicate your level of familiarity with the terms**.

Finally, for any terms you marked as "Yes, (I'm familiar with this term)", **provide a definition or usage context**; feel free to **add any slang term that is not on the list** but you are familiar with; and indicate **where you learned or encountered the Gen Z slang terms**.

6. Are you familiar with these terms? (Part 1/2)*

	Yes	No
1. Based	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Basic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Bestie	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Bet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Bop	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Bruh	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Cringe	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Deadass	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Flex	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. FR (For Real)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Fruity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Gatekeep	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Ghosting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Girlboss	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. High-key	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Hits different	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Hot take	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. I'm dead	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. IJBOL (I Just Burst Out Laughing)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Living in your head rent free	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Are you familiar with these terms? (Part 2/2)*

	Yes	No
21. Low-key	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Mid	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. Mood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. Salty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. Ship (someone with someone)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. Sick	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. Slaps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. Slay	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. SMH (Shaking My Head)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. So real for that	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31. Someone/ something is cancelled	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. Sus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
33. Take an L	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
34. TBH (To Be Honest)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35. That ain't it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
36. Touch grass	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
37. Triggered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
38. Valid	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
39. Vibe	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
40. Yikes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. For the terms you marked as “Yes,” indicate please your level of familiarity with these terms. (Part 1/2)

Not at all familiar=answered "No" in the previous section; Slightly familiar=I have heard this term before, but I'm unsure of its meaning or usage; Moderately familiar=I recognise the term and have a basic understanding of its meaning; Very familiar=I'm able to use this term in conversations and can explain its meaning to others; Extremely familiar=I use this term regularly and effortlessly in my conversations*

	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar
1. Based	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Basic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Bestie	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Bet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Bop	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Bruh	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Cringe	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Deadass	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Flex	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. FR (For Real)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Fruity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Gatekeep	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Ghosting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Girlboss	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. High-key	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Hits different	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Hot take	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. I'm dead	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. IJBOL (I Just Burst Out Laughing)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Living in your head rent free	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. For the terms you marked as “Yes,” indicate please your level of familiarity with these terms. (Part 2/2)*

	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar
21. Low-key	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Mid	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. Mood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. Salty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. Ship (someone with someone)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. Sick	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. Slaps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. Slay	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. SMH (Shaking My Head)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. So real for that	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31. Someone/ something is cancelled	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. Sus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
33. Take an L	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
34. TBH (To Be Honest)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35. That ain't it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
36. Touch grass	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
37. Triggered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
38. Valid	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
39. Vibe	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
40. Yikes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Can you please provide a short definition (in your own words) or usage context for any of the terms you marked as “Yes (I’m familiar with this term)”?

11. Are there any Gen Z slang terms that are not on the list, but you are familiar with?

12. Where do you typically encounter or learn Gen Z slang terms? (select all that apply)*

- I typically don't encounter/learn any Gen Z slang terms
- Social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, TikTok, Twitter)
- Online forums or communities
- Movies and TV shows
- Music and lyrics
- Family conversations
- Conversations with friends
- Work environment
- Other

Intergenerational Communication

Answers to these questions **will help me tremendously** in the research on **how Gen Z slang can impact communication across different generations.**

13. In your experience, has the usage of Gen Z slang ever **caused misunderstandings or challenges** in communication with individuals from Generation Z?*

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

14. What misunderstandings or challenges have you faced in your communication with Generation Z?

15. In your experience, has the usage of Gen Z slang ever **facilitated (=make smoother)** communication with individuals from Generation Z?*

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

16. Can you provide specific examples of instances where the use of Generation Z slang facilitated your communication with younger individuals?

17. How do you adapt your communication style when interacting with members of Generation Z to ensure effective mutual understanding?

End of the survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! Your answers will considerably help me with my research on Gen Z slang and intergenerational communication for my bachelor's thesis. Have a great day!

Appendix B: Additional Tables and Charts

Table B1: 100 Slang Terms Used in the Preliminary Questionnaire

100 Slang Terms Used in the Questionnaire for Gen Z (Preliminary Questionnaire)	
1. (Sip) Tea	51. Basic
2. Vibe	52. Deadass
3. (No) Cap	53. And I Oop
4. Drip	54. (It's) Sending Me
5. Simp	55. Pressed
6. Stan	56. In My X Era
7. Slaps	57. Touch Grass
8. Wig	58. (Living in Your Head) Rent Free
9. Bop	59. Understood the Assignment
10. Drag	60. OK Boomer
11. Finesse	61. Sheesh
12. Hits Different	62. Zaddy
13. Sus	63. Mid
14. High-key	64. NPC
15. Low-key	65. Bae
16. Periodt	66. (Have/Chase) Clout
17. MC (Main Character)	67. Homie
18. Fam	68. (Be a) Clown
19. Sis	69. Do You Dirty
20. Ghosting	70. Flop
21. Situationship	71. Get This Bread
22. (I'm) Shook/Shooketh	72. Ship (Someone with Someone)
23. Bet	73. Square Up
24. Yeet	74. Throw Shade
25. (Big) Yikes	75. Sick
26. Slay	76. Triggered
27. Cheugy	77. Bruh
28. Fit	78. You're Trippin'
29. Glow Up	79. TBH (To Be Honest)
30. (Someone/Something Is) Cancelled	80. (It's) Cuffing Season
31. Finna	81. Thirst Trap
32. Boujee	82. Based
33. Let Him Cook	83. Gatekeep
34. Someone Cooked Here	84. Sleep on (Something/Someone)
35. Cringe	85. CEO (of Something)
36. (I'm) Dead	86. (Be a) Karen
37. Lit	87. Pushin' P
38. Salty	88. FR (For Real)
39. Woke	89. Ate (And Left No Crumbs)
40. That/This Ain't It	90. Bestie
41. Catch These Hands	91. (It's a) Canon Event
42. It's Giving	92. Ratio
43. Rizz	93. On God
44. Bussin'	94. Opp
45. G.O.A.T	95. Valid
46. Mood	96. Fruity
47. Flex	97. Side Eye
48. Go Off	98. (It) Altered My Brain Chemistry
49. Out of Pocket	99. Caught in 4K
50. (Take an) L	100. Gagged

Table B2: List of 100 Slang Terms with Percentages of Frequent Use

List of 100 Slang Terms with Percentages of Frequent Use			
Slang Term	Used “Frequently” or “All the time” in %	Slang Term	Used “Frequently” or “All the time” in %
1. (Sip) Tea	13,75	51. Basic	26,88
2. Vibe	58,75	52. Deadass	21,88
3. (No) Cap	7,50	53. And I Oop	4,38
4. Drip	5,00	54. (It’s) Sending Me	5,00
5. Simp	16,88	55. Pressed	5,00
6. Stan	16,88	56. In My X Era	12,50
7. Slaps	33,13	57. Touch Grass	18,75
8. Wig	0,63	58. (Living in Your Head) Rent Free	23,75
9. Bop	20,00	59. Understood the Assignment	10,00
10. Drag	6,25	60. OK Boomer	10,63
11. Finesse	5,00	61. Sheesh	13,75
12. Hits Different	34,38	62. Zaddy	0,63
13. Sus	35,00	63. Mid	26,25
14. High-key	25,63	64. NPC	13,13
15. Low-key	52,50	65. Bae	3,13
16. Periodt	5,00	66. (Have/Chase) Clout	8,13
17. MC (Main Character)	13,13	67. Homie	15,63
18. Fam	10,63	68. (Be a) Clown	14,38
19. Sis	7,50	69. Do You Dirty	15,63
20. Ghosting	28,13	70. Flop	12,50
21. Situationship	6,25	71. Get This Bread	7,50
22. (I’m) Shook/Shooketh	11,25	72. Ship (Someone with Someone)	31,25
23. Bet	23,75	73. Square Up	7,50
24. Yeet	16,88	74. Throw Shade	11,25
25. (Big) Yikes	25,63	75. Sick	40,00
26. Slay	22,50	76. Triggered	18,13
27. Cheugy	0,00	77. Bruh	48,75
28. Fit	16,88	78. You’re Trippin’	11,88
29. Glow Up	12,50	79. TBH (To Be Honest)	60,63
30. (Someone/Something Is) Cancelled	22,50	80. (It’s) Cuffing Season	1,88
31. Finna	3,75	81. Thirst Trap	3,75
32. Boujee	10,00	82. Based	33,13
33. Let Him Cook	15,63	83. Gatekeep	24,38
34. Someone Cooked Here	5,00	84. Sleep on (Something/Someone)	16,88
35. Cringe	61,88	85. CEO (of Something)	9,38
36. (I’m) Dead	34,38	86. (Be a) Karen	11,88
37. Lit	14,38	87. Pushin’ P	0,63
38. Salty	27,50	88. FR (For Real)	42,50
39. Woke	9,38	89. Ate (And Left No Crumbs)	10,00
40. That/This Ain’t It	21,88	90. Bestie	25,63
41. Catch These Hands	4,38	91. (It’s a) Canon Event	9,38
42. It’s Giving	15,63	92. Ratio	10,00
43. Rizz	12,50	93. On God	13,13
44. Bussin’	7,50	94. Opp	3,13
45. G.O.A.T	17,50	95. Valid	30,00
46. Mood	39,38	96. Fruity	18,13
47. Flex	29,38	97. Side Eye	11,88
48. Go Off	17,50	98. (It) Altered My Brain Chemistry	6,88
49. Out of Pocket	9,38	99. Caught in 4K	8,13
50. (Take an) L	28,75	100. Gagged	2,50

Table B3: 40 Slang Terms with Definitions

40 Slang Terms with Definitions	
Slang Term	Definition
1. Based	Something (e.g. an opinion) that you agree with (Cramer).
2. Basic	Average or generic; to describe people only interested in mainstream trends (King).
3. Bestie	A nickname for a person's best friend; also used to address anyone you care about (Weekman).
4. Bet	"Okay" or "Sure" (King).
5. Bop	A really good song (King).
6. Bruh	An expression of shock or disbelief (King).
7. Cringe	Something very awkward or uncomfortable (King).
8. Deadass	"Seriously" or "Literally" (King).
9. Flex	To show off (King).
10. FR	An acronym for "For Real;" to emphasise agreement or an important point (Ahmed).
11. Fruity	Used to describe someone who is a member of the LGBTQ+ community (Salmon).
12. Gatekeep	To control who has access to knowledge or opportunities (Klein).
13. Ghosting	To avoid someone or stand them up (King).
14. Girlboss	A hard-working person; typically used ironically (Kaplan).
15. High-key	Something very obvious (King).
16. Hits Different	To have a novel effect (King).
17. Hot Take	A personal opinion which is often controversial or unpopular (King).
18. (I'm) Dead	A hyperbole for something extremely hilarious (Knott).
19. IJBOL	An acronym for "I Just Burst Out Laughing;" used to express laughter (Munson).
20. (Living in Your Head) Rent Free	When someone cannot stop thinking about something (Liles).
21. Low-key	To keep quiet about; often precedes an honest opinion (King).
22. Mid	Something average or of poor quality (Cramer).
23. Mood	The feeling of something being relatable (King).
24. Salty	To be bitter or angry about something (King).
25. Ship (Someone with Someone)	To imagine two people (characters) in a relationship together (King).
26. Sick	A synonym for "Cool" (King).
27. Slaps	To describe something amazing or impressive (Knott).
28. Slay	To describe someone's appearance or accomplishment (Kato).
29. SMH	An acronym for "Shaking My Head;" to convey disbelief or disappointment (Ahmed).
30. So Real For That	To praise someone for being relatable (Philipp).
31. (Someone/Something Is) Cancelled	When someone or something is no longer supported due to their wrongdoings (Knott).
32. Sus	Short for "suspicious;" suggests questionable behaviour (King).
33. (Take an) L	To take/accept a loss (Monaghan).
34. TBH	An acronym for "To Be Honest;" to express an opinion about something (Ahmed).
35. That Ain't It	Something unacceptable (King).
36. Touch Grass	Used to tell chronically online people to get back to reality (Klein).
37. Triggered	Be emotionally upset by something; often used to exaggerate a minor frustration (Sessoms).
38. Valid	Something of a high standard (Yomary).
39. Vibe	The energy or mood projected by a person, place, or thing (King).
40. Yikes	To describe something embarrassing or disturbing (Spollen).

Chart B1: Generation X Participants' Birth Years

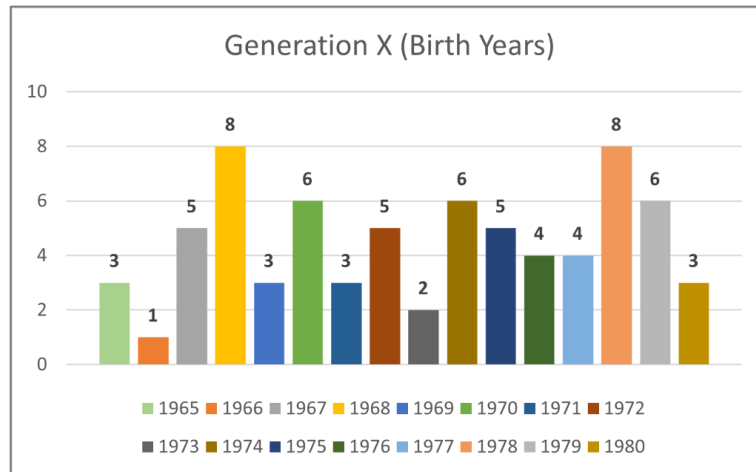


Chart B2: Millennial Participants' Birth Years

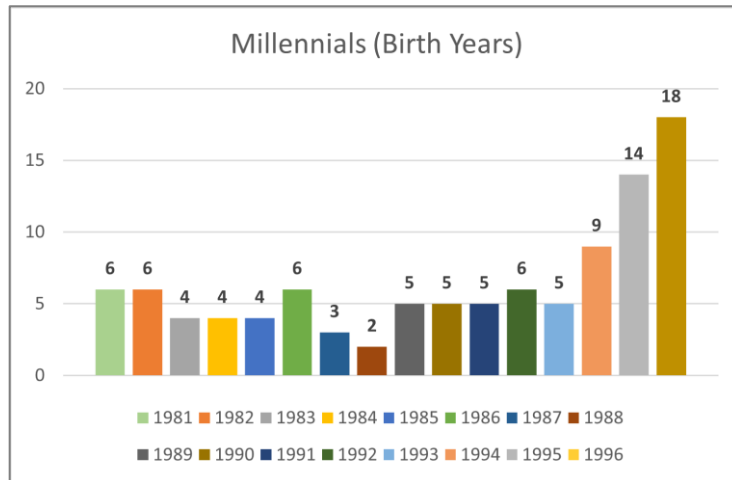


Table B4: Generation X and Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (1-10)

Generation X and Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (1-10)					
Term	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar
1. Based	18%	21%	24%	21%	16%
2. Basic	5%	6%	21%	30%	37%
3. Bestie	2%	2%	10%	34%	51%
4. Bet	22%	18%	22%	22%	16%
5. Bop	39%	10%	15%	15%	22%
6. Bruh	3%	6%	17%	29%	45%
7. Cringe	2%	2%	13%	29%	53%
8. Deadass	15%	12%	20%	26%	28%
9. Flex	6%	7%	16%	29%	42%
10. FR (For Real)	11%	8%	17%	24%	40%

Chart B3: Generation X and Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (1-10)

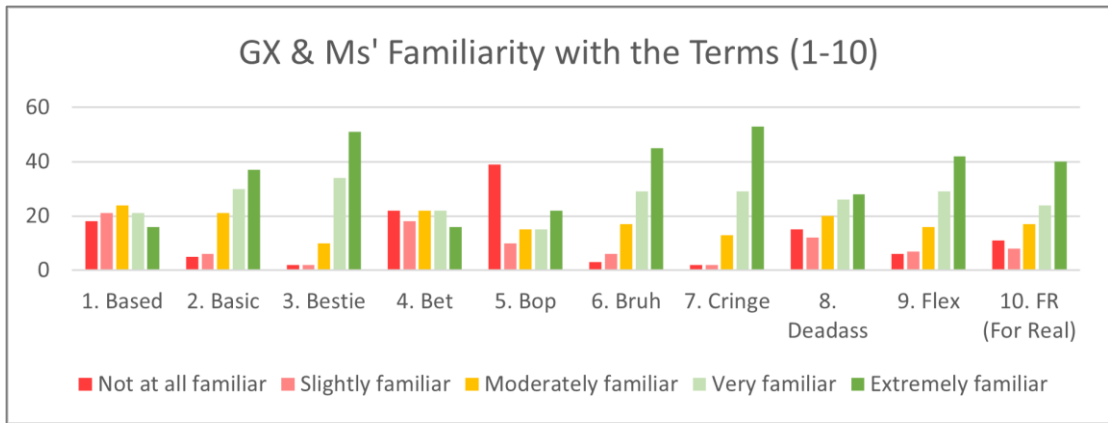


Table B5: Generation X and Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (11-20)

Generation X and Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (11-20)					
Term	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar
11. Fruity	48%	14%	13%	12%	13%
12. Gatekeep	10%	5%	16%	30%	39%
13. Ghosting	2%	3%	10%	31%	53%
14. Girlboss	13%	6%	22%	28%	31%
15. High-key	32%	7%	20%	18%	23%
16. Hits Different	9%	13%	18%	22%	38%
17. Hot Take	10%	7%	14%	28%	41%
18. (I'm) Dead	12%	5%	17%	29%	37%
19. IJBOL (I Just Burst Out Laughing)	66%	10%	10%	9%	5%
20. (Living in Your Head) Rent Free	7%	6%	14%	29%	43%

Chart B4: Generation X and Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (11-20)

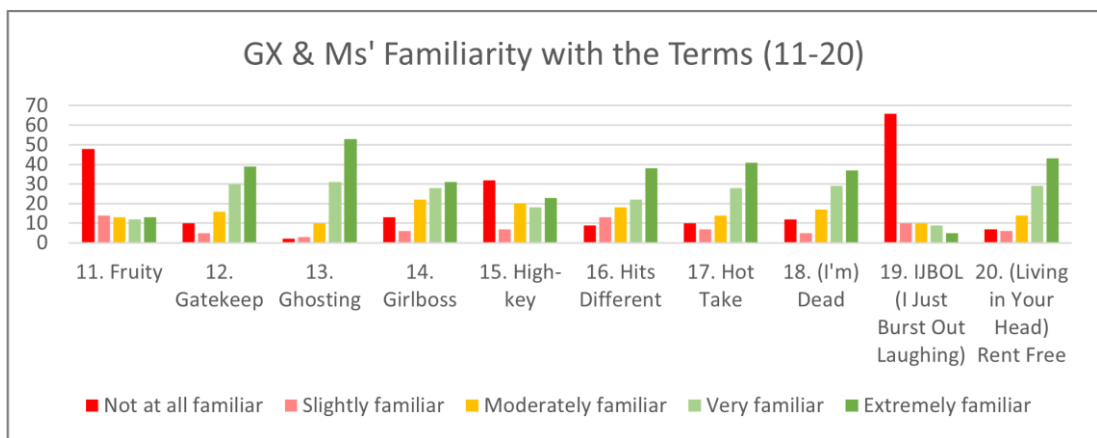


Table B6: Generation X and Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (21-30)

Generation X and Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (21-30)					
Term	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar
21. Low-key	6%	7%	22%	20%	44%
22. Mid	20%	11%	22%	20%	27%
23. Mood	13%	9%	20%	24%	34%
24. Salty	5%	5%	13%	28%	49%
25. Ship (Someone with Someone)	24%	6%	13%	20%	37%
26. Sick	6%	10%	17%	23%	43%
27. Slaps	14%	6%	16%	30%	34%
28. Slay	5%	11%	16%	32%	36%
29. SMH (Shaking My Head)	7%	8%	14%	24%	47%
30. So Real For That	47%	15%	11%	13%	14%

Chart B5: Generation X and Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (21-30)

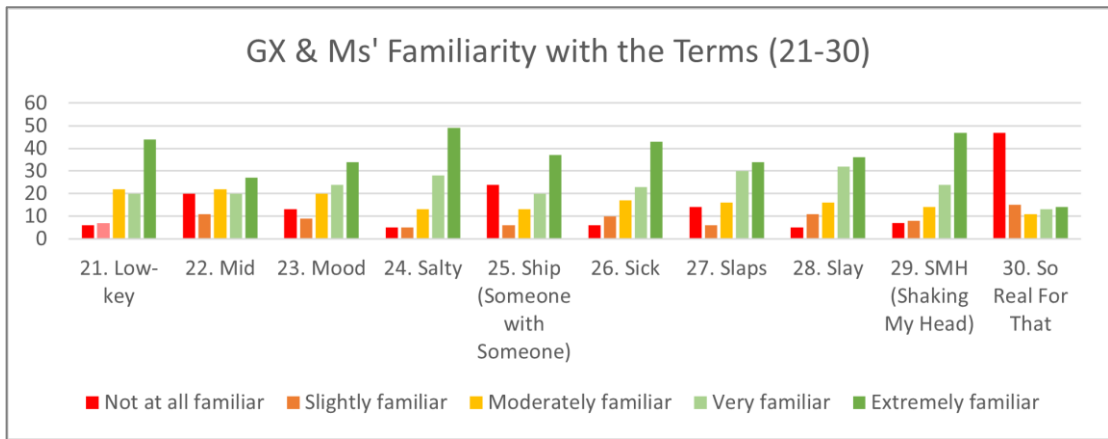


Table B7: Generation X and Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (31-40)

Generation X and Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (31-40)					
Term	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar
31. (Someone/Something Is) Cancelled	7%	5%	17%	26%	45%
32. Sus	5%	9%	16%	30%	40%
33. (Take an) L	26%	6%	16%	19%	34%
34. TBH (To Be Honest)	4%	5%	13%	20%	59%
35. That Ain't It	27%	10%	18%	20%	25%
36. Touch Grass	24%	7%	13%	24%	32%
37. Triggered	2%	3%	15%	28%	51%
38. Valid	9%	11%	15%	22%	43%
39. Vibe	7%	6%	18%	22%	47%
40. Yikes	8%	9%	11%	23%	48%

Chart B6: Generation X and Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (31-40)

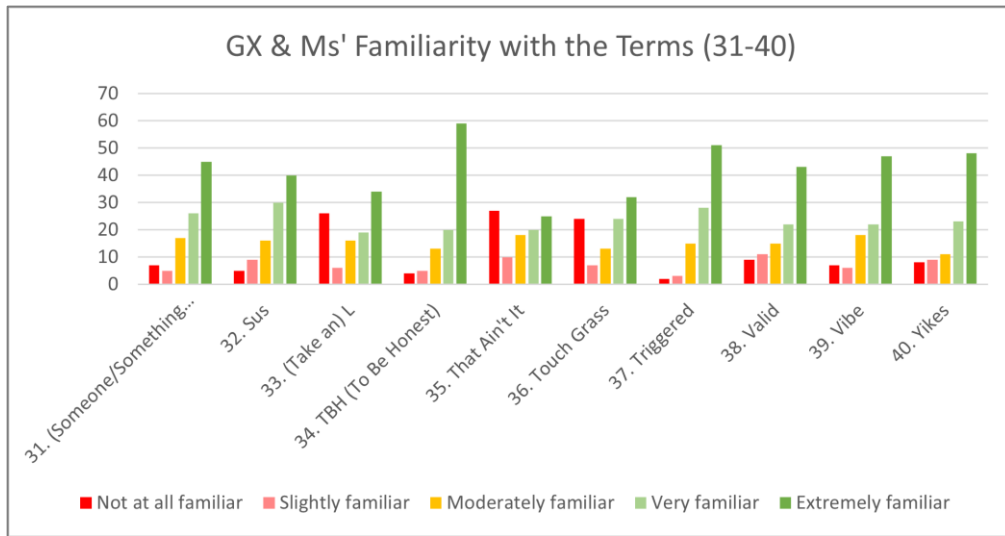


Table B8: Generation X's Familiarity with the Terms (1-10)

Generation X's Familiarity with the Terms (1-10)					
Term	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar
1. Based	25%	11%	32%	21%	11%
2. Basic	4%	7%	25%	38%	26%
3. Bestie	3%	3%	13%	42%	40%
4. Bet	31%	13%	18%	25%	14%
5. Bop	51%	13%	11%	13%	13%
6. Bruh	3%	4%	21%	39%	33%
7. Cringe	3%	1%	15%	43%	38%
8. Deadass	18%	15%	21%	24%	22%
9. Flex	7%	8%	17%	29%	39%
10. FR (For Real)	14%	10%	21%	26%	29%

Chart B7: Generation X's Familiarity with the Terms (1-10)

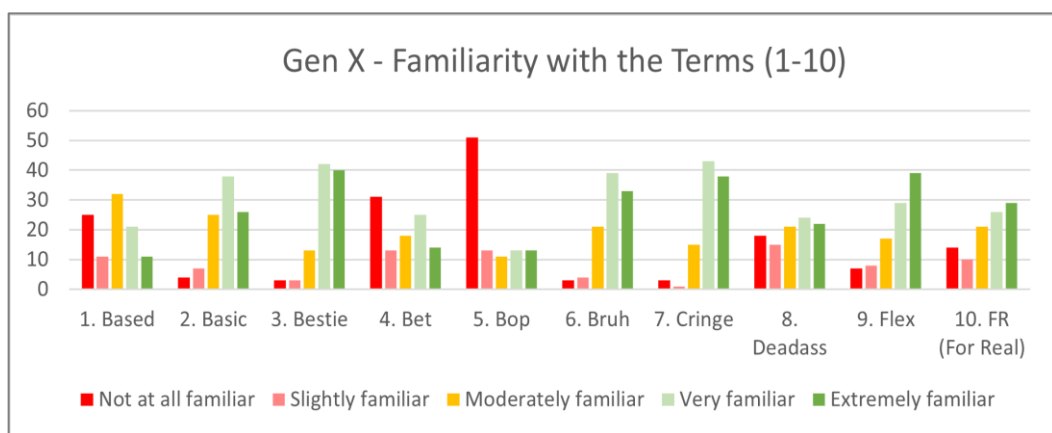


Table B9: Generation X's Familiarity with the Terms (11-20)

Generation X's Familiarity with the Terms (11-20)					
Term	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar
11. Fruity	57%	17%	10%	8%	8%
12. Gatekeep	11%	7%	19%	31%	32%
13. Ghosting	1%	4%	14%	42%	39%
14. Girlboss	18%	7%	28%	25%	22%
15. High-key	46%	7%	15%	18%	14%
16. Hits Different	11%	13%	21%	25%	31%
17. Hot Take	10%	10%	18%	35%	28%
18. (I'm) Dead	15%	7%	21%	33%	24%
19. IJBOL (I Just Burst Out Laughing)	61%	8%	11%	14%	6%
20. (Living in Your Head) Rent Free	8%	7%	18%	33%	33%

Chart B8: Generation X's Familiarity with the Terms (11-20)

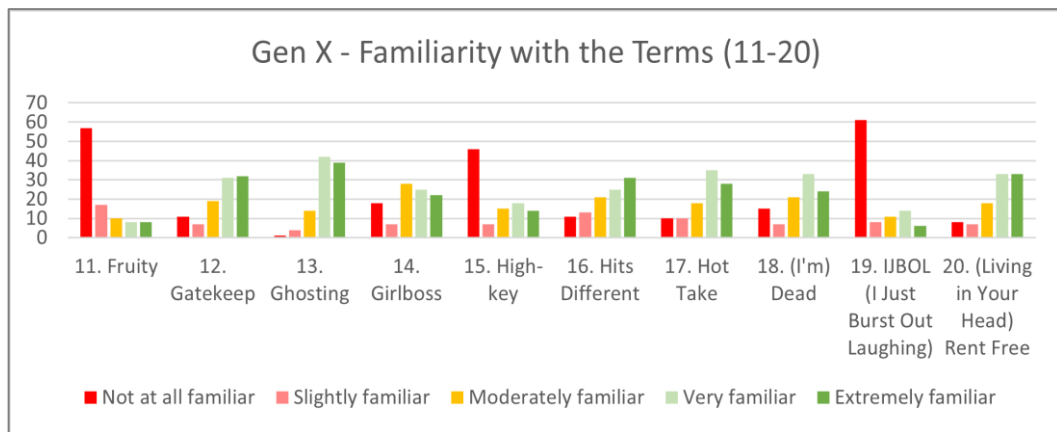


Table B10: Generation X's Familiarity with the Terms (21-30)

Generation X's Familiarity with the Terms (21-30)					
Term	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar
21. Low-key	6%	10%	24%	29%	32%
22. Mid	21%	10%	25%	22%	22%
23. Mood	17%	14%	15%	28%	26%
24. Salty	1%	10%	14%	31%	44%
25. Ship (Someone with Someone)	35%	4%	15%	25%	21%
26. Sick	8%	14%	18%	29%	31%
27. Slaps	21%	7%	17%	31%	25%
28. Slay	8%	10%	15%	40%	26%
29. SMH (Shaking My Head)	8%	7%	18%	31%	36%
30. So Real For That	56%	17%	7%	10%	11%

Chart B9: Generation X's Familiarity with the Terms (21-30)

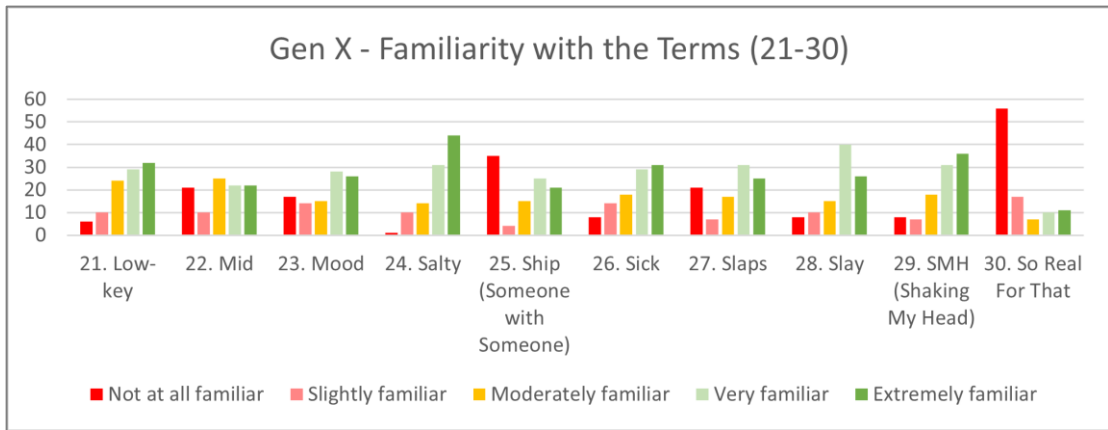


Table B11: Generation X's Familiarity with the Terms (31-40)

Generation X's Familiarity with the Terms (31-40)					
Term	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar
31. (Someone/Something Is) Cancelled	10%	4%	24%	31%	32%
32. Sus	4%	14%	17%	32%	33%
33. (Take an) L	29%	8%	14%	25%	24%
34. TBH (To Be Honest)	4%	11%	17%	28%	40%
35. That Ain't It	35%	17%	8%	18%	22%
36. Touch Grass	29%	8%	17%	28%	18%
37. Triggered	4%	4%	18%	36%	38%
38. Valid	10%	15%	14%	26%	35%
39. Vibe	7%	8%	19%	29%	36%
40. Yikes	8%	13%	7%	32%	40%

Chart B10: Generation X's Familiarity with the Terms (31-40)

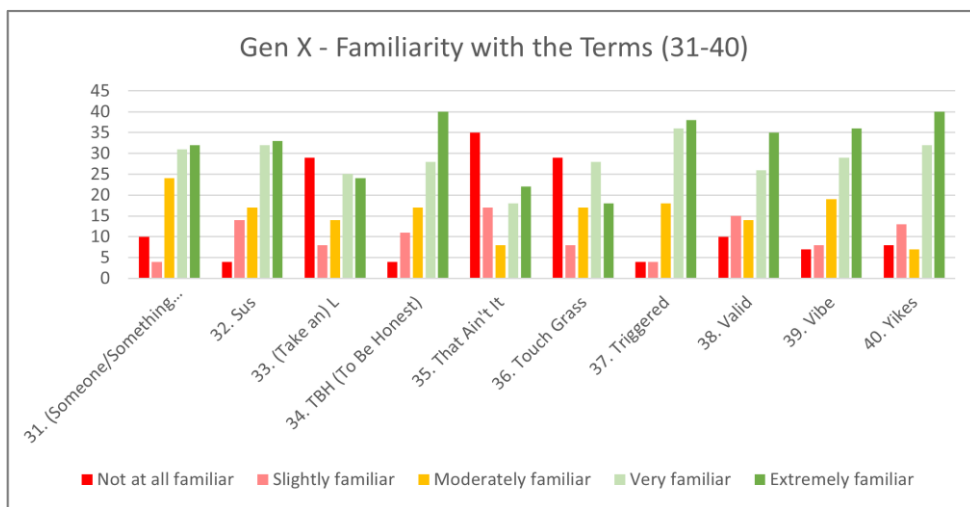


Table B12: Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (1-11)

Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (1-10)					
Term	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar
1. Based	14%	27%	19%	21%	20%
2. Basic	5%	6%	19%	25%	45%
3. Bestie	2%	2%	9%	29%	58%
4. Bet	17%	22%	25%	20%	17%
5. Bop	29%	8%	18%	17%	28%
6. Bruh	3%	7%	14%	23%	54%
7. Cringe	2%	3%	12%	19%	65%
8. Deadass	13%	10%	19%	27%	31%
9. Flex	6%	6%	16%	28%	44%
10. FR (For Real)	9%	7%	15%	22%	48%

Chart B11: Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (1-10)

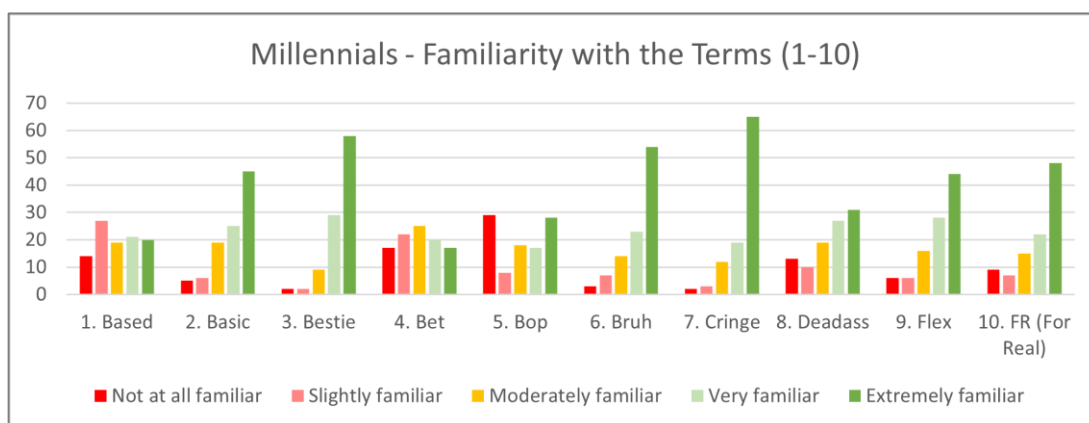


Table B13: Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (11-20)

Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (11-20)					
Term	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar
11. Fruity	41%	13%	15%	15%	17%
12. Gatekeep	10%	4%	13%	29%	44%
13. Ghosting	3%	3%	7%	24%	64%
14. Girlboss	10%	5%	19%	29%	37%
15. High-key	22%	8%	24%	18%	29%
16. Hits Different	7%	13%	17%	21%	43%
17. Hot Take	11%	5%	12%	23%	50%
18. (I'm) Dead	10%	3%	14%	26%	47%
19. IJBOL (I Just Burst Out Laughing)	70%	11%	10%	5%	5%
20. (Living in Your Head) Rent Free	7%	6%	12%	25%	50%

Chart B12: Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (11-20)

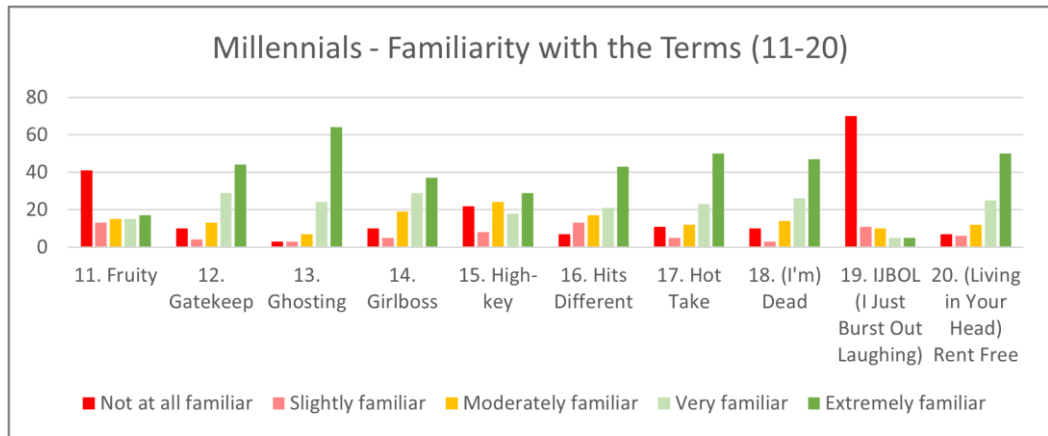


Table B14: Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (21-30)

Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (21-30)					
Term	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar
21. Low-key	7%	6%	21%	14%	53%
22. Mid	20%	12%	20%	19%	30%
23. Mood	11%	5%	24%	22%	39%
24. Salty	7%	2%	13%	26%	52%
25. Ship (Someone with Someone)	17%	8%	11%	17%	48%
26. Sick	5%	8%	17%	19%	52%
27. Slaps	9%	5%	15%	30%	41%
28. Slay	3%	12%	17%	25%	43%
29. SMH (Shaking My Head)	6%	9%	12%	20%	54%
30. So Real For That	41%	14%	15%	15%	16%

Chart B13: Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (21-30)

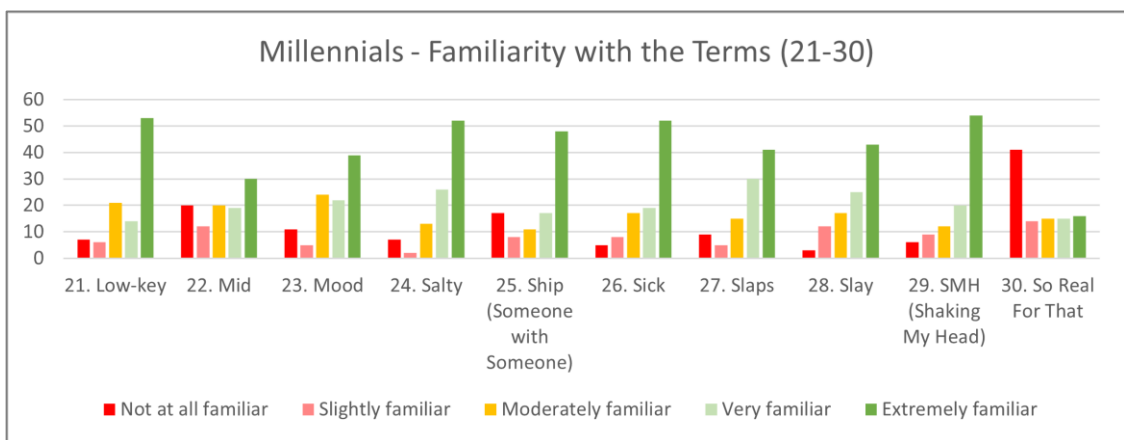


Table B15: Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (31-40)

Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (31-40)					
Term	Not at all familiar	Slightly familiar	Moderately familiar	Very familiar	Extremely familiar
31. (Someone/Something Is) Cancelled	5%	6%	12%	24%	54%
32. Sus	6%	6%	16%	28%	44%
33. (Take an) L	24%	4%	17%	15%	41%
34. TBH (To Be Honest)	4%	1%	10%	14%	72%
35. That Ain't It	22%	6%	25%	22%	26%
36. Touch Grass	20%	7%	11%	22%	41%
37. Triggered	1%	3%	13%	23%	61%
38. Valid	9%	8%	16%	20%	48%
39. Vibe	7%	5%	18%	17%	54%
40. Yikes	8%	7%	15%	17%	54%

Chart B14: Millennials' Familiarity with the Terms (31-40)

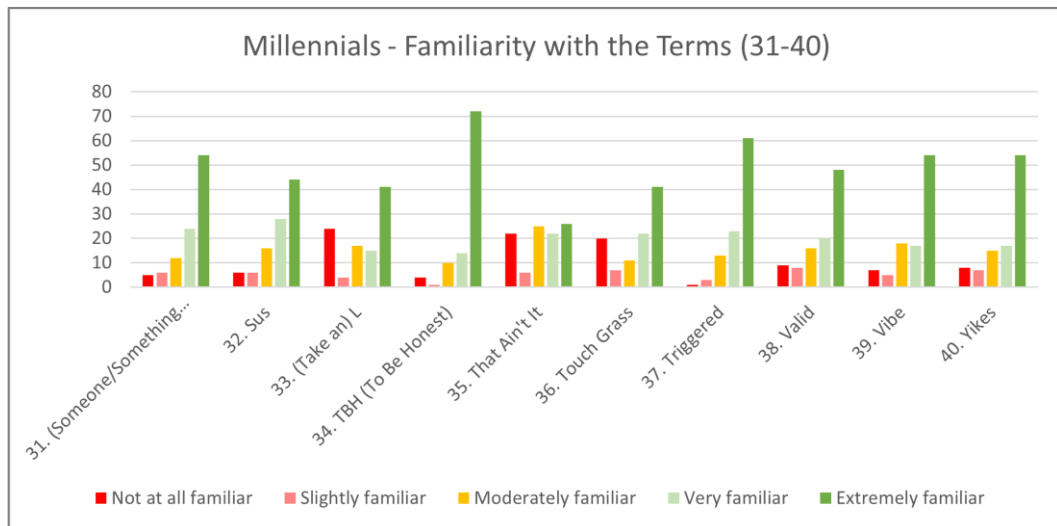


Table B16: Generation X and Millennials' Top 10 "Not at all familiar" Terms

GX & Ms' "Not at all familiar" Terms (Top 10)		
1.	IJBOL (I Just Burst Out Laughing)	66%
2.	Fruity	48%
3.	So Real For That	47%
4.	Bop	39%
5.	High-key	32%
6.	That Ain't It	27%
7.	(Take an) L	26%
8.	Touch Grass	24%
=	Ship (Someone with Someone)	24%
10.	Bet	22%

Table B17: Generation X and Millennials' Top 10 "Extremely familiar" Terms

GX & Ms' "Extremely familiar" Terms (Top 10)		
1.	TBH (To Be Honest)	59%
2.	Ghosting	53%
=	Cringe	53%
4.	Triggered	51%
=	Bestie	51%
6.	Salty	49%
7.	Yikes	48%
8.	Vibe	47%
=	SMH (Shaking My Head)	47%
10.	(Someone/Something Is) Cancelled	45%
=	Bruh	45%

Table B18: Generation X's Top 10 "Not at all familiar" Terms

Generation X's "Not at all familiar" Terms (Top 10)		
1.	IJBOL (I Just Burst Out Laughing)	61%
2.	Fruity	57%
3.	So Real For That	56%
4.	Bop	51%
5.	High-key	46%
6.	That Ain't It	35%
=	Ship (Someone with Someone)	35%
8.	Bet	31%
9.	Touch Grass	29%
=	(Take an) L	29%

Table B19: Generation X's Top 10 "Extremely familiar" Terms

Generation X's "Extremely familiar" Terms (Top 10)		
1.	Salty	44%
2.	Yikes	40%
=	Bestie	40%
=	TBH (To Be Honest)	40%
5.	Flex	39%
=	Ghosting	39%
7.	Cringe	38%
=	Triggered	38%
9.	Vibe	36%
=	SMH (Shaking My Head)	36%

Table B20: Millennials' Top 10 "Not at all familiar" Terms

Millennials' "Not at all familiar" Terms (Top 10)		
1.	IJBOL (I Just Burst Out Laughing)	70%
2.	So Real For That	41%
=	Fruity	41%
4.	Bop	29%
5.	(Take an) L	24%
6.	That Ain't It	22%
=	High-key	22%
8.	Touch Grass	20%
=	Mid	20%
10.	Ship (Someone with Someone)	17%
=	Bet	17%

Table B21: Millennials' Top 10 "Extremely familiar" Terms

Millennials' "Extremely familiar" Terms (Top 10)		
1.	TBH (To Be Honest)	72%
2.	Cringe	65%
3.	Ghosting	64%
4.	Triggered	61%
5.	Bestie	58%
6.	(Someone/Something Is) Cancelled	54%
=	Bruh	54%
=	SMH (Shaking My Head)	54%
=	Vibe	54%
=	Yikes	54%

Table B22: Gen Z Slang Causing Misunderstandings or Challenges

Use of Gen Z Slang Causing Misunderstandings or Challenges		
	Number of answers	In %
No	91	52
I don't know	40	23
Yes	43	25

Table B23: Gen Z Slang Facilitating the Communication

Gen Z Slang Facilitating the Communication		
	Number of answers	In %
No	68	39
I don't know	56	32
Yes	50	29