

The Usage of Acronym Slang Found in @whitepeoplehumor Instagram Account Comment Section

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Abstract. This study investigates the usage of acronym slang in the comment sections of the @whitepeoplehumor Instagram account between January to May 2025. Employing a descriptive qualitative method, the research focusing on ten prominent acronym slang terms. Each term was examined for its meaning, context of use, and communicative function. The findings reveal that acronym slang serves multiple purposes, including expressing agreement or disagreement, signaling emotions, creating humorous or ironic effects, and reinforcing group identity. However, frequent use of such slang may hinder comprehension for unfamiliar audiences and reduce reliance on standard English. The study highlights the dual role of acronym slang as both a creative linguistic tool and a potential communication barrier in digital interactions. These insights contribute to the understanding of sociolinguistic dynamics in online discourse, particularly among Generation Z users.

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INTRODUCTION

Language plays a crucial role in shaping human life. People use language as the way of interacting and communicating with others in society. Communication is commonly defined as the exchange of information between individuals through a shared system of symbols, signs, or behaviours. Communication is a process of sharing and interpreting messages to elicit responses and transmit information between individuals or groups (Hafsa et al., 2023). Rusu (2023), argues that communication is an interactive exchange where participants share intentions, beliefs, emotions, and thoughts to achieve mutual understanding.

Communicate is primarily used to exchange information, ideas, and feelings between individuals or groups, allowing them to share thoughts, needs, and

perspectives. Every communication consists of a minimum of one sender, one receiver and message. The transmission of a message from sender to recipient risks being affected by many things because communication impacts how people interacted. Every individual has unique characteristics shaped by their culture, which influence the type of language they use. This results in a wide range of language variations within society. Variations in language occur due to cultural, social, and situational factors, which influence how it is used in everyday life.

The English language is divided into two types; they are standard and non-standard language. Standard language follows established grammar and vocabulary rules and is used in formal contexts like presentations and academics, while non-standard language is an informal variant commonly used by young people in casual settings such as chatting with friends or family. Linguistics is a scientific discipline that systematically examines language, encompassing its structure, origin, historical development, and functional use by humans. A key subfield within linguistics that investigates the interaction between language and society is known as sociolinguistics (Wardhaugh et al., 2015). As defined by Silalahi (2020), sociolinguistic studies the goals and purposes of language in society as a branch of linguistics. Furthermore, sociolinguistics explores how language is shaped by and varies according to social factors including social class, ethnicity, gender, age, and communication context.

One of the many areas examined within sociolinguistics is slang. According to Semiba (2019) slang refers to informal language commonly used in everyday conversations, particularly among teenagers or specific social groups. Slang is typically viewed as an informal way of speaking used within particular communities. Furthermore, according to Holmes & Wilson (2022), slang is part of vocabulary and often indicates a person's age, with younger people using it more frequently. Slang is a very informal type of vocabulary, mainly used in casual conversations among people who are familiar with one another, and it is often seen as unconventional by older generations. Teenagers generally avoid using such expressions with other generations, whom they view as outsiders that disapprove of their language.

Allan & Burridge (2006) define slang as a marker of specific social groups. It is when individuals create unusual words or phrases to express ideas in a fresh or unconventional way, often using them in everyday conversations, chats, or social media, especially among teenagers who prefer shorter, easier, and more expressive alternatives to standard language. According to Allan & Burridge (2006), there are five types of slang including fresh and creative, compounding, imitative, acronym and clipping. Slang is a form of language that evolves spontaneously, without any formal rules governing its emergence or development. Slang also serves as a means of identifying individuals within a particular group and fostering a sense of solidarity among its members. Slang is not limited to everyday spoken communication; it is also prevalent on contemporary social media platforms, with Instagram serving as a prominent medium for modern communication.

The use of slang can create communication barriers, particularly when the language employed by the speaker differs significantly from that of the listener. This linguistic gap often results in misunderstandings or confusion, especially for audiences unfamiliar with the slang being used. Such barriers are increasingly evident on social media platforms, where informal and abbreviated language is prevalent. Social media serves as a means of communication and information exchange; it has become an essential part of everyday activities for all levels of society. In the modern era, the internet has become an essential part of daily life, transforming the way people communicate, access information, and interact with others.

The internet is a vast and unrestricted space, accessible to anyone, often without revealing the true identity of its users. This anonymity enables individuals to communicate in a reckless or harmful manner without fear of social consequences.

According to Meriläinen & Ruotsalainen (2024), the lack of visual cues and anonymity online can significantly increase toxic disinhibition in digital communication. This phenomenon is frequently observed on social media, particularly in Instagram comment sections, where numerous words and slang expressions with negative meanings or connotations are used freely and without restraint. Online anonymity significantly lowers social inhibitions, allowing individuals to behave in ways they would not in person. Nonetheless, such expressions are not necessarily negative in all cases; they often convey different meanings that are highly context-sensitive and can only be appropriately interpreted within particular situational or cultural frameworks.

In order to situate this research within the existing body of knowledge, several prior studies concerning slang usage in social media had been reviewed. The following literature presents findings from related research and their relevance to the current study. Indra (2024), Examined the use of slang words on Instagram. Focusing on captions and comment sections to identify their types, functions, and the sociolinguistic factors influencing their usage. The study revealed that slang often widely used across age groups to foster a sense of community. In the context of creation, adoption and spread of English slang among teenagers influenced, Shokhrukh (2024) demonstrated this matter. The study found a strong correlation between frequent platform use and the adoption of new slang terms based on TikTok videos, Instagram stories, and influencer posts. The study concluded that these platforms play a central role in shaping teenage linguistic identity, though rapid slang turnover can create generational communication gaps and pose challenges for formal language education. Furthermore, an analysis by Amalia et al., (2025), conducted a study on the use of slang by Generation Z in social media communication. Their research found that slang serves as an expressive tool for self-identity, fosters social closeness, and facilitates informal communication in virtual contexts. Highlighting the creative ways in which young users adapt and innovate linguistic forms to suit the fast-paced environment of digital interaction.

These challenges have drawn the attention of researchers who aim to better understand the social and communicative functions of slang in modern contexts. In response to this growing interest, the present study is titled "The Usage of Acronym Slang Found in @whitepeoplehumor Instagram Account Comment Sections." It aims to examine how slang is utilized in digital interactions and reveals about users' language behaviour and group identity on Instagram. Based on the background of the study, several problems have been identified regarding the use of slang on Instagram. The study focuses on the use of slang on Instagram, specifically in comment sections. The research is focusing to find out the acronym type, and meaning of the slangs that have been selected and collected to examine.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, specifically using a descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive qualitative is the research that involves collecting data in the form of words or images, rather than focusing on numerical data (Nassaji, 2015). The collected data is then analyzed and described in detail to make it easier for others to understand. In this research, the data consists of slang words found on social media, particularly Instagram. These slang terms are categorized into five types according to the theory proposed by Allan & Burridge (2006), including fresh and creative, flippant, imitative, acronym, and clipping.

The author limits the scope of the study and focuses exclusively on the type of acronym discussed in this article used by users in @whitepeoplehumor Instagram account comment sections posted from January 2025 until May 2025 that has more than 200 comments. The period of January to May 2025 was selected to ensure that the data reflects contemporary and contextually relevant slang usage among Instagram users.

This timeframe is recent enough to capture ongoing linguistic trends while allowing for sufficient variation in content and user interaction to support meaningful analysis. Restricting the study to a five month window provides a manageable scope for in depth qualitative examination while minimizing the risk of including outdated or obsolete slang terms. Furthermore, this interval encompasses multiple social and cultural events that may influence online discourse, thereby offering richer insights into the sociolinguistic functions of acronym slang within the selected community.

This study focuses on emergent slang expressions used predominantly by Generation Z on social media. For the purposes of this research, “new slang” refers to lexical items that have appeared or gained significant popularity within approximately the last five years. These terms are typically absent from traditional dictionaries but are widely documented in online slang repositories and digital discourse analyses. Their novelty is further supported by their high frequency of occurrence in Gen Z–oriented social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok and X. This study used Google Trends to check and find out the popular slang words search for the past 5 years. For each slang acronym identified, the researcher presents a single contextual example taken from one of the posts in which the term appears. The selection of examples is based on the clarity of the usage for context and its relevance to the content of the post. Nevertheless, the same term may also appear in other posts within the dataset; however, such occurrences are not further analyzed, as the focus of this study is on the form and meaning of the slang acronym rather than its distribution across posts.

The data for this study were collected from the comment sections of the Instagram account @whitepeoplehumor, focusing on posts published within the selected period that contained more than 200 comments. The data collection process involved the following steps. First identifying eligible posts within the January–May 2025 timeframe. Secondly, manually examining the comment sections of these posts. Thirdly, selecting comments containing acronym slang based on Allan & Burrige (2006) classification. Next, recording each slang term along with its date, contextual usage, and relevant post details. Lastly, organizing the collected terms into a dataset for further analysis. This systematic approach ensured that the selected slang items were both representative of the chosen timeframe and sufficiently documented for qualitative interpretation.

To gain a deeper understanding of slang used in specific situations, by particular groups, or for certain purposes, it is useful to apply Halliday (1985) theory of context of situation. This framework consists of three key components. The first is Field, which refers to the overall situation, what is happening and the nature of the social activity or interaction. The second is Tenor, which focuses on the participants involved, their roles, relationships, and social status. The third is Mode, which describes how language is used in the situation, including the form it takes and its communicative purpose. Using this framework provides structure and depth, offering a linguistic lens through which the use of slang in particular contexts can be more effectively analyzed and understood.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research observations are based on data from social media users, particularly Instagram, who use slang terms. These observations serve as evidence for the research findings. According to the available data, a total of 258 posts with more than 200 comments were identified between January and May 2025 and to facilitate the data retrieval process, a further limitation was applied by selecting the three posts with the highest number of comments from each month. The following section presents the slang acronyms identified in the data.

For each slang acronym, the researcher provides a single contextual example from one relevant post, selected for its clarity and connection to the post’s content.

Although the same term may appear in other posts, these instances are not analysed further, as the study focuses on the form and meaning rather than frequency. These findings are consistent with Shokhrukh (2024) research, which found a strong link between frequent Instagram and TikTok use and the adoption of new slang, often spread through short form content and influencer activity. Such rapid slang turnover shape's teenage linguistic identity but can also create generational language gaps and challenges for formal language learning. The following examples illustrate slang usage on the Instagram account @whitepeoplehumor.

Table 1 The acronym, meaning, and name of user account

No	Acronym	Meaning	Name of account
1.	W	Winning/win	@harleyyoung327
2.	L	Lose/loss	@Slavoie907
3.	TS	This Shit	@al.hutumah
4.	SYBAU	Shut Your Bitch Ass Up	@alinthexdoor
5.	FR	For Real	@yan.mqn
6.	PMO	Piss Me Off	@actually.sage
7.	FYP	For Your Page	@kirro.ika
8.	GOAT	Greatest of All Time	@stevemochel
9.	ICL	I Can't Lie	@fourteenjune14
10.	FOMO	Fear of Missing Out	@theniteshg

Figure 1

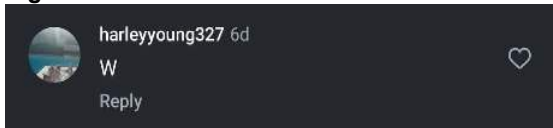


Figure 1. Example of acronym usage by @harleyyoung327

The first slang term is a random user comment in one of the posts that was posted in January 13, 2025. The post is an image of the president of United State, it shows Donald Trump's face edited onto the body of Pope Francis, wearing the papal white cassock and pectoral cross, with text on the image that stated "Give a man a fish and he will eat it for a day. Deport a man and you will never have to feed him again. -Trump 20:20". According to Later.com, "W" is often used as an abbreviation for "win" and is used to express a victory, success, or positive outcome in a given situation. In this context of situation, the user commented the slang term because he agreed with the text on the image which is about deporting rather than feeding them. In this case, it would mean they support the sentiment expressed in the text that deporting someone means you no longer have to feed them and they see it as clever, correct, or funny. Humor enhances liking for the source, positive mood, and message memorability, all of which make the message more persuasive (Walter et al., 2018).

Figure 2

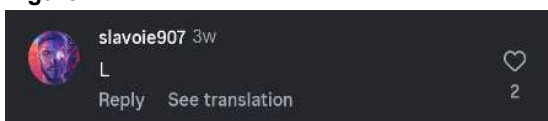


Figure 2. Example of acronym usage by @slavoie907

The second acronym slang word is a comment from a post created on March 23, 2025. The post is about comparison of Disney's movie the Snow White cartoon version to live action adaptation, featuring Snow White and a bird with text on the top saying "They even made the bird black". Based on Later.com, in online slang, the letter "L" commonly represents the word "loss". When an individual describes a situation as an L, it signifies that they have experienced a loss or failed to achieve their intended objective, it is a concise way to convey disappointment. On the basis of this information, the user expressed his disappointment that in the original cartoon, Snow White's appearance matched her name, as she had fair skin. However, in the live action adaptation, the actress portraying her has a different skin tone, being brown instead. The user also pointed out that the bird companion was changed to a hawk, symbolically making both the bird and the main character darker than in the original version.

Figure 3



Figure 3. Example of acronym usage by @al_hutumah

The second data point is derived from the same post as the previous data source, dated January 13, 2025 (see Figure 1). The acronym slang "TS" can carry various meanings depending on the context. According to UrbanDictionary.com, TS is often interpreted as type shit, this shit, or that shit, with these usages being particularly common in recent years. In the context of this post, TS specifically refers to this shit, pointing to the text in the post itself. Similarly, in slang usage, the word hard does not denote difficulty; rather, it conveys a sense of something being strong, intense, impressive, or emotionally impactful. Therefore, when the speaker stated, this shit is hard, they were expressing that the quote was exceptionally good, powerful, or inspiring, while also carrying a humorous undertone.

Figure 4

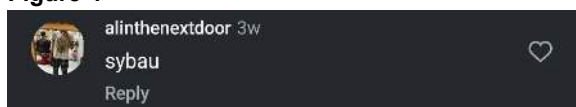


Figure 4. Example of acronym usage by @alিনthenextdoor

The next data point is a comment from a user with the handle @alিনthenextdoor on a post published on February 6, 2025. The post in question contained an image of a statement from @jakegrnr reading: "If you're single on Valentine's Day it's cuz you're ugly. Don't ever forget that. If you looked better you would have the person you want". According to UrbanDictionary.com, the slang term SYBAU is used when someone is perceived as ranting or repeating pointless arguments. It can function as a blunt directive to stop talking, though it may also be used jokingly among close friends who share a sarcastic or edgy sense of humor. In this context, however, the commenter employed SYBAU to strongly disagree with the original poster's statement and to silence what they perceived as an offensive and judgmental remark. Rather than engaging in a polite

rebuttal, the commenter used this forceful slang expression to convey that the post was not worth a measured response.

Figure 5

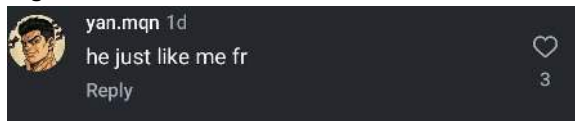


Figure 5. Example of acronym usage by @yan.mqn

The fifth acronym slang was identified in a post-dated May 2, 2025. The post was a screenshot from another account under the name @sydney_sweeney, featuring an image of her and a friend wearing revealing clothing. In the comments, @yalealumni wrote: “Mommies sorry mommies sorry mommies I promise I will be a good boy”, to which another account, @savage_mike06, replied: “Ain’t no fucking way this is the school that rejected me”. According to Cuncic (2023), experiencing humiliation or shame can impair emotional self-control, leading to shame-based responses such as self-defeating or attention-seeking behaviors as a coping mechanism for feelings of worthlessness. In this context, another user responded with the phrase “he just like me fr”, referring to @yalealumni’s comment. This expression means that the user identifies with the same sentiment and would express the same thought in a similar situation. The phrase functions as a humorous alignment marker, signaling solidarity with the original commenter’s perspective and suggesting that the respondent might engage in comparable behavior under similar circumstances. This reflects a common social media pattern, where users ironically identify with exaggerated desires to acknowledge and normalize them in shared online culture.

Figure 6

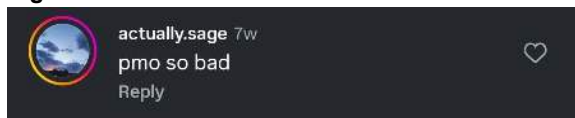


Figure 6. Example of acronym usage by @actually.sage

The sixth slang term originates from a post-dated April 5, 2025. The post is a screenshot from the social media platform X (formerly Twitter), in which @paul_suda replied to a tweet by @CultureCrave reporting that the live-action adaptation of Tangled had been paused following the box office failure of Snow White. In his reply, @paul_suda wrote, “oh she was gonna be black as hell.” According to UrbanDictionary.com, the slang acronym PMO stands for “Piss Me Off,” which aligns with the context of this post. Negative emotional reactions, particularly anger often emerge when individuals experience change those conflicts with their expectations or values. The user expressed strong frustration toward Disney’s decision to alter the original appearance and style of established characters, a change that many fans perceived negatively.

Figure 7

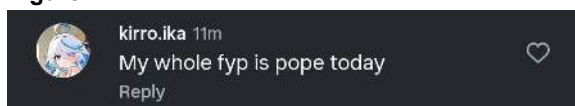


Figure 7. Example of acronym usage by @kirro.ika

The comment from a random user was found in a post published on April 22, 2025, regarding the death of Pope Francis, who passed away on Monday, April 21, 2025. His death became a major global news event, marking the end of a historic papacy that influenced more than 1.3 billion Catholics and resonated far beyond the Church. The acronym FYP originated as a TikTok-specific abbreviation for For You Page around 2018, becoming one of the most recognizable hashtags by 2020. It has since evolved into a broader slang term denoting viral or widely trending online content. In this context, the user commented FYP to indicate that they kept encountering the same news repeatedly throughout the day, mirroring the algorithmic.

Figure 8

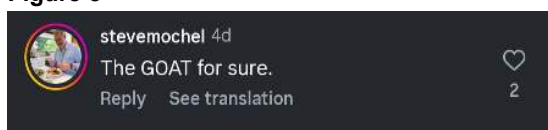


Figure 8. Example of acronym usage by @stevemochel

This slang term was expressed on a post published on April 8, 2025. The context of situation for the post is screenshot of a post in X by @Dexerto featuring MrBeast, a popular youtuber content creator with the title "MrBeast opened a surgical facility in Ghana to help treat rescued child slaves". "GOAT" or "Greatest of All Time" is used to describe someone or something considered unparalleled in their field according to Cambridge Dictionary. The one who serves his fellows is of all his fellows greatest. The user called MrBeast as GOAT because those who show care and concern for others can be considered the greatest individuals in the world.

Figure 9

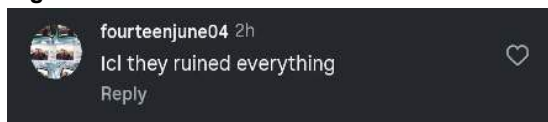


Figure 9. Example of acronym usage by @fourteenjune04

The ninth data point of acronym slang was found from the same post as in Figure 6. The acronym "ICL" stands for "I Can't Lie" according to UrbanDictionary.com and is often used in online conversations to preface a statement that expresses an honest opinion, whether positive or negative. In the context of this situation, the commenter responded to the post regarding the halted live-action Tangled adaptation by saying, "ICL they ruined everything". This phrase indicates the commenter's candid disapproval of the creative direction and casting choices, particularly following the controversy over Disney altering established character appearances in previous adaptations such as Snow White. The use of ICL emphasizes sincerity and frames the opinion as a straightforward truth from the speaker's perspective, reinforcing the strength of their dissatisfaction.

Figure 10

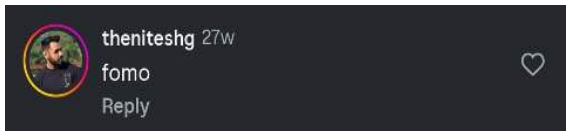


Figure 10. Example of acronym usage by @theniteshg

The tenth acronym slang was identified in a comment by @theniteshg on a post-dated February 17, 2025. The post originated from the social media platform X, where @BluebriarArts replied “Funniest draft dodging method just dropped” to a post by @PopBase stating “Transgender individuals are no longer permitted to join the U.S. military”. The acronym FOMO, short for “Fear of Missing Out”, defined by UrbanDictionary.com as the anxiety or concern that one might miss an enjoyable or significant experience that others are having. In this case, the commenter used FOMO humorously to suggest that some people might “fear missing out” on the perceived “opportunity” described in the post which is avoiding military service by being part of a group prohibited from joining.

CONCLUSION

This research aimed to identify and analyze acronym slang used in the comment section of the Instagram account @whitepeoplehumor from January to May 2025. Guided by Allan & Burridge (2006) classification of slang types, the study focused exclusively on acronym slang, while Halliday (1985) context of situation framework supported the interpretation of meaning based on field, tenor, and mode. The findings identified ten prominent acronym slang terms, each serving distinct communicative functions such as expressing agreement or disagreement, conveying emotions, producing humor or irony, and reinforcing group identity.

The study advances the current understanding of online slang by showing how acronym slang operates not merely as a linguistic shortcut, but as a complex sociolinguistic tool. It demonstrates that meaning is often context-dependent, requiring shared cultural knowledge for accurate interpretation. This highlights the dual role of slang is as a unifying force that fosters solidarity within specific groups, and as a potential communication barrier for outsiders unfamiliar with the terms. By integrating Allan and Burridge’s theoretical framework with Halliday’s contextual approach, this research provides a richer, more nuanced understanding of slang use in digital discourse. It contributes to the field of sociolinguistics by documenting recent acronym slang trends among Generation Z, illustrating how online linguistic creativity both shapes and reflects contemporary social interaction.

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