An Analysis of the English Language: The Difference Between the Contemporary and The Conventional

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ABSTRACT

The English language had been inspired by the arrival of the Anglo-Saxon tribes, Germanic settlers who later became the population of England, from central Europe to England, spreading through the thirteen colonies. With this in mind, the Anglo-Saxon version of what we call English has significantly changed compared to the more modern-day version. This change can be attributed to the efficient and widespread use of communication in modern generations. Each successive century has seen fairly substantial changes in spoken and written English, particularly spoken. Presently, various terms such as: "Skibidi Toilet", "cooked", "fire", "r u", and "lol" have been used as a way to convey a message under a different word or connotation. These words were invented through technology directly as a result of technology. The ever changing climate of English falls in line with previously developed linguistic theories by Noam Avaram Chomsky. This leads to the assumption that these newly developed words and sentence structures of English are in correlation with technology. To confirm this phenomenon of "Neo-English" it's important to analyze this through a cross sectional and thematic analysis hence comparing the literacy of Generation X and Z through collecting data from semi-structured interviews. Ultimately, this study aims to identify the hypothesized phenomenon and bring awareness to ever increasing change in English.

Introduction

The English language had been inspired by the arrival of the Anglo-Saxon tribes, Germanic settlers who later became the population of England, from central Europe to England, spreading through the thirteen colonies. With this in mind, the Anglo-Saxon version of what we call English has significantly changed compared to the more modern-day version of English. This change can be attributed to the efficient and widespread use of communication in modern generations (Mohan, 2022). Each successive century has seen fairly substantial changes in spoken and written English. Increased utilization of slang can be pointed as a main factor; slang is defined as different surfacing connotations of words, new words that convey new messages, and or abbreviated phrases (Mohan, 2022). This has caused a bridge between generations which causes conflict in the understanding of English grammar (Foster, 2015). Technology has only strengthened this bridge. This is due to many new terms being developed through emerging technologies, words such as iPhone, Computer, and iPad (Marc, 2021). As the rapid development of technologies produces greater efficiency, American society has put much more emphasis on technology as a result (Marc, 2021). This emergence of technology has also introduced many new methods of communication and interaction between people thus causing a speed up in the process of linguistic change through efficient communication.

Current generations, such as Generation Z (people born between the years of 1997 to 2012), have grown accustomed to using technology due to being around the particular period in which technology saw a

massive increase in evolution and creation as stated by IEEE Communications (2010). More importantly, though, it differs from older generations who lived through the early stages of the development of technology. Generations from decades ago did not have the same mannerisms, morals, and values as current generations. This is even more exemplified when taking into account the many different ways that technology has affected the linguistics of the English language, which is due to the efficiency of technology, as previously mentioned. Given the great influence of technology, Generation Z has created an almost neo-version of English through slang (Mohan, 2022). Not only is grammar rapidly changing, but so is the way punctuation is used by Generation Z. This has made it more difficult for older generations, such as Generation X (people born between the years of 1965 to 1980) to keep up with the ever-changing language of grammar (Shannon, 2023). It's difficult to manage an understanding of words when they're not in a sphere related to those words. This study aims to highlight the ever-changing language and bring awareness to this change. With more attention, people will begin to be more aware of such a rapid change along with preventing a rift between two generations due to their linguistic differences thus fostering greater communication. Therefore, this culminates in the question of how have social technologies reformed the grammatical patterns of the English language between individuals in the Western U.S. who are either a part of Generation X or Generation Z within half a century? Social technologies is defined as any technological application that includes communication such as: YouTube, Instagram, FaceBook, Discord, Reddit, Snapchat, and Twitch.

Literature Review

The Transformative Nature of Language

To aid in the understanding of this study it's vital to look at several linguistic theories. As a pioneer in helping people comprehend the development of language, Avram Noam Chomsky, an American professor, created several theories regarding linguistics and the understanding of the role society plays in creating language development during the middle of the 1950s. In his most famous theory, Language Acquisition, he stated how grammar is largely independent of language use which is further developed as an individual grows up in a given environment (Chomsky, 1965, pp.3-9). This theory fueled the topic of the English language being changed through generations, as each generation differentiates the use of grammar and punctuation, and thus, this would be more formally known as one of Chomsky's most prominent Linguistic Theory (Chomsky, 1965). The theory correlates directly with this study as it's supposed to prove Chomsky's theory as correct and is relevant in the case of modern linguistics, as this study applies to how technology affects the environment of someone developing their lexical understanding. Moreover, in support of this theory is a scholarly literature book, "American Linguistics in Transition," by Frederick Newmeyer (2022), a linguistic professor at the University of Washington, who showcases how English has changed over time. Bringing up theories such as Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG) theory, derived from Chomsky, demonstrated how grammar in any language can be a system of rules that generate a combination of words that form grammatical sentences in a given language while involving the use of defined operations, called transformations, to produce new sentences from an existing one (Chomsky, 1957, pp. 15-20). This in itself implies that future generations will have a new form of speaking as language can, under the TGG, have an infinite amount of combinations that can drastically differ from an originated sentence (Chomsky, 1957, pp. 15-20). Chomsky's theories have revitalized and formed the theories of linguistics such as Newmeyer, which correlates to how Newmeyer Fagree upon the same conclusion that language is constantly changing, never being consistent (Borsley, 2023). These researchers each assist in the formation of this study as their scholarly studies suggest that language has several factors that culminate into a "new" language formed upon the same dialectic. Since their perspectives are driven by Chomsky's theories, it demonstrates that the change in grammatical patterns are due to technology in modern day applications. These

perspectives and the use of Chomsky's theories all aid in the disparity of how grammar differs between Generation X and Z.

The Impacts on Future Generations

While looking at how grammar can change through the given theories, it's important to view its application. A scholarly study conducted by Kevin Durkin and his team of researchers helped identify the effects of technology on language. It demonstrated how Chomsky's theory of language showed that the English language was undergoing significant change but due to a completely different factor than previous generations (Durkin, 2011). This study also exemplifies the rapid change that the English language is undergoing especially in younger kids and generations (Durkin, 2011). In-depth looks are taken into the relationship between texting, language, and literacy skills. This research was conducted by seeing the development of textism within 17-year-olds and 47 adolescents of the same age with a type of language impairment. Similarly, Paul Budra (2010) showcased the diminishing grammar education in younger kids due to overuse and great dependence on technology which was concluded to have the potential to lead to worsening grammar (Budra, 2010). Students, for example, have greatly relied on technology for communication thus leading to the previously mentioned phenomenon of students oversimplifying their texts to convey a message quickly. Foster (2015) has noted the effects social media has on students' dialectic. One big cause for this change in literacy skills is due to the creation of new vocabulary. In Foster's study (2015), over 2,000 parents, in a survey conducted by Samsung, stated that their children speak in a drastically different language from their own (Foster, 2015). This was helpful towards the topic as it showed actual results of what is being researched and what to expect when the interviews are conducted. This scholarly article discusses a dean's experience with texting and tweeting along with the effects that were seen on his students' English skills when they engaged with texting. The dean says that texting has extremely detrimental effects such as diminishing grammar rules in students (Budra, 2010). Both Durkin (2011) and Budra (2010) have similar studies that showcase how the English language has changed drastically in terms of technology, thus it can be inferred that they each support this study and hypothesized phenomenon that is happening with technology and slang. It's noted that technology has a grand influence on language and has been creating a significant change in linguistics. Alongside Durkin and Budra, Foster also plays a pivotal role in the conversation wherein data is shown regarding the effect of technology changing the youth's dialect. Beyond these researchers have showcased the other side of the coin by noting the ways in which handwriting has benefitted students more than typing. They cited the fact that handwriting has excelled at teaching long term knowledge thus leading to higher retention versus typing which only works minimally thus being determined to be less effective in teaching (Ihara et al., 2021). These researchers found that grammar has greatly been affected by technology. They each show that technology has a massive role in changing current grammar through efficient communication and avenues towards creating slang. This all builds upon each other to showcase the modern applications of Chomsky's theory which imply the ways that grammar can be changed while technology drives that change more rapidly.

Research Gap

The gap that's addressed by the proposed research is the comparison between two generations and the effects of social applications on the two generations' understanding of the English language. No study has been conducted where this comparison has been investigated. This is situated within the scholarly conversation because it can signify ways to approach the new generation's lack of common convention rules thus being further behind the older generations in understanding grammatical patterns. Sources that justify the gap include Rebecca Trieman and her team's investigation of a comparison of different pronunciation of vowels. This research uses the nature of a comparison study to see a trend in the way in which different people pronounce their vowels to

determine contextual conditions (Trieman, 2003). The aforementioned comparative study was designed for the comparison of humans, of the same age group, to a computer. Differing greatly from this study, Trieman's (2003) study doesn't demonstrate the reasoning behind why some humans pronounce their vowels differently along with the comparison not being from a variety of different humans such as this study. My study rectifies this through including a comparison between humans and instead looking at their understanding of grammar as a whole rather than a single part. Viewing another similar study, from Barbara Conboy (2006), who had conducted a scholarly study to compare 20 to 30-month-old bilingual babies and non-bilingual babies, to figure out their lexical-conceptual development and vocabulary development in three different stages of analysis. Although Conboy has an intuitive study, it doesn't compare to this study as the comparison is of a large age gap between generations as well as concerning the task of looking at the causes of why language development is different. Conboy and Treiman's studies, each have done similar approaches yet haven't optimized the ability to synthesize appropriate responses from participants of different generations in order to identify different grammatical patterns. My study will improve upon the initial concept and approach of Conboy and Trieman through adding additional layers such as using semi-structured interviews and viewing first-hand evidence regarding the grammar understanding of two different generations.

Initial Assumptions

Understanding new forms of communication will always have its difficulties. Similar to learning new languages, the ability to retain the meanings and grammatical structures of a language is always cited as the hardest part by the National Institute of Aging (2023). Even more so with the degenerating brain functions of a person in their late age (Schwartz et al., 2003). This implies that older generations have a slightly different understanding of the current day English grammar while the younger generations have another. This is evident when considering how the interpretations of words vary between age groups. Robert Borsley (2018) supports this assumption because his book identifies how American linguistics has evolved through using the European reception of Chomsky's TGG theory. This coincides with this study and is assumed to support this study as it highlights the theory of Chomsky in several different ways and shows its significance through the way it describes the evolution of linguistics being an inevitable force that cannot be changed.

Methodology

The method that was employed for this qualitative study was semi-structured interviews to collect data. These interviews involved a short list of "guiding" questions that were supplemented by follow-up questions which were dependent on the interviewee's previous responses (Cao et al., 2023). The interviews were conducted and transcribed where it later underwent a cross-sectional and thematic analysis based off of the selected group of participants originating from either generation X or Z, where each of their recordings were compared. The participants each belonged to the age groups of 41 to 56 and 16 to 21. On top of this, each participant was selected at random in their gender, race, and ethnicity which resulted in the avoidance of group bias and presented a wider variety of criteria. This gave the ability for a myriad of perspectives to be analyzed and shown (Fischer, 2022).

Data Collection: Semi-Structured Interviews

Using a semi-structured interview method alongside a cross-sectional analysis was beneficial as it showcased vital details about the behavior regarding each population sample (Fischer, 2022). This particular approach is the best for seeking personal morals and opinions regarding issues as it comes from first-hand sources (Cao et

al., 2023). Furthermore, interviews can be conducted to showcase the behaviors of the participants thus being able to understand the phenomenon at hand much more clearly (Spencer, 2022). This study additionally had a large focal point on the ways that various social technologies shift the grammar and punctuation of an individual depending on their age and the generation they belong to. This was observed through a series of questions asked to interviewees hence their answers will be presented and analyzed to see whether a trend fits into the mold or if the phenomenon is non-existent (Davies et al., 2014). This trend is based upon the thematic analysis which is established; a thematic analysis is discovering a pattern of meaning within a qualitative study often known as coding. Semi-structured interviews provide personal insight and accounts from people which allows for greater understanding of the phenomenon at play (Newbronner, 2022). 15 questions were asked, slightly differing between generations, along with follow-up questions which are unique to each participant. These questions involve how one develops language along with influential factors towards that development. This data collection is most effective for this type of study because of the way it allows for overarching questions to be asked and then gives the ability to go into in-depth exploration with the answers (DellaCrosse, 2022). Similarly, semi-structured interviews help showcase an individual's personal belief system and show alternating factors that play into one's behaviors which can be reported in the qualitative study (DellaCrosse, 2022). This study will primarily be based on the western region of the United States. With an emphasis on residents of Nevada. The equipment that will be used to collect data is through a voice recorder which would later be transcribed in a website, Otter Ai.

Six people were interviewed. Participants were chosen based on a random sample to ensure validity for the study. Participants were then interviewed in person where their recording underwent transcription and translation, later used for a thematic analysis. With all the data gathered, it underwent the aforementioned thematic analysis which led to the discovery of a trend between the two generations. Finally, the thematic analysis went through a cross-sectional analysis which led to the discovery of differences and similarities between the generations themes. As many studies have done before, data of this nature will lead to findings of a phenomenon (Shireen, 2022). Such examples include the study, "Nursing Students' Experiences of Workplace Violence Based on the Perspective of Gender Differences: A Phenomenological Study", conducted by Jun Cao and her team of researchers, nursing students at the Guangzhou Medical University. In this study, semi-structured interviews were used to discover the psychological effects of nursing students experiencing verbal abuse in a workplace environment; Cao's study was able to effectively synthesize and declare a phenomenon based upon the semi-structured interviews which this study aims to replicate in terms of methodology (Cao et al., 2023).

To keep track of interviews, a Google Drive will be set up to properly track each individual's answer. Each interview will also include transcriptions of the conversation along with an analysis between the different generations.

Research Method: Coding and Thematic Analysis

The data was first analyzed through a thematic analysis model wherein the interviews were approached with zero bias and coded for certain themes. The goal was to find a common grammatical pattern within the given generation. This was done through reading the transcriptions created based on the semi-structured interviews (Herzog et al., 2023). To find the common pattern, the transcriptions were annotated to properly conceptualize the data. This conceptualized data was then aligned with critical themes that were forged from previous literature. These themes led to a build-up of insights that agreed with language theories such as those produced by Chomsky, like his TGG theory wherein it's physically shown to be true that grammar changes (McArthur, 2018). The TGG theory revolves around the idea that humans are born with the ability to form and speak a wide range of sentences; the TGG theory's purpose is to discover how we speak and form these wide arrangements of sentences (McArthur, 2018). This analysis is best as many previous studies have shown that analyzing the data using a thematic analysis will showcase an underlying trend which can then be translated into a given

behavior for a population (Herzog et al., 2023). Above all else, coding was used to organize the presented data from transcripts to themes. This was through a meticulous process that involved several steps. Beginning with initial familiarization where the researcher has initial readings of transcriptions and then generating initial themes. It's beneficial for the researcher to create a codebook through a table that uses a way to organize the themes, ending with data interpretation which is the analysis of the transcriptions and their meaning to the themes (Campbell et al., 2013).

Research Method: A Cross-Sectional Qualitative Analysis

A cross-sectional analysis assisted in showcasing the differing views of grammatical patterns between Generation X and Generation Z as it allowed for observation of a single population at a given period in their life. This helped with measuring the linguistic features of each respective generation (Ibáñez-Pinilla et al., 2023). Therefore, the cross-sectional analysis was used as a tool of observation of the questions that were asked. This was to analyze their understanding of the English grammar rules along with punctuation. The cross-sectional analysis also assisted in showcasing correlations to the particular phenomenon that was present between the two different generations (Ibáñez-Pinilla et al., 2023). In this case, it showed the differences in the understanding of grammar between Generation Z and Generation X. This was the most effective for this particular study because, similar to past research studies, studies such as "General practitioners' attitudes towards research in primary care: qualitative results of a cross-sectional study." by Thomas Rosemann (2004), researchers at the University of Heidelberg, Voßstr, showed the advantages of a cross-sectional analysis upon a comparison between two population samples. For instance, Rosemann (2004) showcases the benefits of observing a population at two different periods and using that data to form an argument about a certain behavior that has developed between the time of the observation made. With the given information, this study is most effective as it looks into a comparison between two different generations that aged with and without technology in order to make a conclusion to showcase that the correlation of technology would be a causation for change in language structure. This would be more effective as it looks into specific details of one's life rather than a survey that garners little information regarding the individual and their views (Ibáñez-Pinilla et al., 2023).

Findings

Between the six semi-structured interviews that were conducted, nine themes emerged as most prevalent. Below is Table 1 detailing what themes emerged and their meaning to the data at hand.

Table 1. Themes and their meanings

Theme	Meaning
Formality V.S. Informality	The nature of how a person speaks, texts, and communicates and whether it's formal or informal.
Adaptation	The way in which a participant conforms to modern language and absorbs it into their vocabulary.

Rapid Spread	Participants see slang development as a result of the internet mass spreading it.
Dependent	Participant relies on technology to correct their grammar
Change in English	The acknowledgement that English has changed or will change due to technology.
Efficiency	Participants agreed that texting is easier and more effective.
Technology Takeover	The amount of technology a participant is surrounded by and how they use it frequently.
Education	The significant impact formal education had on a participant.
Traditional	Participant doesn't use slang or acronyms and uses the proper form of English

Below is Table 2 which includes important details about each participant and how they relate to the given themes that were identified and labeled in Table 1.

Table 2. Participants in their given Generation pool and their correspondence to the themes

Participant	Correlation to Theme	Theme
1 (Z)	The participant talks about how they feel more comfortable using slang and jargon in settings where comfortability is present, such as with friends or private online posts.	Formality V.S. Informality
	The participant was not a native speaker in which Spanish was their first language, thus when learning English, they adapted to words that were slang through online applications such as Omegle.	Adaption
	The participant highlights how they have a younger sibling who is frequently using technology and social applications and they note the drastic difference between how they text and speak, note this will apply to future generations.	Change in English
	Participants note that slang and abbreviations have made it quicker for them to convey a message both in person and through text. Participant goes on to name slang words such as: LOL, LMAO, BRB, WYD, and WTMT.	Efficiency
2 (Z)	The participant highlights how they're more inclined to be formal in school	Formality V.S. Informality

	settings such as writing a paper for a professor. The participant later high-lights their informality in Instagram posts and iMessage texts.	
	Participant relies heavily on technology as a result of handwriting being phased out due to more settings requiring technology as a tool to write with. Emphasizes the importance of autocorrect and spell checks.	Dependent
	The participant makes a comparison between Shakespearean English and modern English, says that Shakespearean English has been completely phased out and expects the same for modern English. Participant goes on to say that technology will be responsible for the change in English as the Industrial Revolution was the one responsible for the change in Shakespearean.	Change in English
	The participant says that most new slang words they know come from the internet and how memes influence a population to pick up certain slang words. Participant uses the term DELULU to describe how memes based on girls being hopelessly in love have spread to most teen girls' vocabulary.	Rapid Spread
	The participant says that texting allows them to send messages to multiple people along with being able to use recognizable slang words such as: RIZZ, CAP, LIT, and SICK. This makes it easier to convey a message.	Efficiency
	The participant mentions that their college experience has slightly offset the informal speech they have developed as they maintain using proper grammar and English in traditional settings.	Education
3 (Z)	The participant mentions how many social applications such as: Reddit, Instagram, Discord, and YouTube, have large mounds of slang and jargon along with improper use of grammar. The participant would go on to say how this is contrasted with a school setting that controls individuals to write a certain way using certain grammar rules such as including independent and dependent clauses in sentences.	Formality V.S. Informality
	Participants acknowledge that they are reliant on applications such as Grammarly and autocorrect to properly spell and form sentences whenever doing a school assignment.	Dependent
	Due to accompanying many people within their age group, the participant has been accustomed to slang and jargon that comes from their friends hence including those words in their vocabulary and or altering their sentence structure in order to "fit in".	Adaption
	The participant says that their work, social, and family environments all include technology in one way or another thus conforming to using technology in ways they normally would not have, had it not been with the amount of people that use it.	Technology Takeover

4 (X)	The participant says that there's a mix of formality and informality. This is due to the environment an individual finds themselves in, whether it's a school setting where they're required to use formal speech or in a text setting where informality is more widely accepted.	Formality V.S. Informality
	The participant refrains from using slang or jargon as opposed to the participants from the Generation Z pool. Additionally, the participant has difficulty in naming slang words or recognizing certain abbreviations and jargon.	Traditional
	Credits his education of college and high school as main contributors for the way they speak and text, went to school before 2010's. Mentions that he still writes by hand as a result of being at school before the time technology would be implemented.	Education
	The participant mentions English from the Middle Ages and goes on to describe how much the language has changed since that time due to an evolution of Man and the introduction of new cultures.	Change in English
5 (X)	Growing out of slang, the participant notes that slang is a decision based on the individual. As for the participants, they chose to grow out of the informality of slang and jargon due to experiences of being in formal circumstances such as job interviews and meeting people of high authority.	Formality V.S. Informality
	The participant says that the population is growing dependent on technology as a result of how easily available technology is, thus more people are able to access it and be influenced by it.	Rapid Spread
	The participant highlights their dependence on autocorrect as a way to know how to spell words and as a way to remember where commas go.	Dependent
	The participant has a disdain for slang and jargon due to feeling as if those words make them feel unintelligent and judged; participants feel that proper usage garners more respect.	Traditional
	The participant says that their college education helped them clarify and clean their speech through learning and digesting new forms of words and different ways to structure a sentence.	Education
	The participant notes that technology is taking over due to it being used for every scenario possible, such as: cooking, driving, cleaning, speaking, and ordering. With this reliance, it's easy for people to rely on technology for language related problems.	Technology Takeover
6 (X)	The participant works with the youth and notes that they often use informal speech due to being comfortable with their coworkers yet whenever a figure of authority enters the room they tend to avoid informal speech as a sign of respect.	Formality V.S. Informality

	Slang forms through the internet which most people have access to thus they are more exposed to slang words that often are conditioned into their vocabulary.	Rapid Spread
	The participant highlights the fact that they grew up in a family with educators and went to a private school which contributed to their use of language as they were conditioned and almost forced into using the right conjugations, prepositions, and sentence structure.	Education
	The participant has seen firsthand the ways technology has changed through her younger coworkers who use improper grammar and several slang words such as: BUSSIN, COOKED, and SKIBIDI. The participant says technology is responsible because of how it is embedded in today's society.	Change in English
	The participant struggles with using slang or not as they attempt to stick to what was taught to them at a young age yet find themselves in situations where slang is the only option.	Traditional
	The participant struggles with using slang or not yet they often let themselves use slang as a way to connect with the youth and showcase their ability to form connections despite age barriers.	Adaption

Table 2 identifies three vital details: the participant and the generation pool their from (first column), the evidence as to why they fit under the given themes and what themes they fit into (middle column), and the themes that they most relate to (third column). As per the method section, these participants had undergone a semi-structured interview with overarching questions that were slightly different per each generation. This data then underwent a process of coding where thematic analysis was applied and a cross-sectional analysis was used. The reason behind the order was due to the order that each participant was interviewed in their respective generation. Based on the reasoning, the participants were put into their respective theme.

Table 3. Color-coded Cross-Sectional Graph

Themes	Gen Z (1)	Gen Z (2)	Gen Z (3)	Gen X (4)	Gen X (5)	Gen X (6)
Formality V.S. Informality						
Adaptation						
Rapid Spread						
Dependent						
Change in English						
Efficiency						

Technology Takeover						
Education						
Traditional						

Table 3 is representative and used as a way to showcase which generation has the most common view of each theme. For example, the theme of Adaptation, was commonly showcased to appear most in Generation Z which would differ from the theme of Education which is predominately showcased by Generation X. This table makes it easier to identify which generation holds which views through being highlighted in either blue (generation Z) or yellow (generation X) while the blank spots are the themes that are equally viewed between each generation, such as the theme of Formality V.S. Informality, which is shown to appear in all the participants.

Results & Analysis

In order to analyze the given data through using a cross-sectional approach, a comparison between two groups at a single point, it was important to identify which themes are held by which generation and how they each contrast with each other. I analyzed themes that both generations shared which include Formality V.S. Informality, Technology Takeover, and Change in English. Formality V.S. Informality was seen across all participants as each participant had a formal grasp of the English language or an informal grasp. For generation X, the case was always formal as they understood and used words that were considered formal usage, this means they used proper grammar rules like capitalization and conventions. Generation Z was the opposite as each participant used slang during the interview and understood the most amount of slang words when prompted to identify. As for the theme of Technology Takeover, only 2/6 participants had shown this theme, each from separate generations. Both participants commonly answered that technology has been such a pervasive tool in their lives as it has taken over their work and school environment along with it being common in their household and daily life. The final shared theme was Change in English. This theme was commonly associated with each generation as they both agreed that technology will change the language due to the new words being formed and the change in grammar such as the way words are phrased and used. Both generations commonly referred to the past English language as an example of change over time.

Generation Z Common Themes: Adaption, Dependent, and Efficiency

Generation Z had three common themes that were more frequent than in Generation X. This made a contrast difference as these themes are associated with how Generation Z has ultimately changed the English language. The first theme that was common was Adaption which appeared in the interview of Gen Z (1) and Genz (3) versus only appearing once for Generation X, Gen X (6). This theme is showcasing how the participants are willing to adapt to modern English slang and jargon and the rate that they take in the new form of English. The second theme that was common in Generation Z was Dependence. This theme is centered around how a participant is dependent on technology to help them on spelling, writing, and on given tasks outside of using it for language. This theme appeared in Gen Z (2) and Gen Z (3) while only appearing in Gen X (5) for Generation X, this was due to the theme being far less prevalent in Gen X. The final common theme in Generation Z is efficiency, this theme appeared whenever a participant had mentioned how technology helps them convey information quickly and effectively without using a lot of energy. This theme was found in Gen Z (1) and Gen Z (2) while not even appearing in any of the conducted interviews with Generation X.

Generation X Common Themes: Rapid Spread, Education, and Traditional

Generation X, similar to Generation Z, had three common themes that were showcased more often than in Generation Z. With these themes it was seen that the older generations had a completely different view and perspective than the younger generations. The first theme was Rapid Spread which discusses how participants view the internet as a main source of circulating slang and jargon thus leading to more people picking it up and using it. The participants that aligned with this theme were Gen X (5) and Gen X (6) while only one participant from Generation Z aligned with this theme, Gen Z (2). The next theme was Education, this theme is associated with the participants that affirm that their education from previous English classes had been the main contributors to the way they currently speak and write. The participants that had this theme appear in their interview included all the participants from Generation X yet only one participant from Generation Z, Gen Z (2). The final theme that appeared most commonly with Generation X is Traditional. This theme was exclusive to participants who refuse to use modern day slang and jargon thus preferring to stick to what they know and are most familiar with. The participants that had this theme were all of Generation X and none from Generation Z.

Discussion & Evaluation

In cross-sectional analysis it's important to notice the differing views between the separate generations as noted by Table 3. To begin, it's important to understand why Generation X and Z fit into the certain themes that they do. Generation Z had the following themes: Adaption, Dependence, and Efficiency. These themes are exclusive to Generation Z and their themes that link with what was hypothesized. Generation Z is known to be a generation that's more progressive and accepting of modern ideals and morals (Amiri, 2021). This would go on to explain why they fit into the theme of Adaption as there is a generation that's known for the ability to adapt and embrace change especially if it's influential and many people are following suit (Amiri, 2021). The theme of Dependence and Efficiency can be explained from the scholarly article by a team of researchers at the University of Tasmania, Australia. Within this article, the researchers explain how students are performing below standards on assessments of written and spoken forms of grammatical understanding. The assessment showcased the way in which students are dependent on their phone to correct their issues rather than fixing it themselves and how most students speed text in order to convey a message as quickly as possible. The assessment aligns with this study's results as the way the public speaks isn't significantly altered, the way they write without the use of technology is; the scholarly article showcased students had issues with capitalization and punctuation (Wood et al., 2014).

Generation X had aligned with completely other themes such as Rapid Speed, Education, and Traditional. These themes reflect the nature of time before the prevalence of technology and the aftermath. With Generation X, the youngest age to experience the emergence of phones would have been 20 years old. With this in mind, Generation X would have been primarily influenced by what they initially grew up with, which was formal education in either high school or college. This backed by the analysis which showed the theme of Education appearing in all the participants within Gen X. This goes hand in hand with the theme of Traditional. All the participants in Gen X had refused to conform which made it so that most didn't have the theme of Adaption appear. Conditioning is difficult to reverse thus making sense as to why most people in Gen X refused to adapt (De Luna et al., 2023). With the theme of Rapid Spread, Generation X had agreed with the idea that technology is the main factor to the development of slang, jargon, and different connotations of words. This theme mainly appeared with Generation X because they grew with technology and saw the progression of it slowly seeping into the daily lives of people (De Luna et al., 2023). These given themes affirm the initial assumptions as older generations now lack understanding as a result of their attachment to tradition while younger generations have advocated towards using more slang.

Conclusion

Ultimately this study concluded that there does exist an underlying phenomenon of technology altering the grammar of younger generations. This is highlighted by the way Generation Z has become dependent on technology to write properly along with having slang appear more frequently in their vocabulary as a result of constantly using social applications and due to the efficiency of texting. This would further be strengthened by the fact that Generation X had not been as affected by technology due to their concrete understanding of English grammar on account of their formal education that was deprived of any technological devices. Additionally, Generation X was aware of concurrent changes to English through interactions with the youth. With awareness of this perennial phenomenon, generations can begin to emerge themes that were shown as a way to foster unity and understanding thus leading to less division between generations. This being an implication, it coincides with the way that acknowledgement of this difference can lead to generational cooperation as a way to make the transition into this neo-version of English smoother. This study also fulfills the gap of how technology plays a role in the development of grammar as seen with the differing lexical concept of Generation Z as to Generation X.

Limitations

Although this study proved the initial assumptions correct, it had restrictions that could not have been helped during the making of the study. This includes the small sample size of only six participants, with three participants from each generation. With such a small sample size, it cannot account for the many other populations that are from each separate generation. Furthermore, the study had not taken into account the socio-economic status of the participants which affects the study as some participants can come from low-income backgrounds that cannot afford to have social applications or the opposite wherein high-income backgrounds have more opportunities to have social applications and technology. Due to strict time constraints, this study couldn't incorporate more comparisons between more generations such as Boomers or Millennials. Besides, this study did not include racial or cultural information that could have possibly been attributed to language development.

Future Directions

This study provides insight into a phenomenon that hasn't had enough attention drawn to it. It is important that further research is developed to figure out future implications based on answers that are more concrete. It would be beneficial for future researchers to apply similar methodologies and analysis, yet with a greater sample size and a more robust roster of generations to interview and compare with. This would enable further investigations that delve deeper into the phenomenon and ways to predict the future of English and the amount of change it can undergo before it becomes completely unrecognizable today.

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