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The "Anjir" utterances in everyday communication of Gen-Z students

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Abstract
The use of the utterance "*anjir*" in everyday communication among Gen-Z students reflects a dynamic linguistic shift that expresses emotion, identity, and social belonging in informal contexts, warranting deeper sociolinguistic and pragmatic analysis. This study aims to analyze the meaning and function of the word "anjir" in the communication of Gen Z students at Harapan Bersama Polytechnic. The word "anjir" is a form of slang that has shifted in meaning from a curse to a symbol of emotional expression, social, and group identity. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, digital conversation documentation, and semi- structured interviews. The results of the analysis show that the word "anjir" is used in various forms such as "anjay", "bjir", "jir", and so on, each of which reflects a certain emotional intensity. In meaning, "anjir" is used to express annoyance, admiration, empathy, and cuteness. Functionally, this word acts as a spontaneous expression, a filler for casual conversation, and a strengthener of social relations among students. The findings show that the word "anjir" has become part of Gen Z's distinctive communication style that is more open, egalitarian, and contextual. This research is expected to contribute to sociolinguistic studies and an understanding of the language dynamics of the younger generation.

Keywords: *Slang Words, Gen Z, Communication*

INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the dynamic aspects of human life that is constantly changing, both in terms of structure and meaning (Mudiono, 2022); (Faradila Mesfer

et al., 2024). Different countries around the world may speak the same language or dialect (Wongso Adi Saputra, 2022), but they often have their interpretations and unique ways of understanding vocabulary and language concepts (Fauzi, 2022) . The development of technology, especially social media, has accelerated the process of language evolution, especially among the younger generation. Generation Z, the group born between 1995-2010, is a generation that grew up in the digital era and made slang as the main means of daily communication (Tasyarasita et al., 2023). Social media such as TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter are the main spaces of expression, where language habits continue to develop and innovate.

One word that is popular and often appears in Gen Z's daily communication is "anjir". This word originates from the abusive word "dog", but has undergone a process of reinterpretation and a shift in function. Its use now no longer solely contains negative meanings, but is also used to express various emotions such as admiration, annoyance, fun, and even just as a marker of speaking style (Viklous, 2022). In digital communication, the word "anjir" is often found in the form of comments, captions, or informal conversations conveyed in writing or verbally (Balashov, 2023). In fact, variations in its morphological forms-such as anjay, bjir, or jir-signify the level of emotion or expression that users want to convey (Widyatmoko, E. R., & Kushartanti, 2024).

This shift shows the phenomenon of language shifting and pragmatic reinterpretation among digital language users (Fatkhiyati et al., 2024). The use of words that were originally considered taboo becomes something commonplace and neutral in certain contexts. Research conducted by (Viklous, 2022) shows that the word "anjir" has a variety of different pragmatic functions depending on the context in which it is used, and often undergoes morphological processes such as clipping and suffix addition to strengthen expressions. This phenomenon shows that language change occurs in real-time and can be observed in speech communities such as Gen Z who are active on social media (Yunanda et al., 2022).

Meanwhile, (Lase & Wati, 2024) revealed that the use of this word on social media also reflects group identity as well as a form of communication intimacy among fellow Gen Zs. The word "anjir" is not only used to convey spontaneous expressions, but also as a way to strengthen social connections, emphasize closeness, and indicate membership in a particular group or language community. In other words, it acts as a powerful social marker.

This phenomenon is interesting because the use of the word "anjir" not only represents a linguistic shift in meaning but also reflects the social and cultural construction of a generation. In this context, language is not only a means of communication, but also a marker of social identity and a medium of cultural representation (Maharani, 2025). Through language, including word choice in informal interactions, Gen Z creates a space of expression that is distinctive, dynamic, and sometimes not understood by other generations.

Even so, the use of the word "anjir" is not free from controversy. Some view this word as a form of verbal violence or inappropriate expression in formal settings (Nawawi et al., 2022). The research shows that despite its widespread use, the perception of the word "anjir" is still influenced by the social values and norms adopted by certain communities or institutions.

Therefore, it is important to place the analysis of this word in its proper social and cultural context.

This phenomenon is increasingly important to be studied scientifically considering that the position of the word "anjir" in Gen Z communication is not just a form of spontaneous speech, but also a symbol of communication that is full of meaning. A comprehensive understanding of how these meanings is formed, how they are used in social interactions, and how they reflect the dynamics of the young generation's identity is needed. This research is expected to contribute to the study of sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and generational communication, especially in understanding how Gen Z uses language to shape and express their social identity.

The study of the use of the word "anjir" in Gen Z communication can be understood through a sociolinguistic approach that emphasizes the importance of social context in the formation of meaning and language variation. Mujib in Supri & Nur (2021) states that sociolinguistics studies language in relation to social structures and community behavior, while Trudgill in Supri & Nur (2021) asserts that sociolinguistics examines how language is used in typical cultural practices. In this context, the word "anjir" is a clear example of how language evolves following the dynamics of a particular social group, namely Gen Z.

According to (Viklous, 2022), the use of the word "anjir" which comes from the word "dog" has experienced an expansion of meaning and function. The word is now no longer limited to swearing, but is used in a variety of emotional contexts such as amazement, shock, funny, anger, and even anxiety. This shift is supported by morphological processes such as clipping (anj, njir) and affixation (anjay, jir), as well as the use of emoticons that enrich its expressive dimension.

The use of the word "anjir" can also be studied from the perspective of pragmatics. Wijana in (Gumiar, 2020) states that pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies meaning based on context of use, not just linguistic forms. This is reinforced by Rahardi in (Gumiar, 2020) who emphasizes that pragmatic meaning is contextual and related to the communicative intention of the speaker. In Gen Z communication, the word "anjir" functions as a form of spontaneous expression that strengthens social attachment between users, as well as a symbol of familiarity and group affiliation.

In a broader dimension, the use of the word "anjir" can also be interpreted as a cultural representation. A study by (Lase & Wati, 2024)analyzing TikTok comment sections shows that variations of the word "anjir" reflect the creativity of netizens in

expressing emotions and reinforcing the identity of digital communities. Stuart Hall's theory of representation in (Lase & Wati, 2024) supports this by stating that meaning is not fixed, but rather socially and culturally negotiated through everyday communication practices. In this context, the word "anjir" has become a symbol of Gen Z's collective identity on social media, as well as a tool to build group solidarity.

Furthermore, the shift of the word "anjir" from a negative meaning to a neutral or even positive expressive function also shows that language is dynamic and responsive to cultural changes. In a study by (Adha et al., 2024) a similar shift was found in the word "anjay" which is considered a refined version of the word "dog", and is used by Gen Z to convey admiration or surprise in digital interactions. This phenomenon shows that slang or abusive words cannot be understood only from their semantic roots, but need to be analyzed sociocultural.

Interestingly, this process is also seen in other words such as "jancuk" or "cok" which in East Javanese culture are not always used as curses, but also as greetings or markers of intimacy between friends. (Sriyanto & Fauzie, 2017) explains that "jancuk" in the context of Suroboyoan culture is an egalitarian communication symbol that reflects equal relationships and familiarity. This pattern parallels the use of the word "anjir" which now functions as a filler or common interjection in Gen Z digital conversations.

In addition, the linguistic analysis of the word "anjir" can also be completed through the perspective of morphology. Morphology is a branch of linguistics that studies word formation through processes such as affixation, repetition, and truncation. In this case, the word "anjir" undergoes various form transformations such as anjj, bjir, anjayr, to hyperbolic forms such as anjreeettt. This process not only shows linguistic creativity, but also the emotional power that the user wants to convey.

Bloomfield in (Tasyarasita et al., 2023) divides slang forms into four, namely abbreviations, funny mispronunciations, shortening, and interjections. (Tasyarasita et al., 2023) in their study of TikTok Gen Z slang classifies "anjir" as a form of expressive interjection that appears in the context of reactions to surprise, admiration, or disbelief. This reinforces the notion that the use of this word reflects strong communicative intentions within the digital community.

From the perspective of language change, the concepts of apparent-time and real-time introduced by Labov in (Chambers & Schilling, 2018)can be used to track the evolution of the word "anjir". Apparent-time change refers to differences in usage between generations at one time, while real-time refers to the documentation of change within a community over time. The word "anjir" is evidence of real-time change influenced by active use on social media.

In addition, the process of cultural hybridization described by Foulcher and Day (Jatmiko, 2019) can help explain this phenomenon. The interaction between coarse language and slang creates a new form that is not only acceptable, but also celebrated by certain social groups such as Gen Z. Thus, the word "anjir" does not

simply experience a shift in culture. Thus, the word "anjir" does not simply experience a shift in meaning, but also becomes part of a new cultural construction in the digital ecosystem.

Despite numerous research investigating slang and informal phrases among Indonesian youth, a significant vacuum persists in the analysis of the specific utterance "anjir" within the daily communication practices of Gen-Z students. Most current research tends to generalize youth language without exploring the intricate roles and contextual significances of specific utterances. The term "anjir," although commonly utilized across numerous social and digital platforms, has not been comprehensively examined regarding its pragmatic uses, emotional expressions, and its influence on group identity and social interactions among peers. This study aims to fill that gap by offering a concentrated sociolinguistic and pragmatic analysis of "anjir" as a linguistic occurrence that embodies the communicative norms and cultural values of Gen-Z speakers.

By combining the approaches of sociolinguistics, pragmatics, morphology, as well as the concepts of language change and cultural hybridization, the study of the meaning and function of the word "anjir" in Gen Z communication becomes more comprehensive. This approach also shows that linguistic phenomena such as "anjir" cannot be understood in isolation from the social, media and cultural contexts that surround it. This word is a representation of how the younger generation constructs identity, expresses emotions, and builds social relations through dynamic and evolving language.

Based on this background, this research will discuss in depth the meaning and function of the word "anjir" in Gen Z communication, especially in non-formal verbal interactions and social media content. This research is important to understand the dynamics of language and its social function in modern society.

METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to understand the meaning and function of the word "anjir" as used by Gen Z students in informal communication within Harapan Bersama Polytechnic. This approach was chosen because the research focuses on exploring the contextual meaning and social function of the word usage, which cannot be represented numerically (Creswell, 2021). This method allows researchers to explore the dynamics of language use in students' daily lives through observation and in-depth interviews (Taylor et al., 2016).

The object of this research is the forms of using the word "anjir" that appear in students' oral and written interactions, both in conversations between students, non-formal discussion forums, campus organization activities, and personal social media posts aimed at the campus community. The research subjects are active students from various study programs in Politeknik Harapan Bersama who fall into the Gen Z age category (born around 1995-2010).

Data collection techniques were carried out through direct observation of conversations taking place in the campus environment, as well as through semi-structured interviews with several students to explore their perceptions and experiences in using the word "anjir". In addition, documentation in the form of conversation quotes or screenshots from digital communication platforms such as WhatsApp Group, Instagram comments, or student social media captions were also used as supporting data, while maintaining the confidentiality of respondents' identities.

Data analysis followed the interactive technique developed by Miles and Huberman, which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014). Data reduction was carried out by sorting out the relevant use of the word "anjir" according to its social and emotional context. Data presentation was done in the form of thematic categorization, such as the meaning of amazed, annoyed, funny, to social functions such as solidarity or familiarity. Conclusions were drawn by linking the findings in the field with the theoretical frameworks of sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and morphology.

To ensure validity, this research used source triangulation, comparing data from interviews with observation data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018) and digital documentation. Confirmation of meaning was also done directly to respondents to avoid misinterpretation. This approach allows for a more accurate understanding of the role of the word "anjir" in students' social interactions.

By limiting the scope to the students of Politeknik Harapan Bersama, this research is expected to provide a more specific and contextualized picture of Gen Z's use of slang. The results of this study can also serve as material for reflection on the dynamics of language in the campus community and its role in shaping identity and social relations among students

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research successfully collected 87 respondent data on the use of the word "anjir" and its variations from the student environment of Politeknik Harapan Bersama during the observation period of 30 working days. Data was obtained from direct observation, documentation of digital conversations (WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok), and semi-structured interviews with active students. The findings show that the use of the word "anjir" is not only a form of spontaneous expression, but also part of the construction of social meaning and identity of the Gen Z group.

The word "anjir" is used in various forms: *anjay, jir, njir, anjas, bjir, anjr, anjrot, anjret*. The process of changing these forms shows the occurrence of clipping (shortening words), affixation (adding back letters), and phonetic hyperbole as a form of emotional reinforcement. For example:

"*Wah anjay laptopku ketinggalan di kelas*" (R2, 2025-04-22)

"*Bjir, bener-bener ga nyangka sih endingnya begitu*" (R34, 2025-04-08)

"*Jir gamenya seru banget, fix main lagi*" (R65, 2025-04-15)

These morphological forms enrich expressive aspects and strengthen communication intentions. According to (Verhaar & Alip, 1996), creativity in informal morphology reflects the social and psychological dynamics of language users, especially in young communities such as Gen Z.

In this study, the meaning of the word "anjir" is categorized based on the emotions or reactions contained in its use. This classification is made to facilitate understanding of the variety of meanings that arise from the context of students' daily interactions. The following is a description of each category of meaning found:

The meaning of the word "anjir" is very flexible, depending on the situation, intonation, and the relationship between speakers. Based on thematic analysis of the data, five dominant meaning categories were found:

The use of the word "anjir" as an expression of annoyance often arises when students face the pressure of assignments, unpleasant events, or frustrating things. In this context, the word "anjir" serves as an outlet for emotions without the need to use frontal harsh words.

"*Anjir, tugasnya numpuk semua minggu ini*" (R66, 2025-04-16)

"*Bjir, baru juga ngumpulin udah disuruh revisi lagi*" (R72, 2025-04-10)

In many quotes, the word "anjir" is used to express admiration for something that is considered impressive, whether in terms of achievements, visual displays, or the accomplishments of others.

"*Gokil anjir, dapet A padahal asal isi*" (R74, 2025-04-09)

"*Anjay, gambarnya keren banget*" (R41, 2025-04-11)

The word "anjir" is also used in emotional situations to show empathy or understanding. This usage shows that the word can strengthen the relationship between friends and become a more personal emotional link.

"*Anjir, kamu ngerti banget perasaanku*" (R3, 2025-04-22)

"*Jir, gua juga ngerasain hal yang sama sumpah*" (R67, 2025-04-18)

Students also often use the word "anjir" to respond to ridiculous or embarrassing events, whether experienced by themselves or others. In this context, the word "anjir" becomes part of humor and solidarity in joking.

"*Anjir, si A ketiduran pas presentasi*" (R5, 2025-04-23)

"*Njir, tadi gue nyapa orang yang salah*" (R58, 2025-04-19)

In lighter usage, the word "anjir" is not always emotionally charged. It can be present in casual or idle conversation as a filler for expressions that are not too serious, but still strengthen the impression of intimacy between speakers.

"Anjay, nugas sambil rebahan tuh nikmat" (R79, 2025-04-15)

"Anjir aja deh hidup gini amat" (R84, 2025-04-17)

These meanings show that the word "anjir" has crossed its literal semantic boundaries as a curse word and has instead become a multifunctional means of expression.

In the study of pragmatics and social communication, the function of a word lies not only in its literal meaning, but in how it is used to achieve certain communication goals. In the context of the use of the word "anjir" by Gen Z students, there are several dominant functions identified from the results of observations and interviews, including:

Functionally, the use of the word "anjir" fulfills several social and pragmatic functions in GenZ communication. This function arises when the word "anjir" is used for spontaneous emotional outbursts, especially in stressful situations. The word becomes a milder outlet for frustration than harsh forms of swearing.

"*Anjirr, gue stress banget sama deadline minggu ini*" (R70, 2025-04-12)

"*Anjay, baru buka laptop langsung dapat 3 tugas*" (R52, 2025-04-21)

In everyday conversation, the word "anjir" is also used without any particular emotional baggage, but rather as part of a fluid style of language. Its function here is more to complement or reinforce the tone of the conversation to make it sound more natural and familiar.

"*Liat posingan itu, anjir ya nggak nyangka banget*" (R48, 2025-04-06)

"*Udah biasa sih, anjir gitu doang*" (R55, 2025-04-04)

The word "anjir" is often used to emphasize things that are considered extraordinary, surprising, or positively impressive. This function shows that the word has experienced a shift in meaning to a form of appreciation.

"*Anjay, menang lomba dong si Kevin!*" (R47, 2025-04-03)

"*Gambarnya bagus banget jirrr*" (R4, 2025-04-23)

This function is seen when the word "anjir" is used to strengthen relations between students. In this context, "anjir" becomes a marker of membership in the Gen Z community that shares similar speech styles and social values.

"*Anjir, lo masih inget cerita gue kemarin?*" (R45, 2025-04-11)

"*Njir, grup ini emang paling rame!*" (R68, 2025-04-10)

This function arises when "anjir" is used in funny, surprising or unexpected situations. It acts as a bridge to express disbelief or invite laughter in casual interactions.

"Njir, temen gue malah nyasar ke kelas D3" (R36, 2025-04-14)

"Bjir, gue kira itu dosen eh ternyata kakak angkatan" (R60, 2025-04-17)

This finding corroborates Rahardi's (2017) opinion that pragmatic functions cannot always be determined from literal language forms, but through context and interpersonal relations.

Apart from being analyzed in terms of meaning and function, the use of the word "anjir" is also influenced by the situation and media where the interaction takes place. This context is important because it shows where and when the expression appears, and how the conversational environment shapes students' language choices. In this study, the context of use is classified based on observations of the location (offline) and communication platform (online) used by respondents.

The word "anjir" is most commonly used in: Private WhatsApp chat (14 cases); Conversations in campus hallways (14 cases); Casual discussion in class (10 cases); Instagram comments (10 cases); Comments on TikTok (8 cases)

This condition shows that the use of the word "anjir" has merged into digital and oral communication as part of the informal register. It not only appears in emotional conditions, but also becomes a marker of Gen Z's communication style in bridging spontaneous expressions with social responses.

Overall, the results of this study show that the word "anjir" has undergone a transformation from a mere swear word to a multifunctional socio-linguistic symbol. It has become part of Gen Z's dynamic expressions, relations, and identities in the campus ecosystem and digital media.

This finding also reflects a shift in communication values between generations. If previous generations tended to avoid the use of harsh words in social interactions, Gen Z instead reconstructed the meaning to be more fluid, contextual, and even positive. In the context of campus culture, this shows that language is not only a means of conveying messages, but also a medium for building solidarity and affirming group identity. Therefore, the use of the word "anjir" by students is not just a verbal habit, but also a representation of social and cultural changes in the way the younger generation interacts.

This study presents an original contribution by concentrating on the phrase "anjir," a prevalent and multifunctional expression among Indonesian Gen-Z students, which has not been the primary focus of previous academic research. This research offers a comprehensive sociolinguistic and pragmatic examination of "anjir," investigating its several functions—such as conveying emotion, fostering social connections, and indicating identity—in both verbal and digital communications. The research underscores how Gen-Z users have semantically moderated and pragmatically

transformed a previously banned phrase into a broadly accepted mode of ordinary discourse. This research not only identifies an emergent linguistic trend but also elucidates the dynamic methods by which adolescents influence and normalize new language forms within their social and cultural environments.

By concentrating on the expression "anjir," a widely used term among Indonesian Gen Z students that has not before been the main focus of academic research, this study offers an original contribution to sociolinguistic study. Unlike earlier generations that tended to avoid unpleasant or prohibited terms in social contacts, Gen Z has rebuilt the meaning of such statements to be more fluid, contextual, even positive. This change shows in campus culture that language is a tool for promoting togetherness and validating group identification as much as for delivering messages.

This study investigates the several pragmatic uses for the word "anjir" in both verbal and digital communication—from expressing emotion and strengthening social ties to indicating generational identity (Maricar, 2024). Under a sociolinguistic and pragmatic lens, the study shows how young speakers have semantically modified and pragmatically changed a once-taboo phrase into an accepted and frequent form of communication (Andi Kurniadi Baskal et al., 2024). Therefore, the study not only points out a developing linguistic trend but also emphasises the dynamic ways in which young people actively construct, normalise, and spread fresh language forms inside their social and cultural surroundings (Ma'rifah et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study aims to reveal the meaning and function of the word "anjir" in the communication of Gen Z students at Harapan Bersama Polytechnic. The results of observations, documentation, and interviews show that the word "anjir" has undergone a significant transformation in meaning, from a form of swearing to a linguistic symbol full of social functions. In practice, this word is not only a tool to express emotions such as annoyance or admiration, but also a bridge to build intimacy, create humor, and affirm group identity.

Morphologically, the basic form "anjir" develops in various variants such as "anjay", "bjir", "jir", and other hyperbolic forms. Each variant has its own expressive power, depending on the context and the intensity of the emotion to be conveyed. Meanwhile, the meaning of the use of this word is highly dependent on the situation and the social relationship between speakers, including expressions of pressure, empathy, cuteness, and casual interaction.

In the context of pragmatics, the main functions of using the word "anjir" include as a channel for emotional expression, a filler for informal conversations, and a tool to emphasize closeness in social relations. We found that this word is often used in digital environments such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok, as well as in face-to-face interactions such as campus hallway chats or casual classroom discussions. This shows

that slang such as "anjir" has merged into students' communication practices as a natural, fluid, and dynamic form.

This finding shows that language is not only a means of communication, but also a social construction that reflects the culture, values and identity of the younger generation. Therefore, the phenomenon of using the word "anjir" is important to be understood not only from the linguistic aspect, but also from the perspective of culture and social relations.

This research opens up opportunities for further studies, especially to explore the comparative use of the word "anjir" in different regions or between generations. For educators, the findings can be a bridge to understanding how students communicate and how appropriate educational approaches can be built through language. For students themselves, it is important to understand that slang such as "anjir" has expressive power, but its use must still consider the prevailing context and norms of communication.

Thus, this research not only explains the shifting meanings in Gen Z's linguistic practices, but also provides insights into how language develops along with social and cultural changes in today's campus environment .

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