

## THE EVOLUTION OF ENGLISH DIALECT IN THE RECENT DIGITAL AGE

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**Abstract:** This research explored the evolution of the English language within the context of the South East Asia Dota II server community players, focusing on the recent digital age. These features of language contributed to the dynamic and evolving nature of English within this digital environment. (1) The study aimed to investigate the influence of social media platforms on vocabulary and lexical choices, as well as the development of new English features within English dialects. (2) Findings revealed that social media platforms significantly impacted vocabulary, introducing internet jargon and abbreviations into regular communication, also Lexical choices were often shaped by the need for brevity and efficiency, leading to the frequent use of acronyms and slang that are influenced by the fluidity of internet. (3) Using a qualitative deeply integrated observation method in Peter Trudgill format, the research examined in-game chat logs, forum discussions, and social media interactions and used a corpus to generalize the research data. (4) from the data that has been gathered from various sources such using corpus, the data analysis reveals that contemporary slang and colloquial terms constitute a significant portion of the corpus, accounting for approximately 6.76% out of the 5759 total words. (5) The research concluded that the digital age, facilitated by social media and online space, played a pivotal role in shaping contemporary English, fostering new linguistic trends and expressions that reflected the global and multicultural interaction among users.

**Keywords:** *Evolution, Digital Age, Internet, Dialect, Social Media*

### INTRODUCTION

The English language, renowned for its adaptability, has undergone numerous transformations throughout its history. Language evolution is an intricate process influenced by a multitude of factors, including societal, technological, and cultural changes. In the contemporary era, the rapid growth of digital technology and the internet has led to a profound evolution of the linguistic landscape, giving rise to new forms of communication and language variation.

The advent of the digital age has brought about evolution in the way people communicate. Digital technologies, encompassing the internet, social media, instant messaging Thurlow (2013), and other online platforms, have become integral to daily life. These digital communication tools have transcended geographical and temporal boundaries, fostering interactions and connections on a global scale. Consequently, they have transformed not only the modes of communication but also the very language used in these digital spaces. The digital sphere has given rise to new linguistic phenomena, evolving rapidly to meet the demands of swift, informal, and often text-based communication often referred as "digital dialects". Talking about changes sociolinguistics means that we are talking about the close relationship between the language and the society. Trudgill, (2000) stated that sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics which tends to see the relationship between the language and the society who are using those languages. Meanwhile, Fasold, (1993) stated that the core of sociolinguistics depends on two facts. The first is the variation of languages. It tends to have a relation with the choice of languages for those who are using languages. The second is the language that has been used as a media to send information and someone's point of view to other people out there.

The Sociolinguistic Implications impact of this digital language evolution goes beyond linguistic novelty. It extends into the realm of sociolinguistics, affecting how individuals construct their identities and interact within their online communities. Digital language use can be a marker of group membership and cultural identity, as individuals adapt their language practices to fit the norms and values of their chosen digital communities, therefore this research seeks to explore and understand "The Evolution of English Dialect in the Recent Digital Age."

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The research design is primarily exploratory, utilizing multi-method qualitative approach using a fairly simple digital corpus to gain comprehensive insights into the evolution of English dialect in the digital age. The methodology incorporates, participant observation, and content analysis, allowing for a multifaceted examination of the research topic and thorough data gathering.

This research adopts a qualitative research method, employing Peter Trudgill's, framework design for sociolinguistic analysis. Trudgill's approach emphasizes close and direct involvement with the subject group over an extended period of time to ensure a natural result. Following this method, I immerse myself within the South East Asia Dota II server community, actively participating and observing interactions for an extensive duration. By engaging deeply with the community, this research aims to capture nuanced insights into the linguistic dynamics, cultural nuances, and social behaviours prevalent within this unique gaming environment Herring, (2009).

A corpus, in research methodology, is a structured collection of linguistic data used to analyse patterns and trends in language Gilles, (2017). It typically contains a diverse range of texts from different sources, such as books, newspapers, websites, spoken dialogues, and transcripts, aiming to represent a specific language or dialect accurately. Researchers use corpora qualitative analysis, examining word frequencies, collocations, and broader linguistic trends. Corpus-based research allows for a data-driven approach to linguistic studies, aiding investigations into syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics Caroline Tagg, (2014). Creating a corpus involves collecting, digitizing, and annotating texts with relevant metadata, making it a fundamental resource for anyone exploring the of language change subject of this research from a various replay from the South East Asia Dota II server community players I've come across throughout the years I was playing the game for over 2100+ hours from 2018 to 2024.

The digital corpus text data had been gathered from various online replay matches of Dota II, a very popular online game in all regions, including the social platforms and South East Asian chat servers (All Chats, Steam Community Hub, Discussion, and Discord Server.), This corpus captured a wide range of linguistic content related to digital communication. To ensure data diversity, The data had been sampled from different period years of active user, providing a comprehensive view of recent English dialect evolution.

The collected data undergoes analysis using the AntConc program's corpus data linguistics capabilities, enabling the examination of ratios and collocations within the emerging English dialect or speech. By using this software, the frequency and prevalence of these new linguistic forms can be quantified, offering valuable insights

into their usage patterns and distribution. Employing the default formula provided by AntConc, the frequency ratio of these linguistic innovations is deduced, providing a straightforward yet effective method for assessing their prominence within the evolving English dialect

After all the data had been collected, the researcher analysed the data. It is to solve the problem that the researcher had been using the formula that is common in any corpus data counting, in this case the researcher had been using the default AntConc tool to count the data:

$$\textit{frequency ratio} = \frac{\textit{Word frequency}}{\textit{Total word in corpus}}$$

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of the research are presented in detail on the findings and discussion section. The results answer the objectives of the research that are to identify and to describe the types, functions, and pattern of new words or slang that are prominent in the recent age.

### ***Change in Vocabulary or Lexical Choice***

The internet has revolutionized communication, leading to the emergence of a distinct online dialect characterized by rapid evolution and innovation in vocabulary. This digital lexicon is dynamic, digital age unique to online communities. Additionally, internet culture has birthed terms reflecting the rise of digital content consumption. The fluid nature of the internet dialect reflects the ever-changing nature of online interactions, where linguistic creativity and adaptability thrive like Crystal D, (2000) described.

This section describes the findings of the research on slang or words uttered by the subjects in research. From the analysis process using corpus that are gathered, there are consisted from 5296 words token, the total data collected in this research are data and are displayed in the table below. The table shows the frequency of the occurrence of words uttered by regular English speaker in South East Asia server in online space. The results are various and they will be displayed in the following table:

**Table 1. The findings of the most prominent new slang or words, frequency of occurrence, collocation, and a simple example in the sentence from corpus**

Word	frequency	Collocation	Meaning	Example Sentence
mid	26	Mid-tier	Mediocre	The performance was mid at best, hardly leaving an impression.
cringe	25	cringe-worthy	Causing embarrassment or discomfort	His jokes were so cringe-worthy that nobody laughed.
salty	25	salty attitude	Bitter or resentful attitude	She had a salty attitude after losing the game.
low key	24	low key party	Subtle, not attracting attention	We're just having a low key party at my place, nothing fancy.
cap	20	You're capping	Accusation of Lying, Expressing Disbelief	There's no cap on how much you can achieve if you put your mind to it.
GG	19	Say GG	Good Game used to express sportsmanship	After the match ended, both teams said GG to show mutual respect.
W	19	take the W	Win	We played so well, we're definitely going to take the W in this competition.
L	18	take the L	Loss	Unfortunately, we have to take the L on this one, but we'll bounce back.
low key	18	low key	Quietly, secretly	Let's keep this low key, I don't want everyone knowing.
flex	15	flex muscles	Show off, boast	He loves to flex his muscles whenever he gets the chance.
glow up	15	glow up	Positive transformation, improvement	She had a major glow up after high school and is now a successful model.
fr	15	Fr, fr it's the truth	Seriously, genuinely	Are you fr, fr? I can't believe what you're saying.
sus	14	sus behavior	Suspicious, sketchy behavior	His sus behavior made everyone uncomfortable.
fomo	13	fear of missing out	Anxiety about missing an experience	She couldn't resist going to the party because of FOMO.
stan	10	stan someone	Strongly support or admire	I stan Bruno Marsh, he's such a talented artist.
drip	10	drip outfit	Fashionable or stylish outfit	He walked in with a drip outfit, turning heads everywhere.
noob	10	gaming noob	Inexperienced or unskilled person	He's such a noob at this game, he keeps getting killed within seconds.
based	7	based on evidence	Founded on evidence or facts	Our decision was based on evidence and careful consideration.
grind	7	grind daily	Work hard consistently	Success doesn't come easy, you have to grind daily to achieve your goals.

simp	5	simp for someone	Excessively admire or cater to someone	He's always simping for her, buying her gifts and showering her with compliments.
irl	5	in real life	Actual, not online	He's much shyer online than he is IRL.
rizz	5	feeling rizz	Uncertain or anxious feeling	I'm feeling rizz about this party, I don't know if I should go.

Total Frequency≈325

Through corpus linguistic analysis, several insights emerge regarding the usage patterns and contextual implication of these terms. Notably, terms like "cringe" and "sus" stands for negative perceptions or behaviors, while "glow up" and "stan" convey positive sentiments or admiration. "GG" serves as a marker of sportsmanship or acknowledgment, reflecting a shared culture of online match. Furthermore, terms like "low key" and "vibe" highlight the importance of subtlety and atmosphere in social interactions.

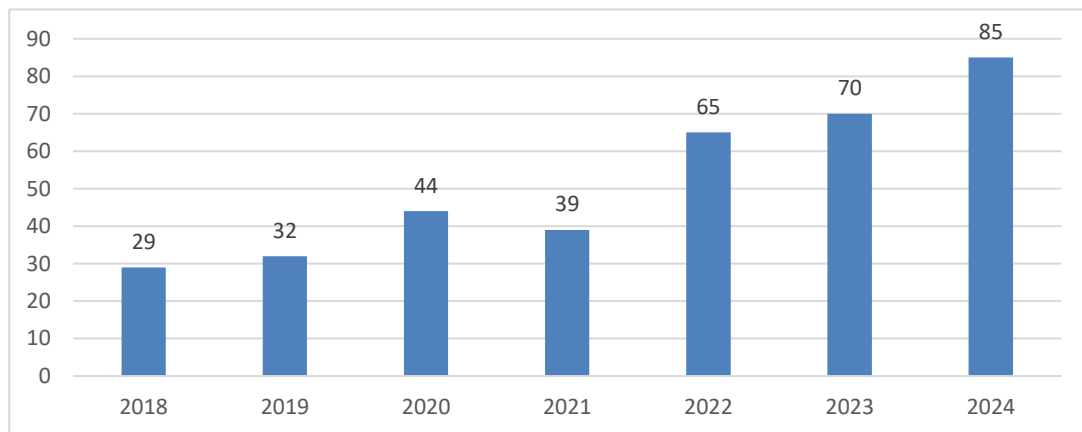
### ***New Slang or Abbreviation Popularity Throughout the Years***

By examining the frequency and context of new slang terms in gaming chat logs, researchers can trace the flow of linguistic trends and change of dialect within these vibrant online communities in the internet. The following table illustrates some notable changes in popularity of new slang and terms that have emerged and evolved in gaming chat logs over the years, showing the popularity of the new words, terms, or slang. The graph below (graph 1) summarizes the occurrence of new slang or dialect forms from different data sources over the years 2018 to 2024. Each row is from lists of specific Data Match ID, which is video replay of raw gameplay of Dota 2 with the chat that already had been processed through corpus linguistics, representing the source of the data, along with the frequency of new slang or dialect occurrences detected from that source.

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**Graphs 1. Internet Slang Usage Throughout the Years Statistic**



This graph simplifies and illustrates the increasing popularity of new English slang and abbreviation. In 2018, the usage frequency was relatively low, with only 29 instances recorded. However, a gradual increase is observed in the following years, reaching 32 in 2019 and 44 in 2020. Although there was a slight dip to 39 in 2021, the trend significantly accelerated afterward, with 65 instances in 2022, 70 in 2023, and a sharp rise to 85 in 2024. This upward trajectory highlights the growing integration and acceptance of internet slang in daily communication, likely driven by the spreading of social media platforms increased internet usage, and the desire for more efficient and expressive forms of online communication.

### ***Shifts in Meaning or Usage of Existing Words***

The evolution of internet speech among the new generation has led to significant shifts in the meanings and usage of existing words. Traditional words are being repurposed to fit the dynamic and fast-paced nature of online communication, often acquiring new connotations or entirely different meanings. This linguistic shift is driven by the need for brevity and the expressive potential of internet slang, allowing users to convey complex emotions and social nuances with familiar yet

contextually transformed vocabulary. As a result, the lexicon of internet speech reflects the creativity and adaptability of language, continually evolving to meet the communicative demands of the digital age.

This table illustrates how the meanings of certain words have evolved in new internet dialect compared to their traditional meanings. For each word listed, the table provides the traditional meaning, the new internet dialect meaning, and an example of how the word is used in context. For instance, "drip" traditionally refers to liquid falling in drops, but in modern slang, it describes someone's impressive style. The new generation, influenced by digital communication, social media, and internet culture, has repurposed many existing words, giving them fresh meanings or altering their usage. This table explores some notable examples:

**Table 2. *The finding of the shifts in meaning or usage of existing words***

<b>Word</b>	<b>Traditional Meaning</b>	<b>New Generation Internet Dialect Meaning</b>	<b>Context/Usage</b>
drip	Liquid falling or flowing in drops; fashion sense.	Used to describe someone's style, especially when it's fashionable, unique, or impressive.	"Check out his drip, he's always wearing the latest trends."
cap	A type of head covering; a protective lid.	Used to indicate that someone is lying or exaggerating; synonymous with "lie" or "falsehood."	"He said he has a million followers, but that's cap."
goat	An animal, the acronym for "Greatest of All Time".	Used to refer to someone or something as the best or most excellent in their field or category.	"LeBron James is the GOAT of basketball."
simp	A slang term for a simple person or fool.	Refers to someone, often a man, who is overly submissive or attentive to someone they are attracted to, often with the hope of winning their affection.	"He's always doing whatever she asks, what a simp."
thirsty	Feeling a need or desire for water.	Describes someone who is desperate or overly eager, especially for attention or validation, often in a romantic or sexual context.	"He's always commenting on her photos, so thirsty."
grind	To crush into fine particles; to work or labor persistently.	Refers to working hard, often used in the context of striving for success or pursuing one's goals with determination and dedication.	"She's always on her grind, studying late into the night."
clout	Influence or power, especially in the context of fame or social status.	Refers to someone's social influence or reputation, particularly online, often measured by followers, likes, or engagement.	"He's only doing it for the clout, not because he actually cares."
literally	In a literal manner; exactly.	Used for emphasis or to express strong feelings, often not literally.	"I literally died laughing." (Meaning they laughed very hard.)
salty	Containing or tasting of salt.	Describes someone who is upset, annoyed, or bitter, often due to a perceived slight or loss.	"He got so salty after losing the game."
ghosting	Haunting or appearing as a ghost.	Suddenly cutting off all communication with someone without explanation.	"He ghosted me after our third date."
flex	To bend or contract (muscles).	To show off or boast, especially about one's achievements or possessions.	"He's always flexing his new car on Instagram."



troll	A mythological creature.	Someone who deliberately provokes or annoys others online for amusement or to cause disruption.	"Don't feed the trolls by responding to their comments."
savage	Fierce, violent, and uncontrolled.	Describes someone who is brutally honest or extremely bold, often in a humorous or impressive way.	"Her comeback was so savage, everyone was speechless."
cringe	To shrink back, cower, or recoil in fear or disgust.	Describes something embarrassing, awkward, or uncomfortable to watch, often causing secondhand embarrassment.	"That TikTok dance was so cringe, I had to look away."
lit	Illuminated by light; set on fire.	Extremely exciting or impressive, often used to describe a party, event, or experience.	"The concert last night was so lit!"
ship	A large seagoing vessel.	To support or endorse a romantic relationship between two fictional or non-fictional characters, often hoping for their romantic involvement.	"I totally ship Harry and Hermione from Harry Potter."
glow-up	The process of improving one's physical appearance over time.	Refers to a significant positive transformation or personal growth, often in appearance, skills, or confidence.	"Have you seen her glow-up since high school?"

This table illustrates how the generalization of the meanings of certain words have evolved in new internet dialect compared to their traditional meanings. For each word listed, the table provides the traditional meaning, the new internet dialect meaning, and an example of how the word is used in context. For instance, "drip" traditionally refers to liquid falling in drops, but in modern slang, it describes someone's impressive style.

### ***Total Popularity or Frequency Ratio***

The total frequency ratio of 0.06136706949 indicates that the combined occurrence of the listed words constitutes about 6.1% of the entire corpus of 5296 words. This metric gives researchers insight into the prevalence and importance of these specific terms within the given dataset. In corpus linguistics, such a ratio is significant because it quantifies how much these words contribute to the overall text, highlighting their relative prominence and potential relevance to the study's thematic focus.

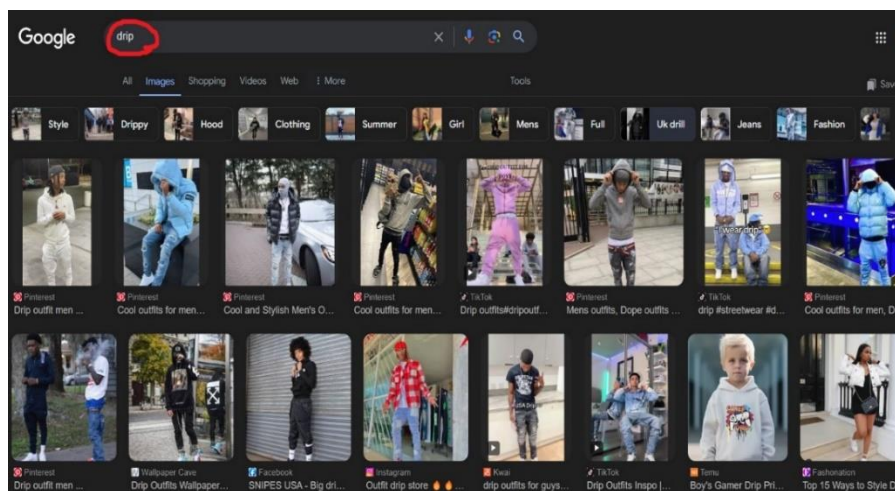
This finding is particularly useful for understanding linguistic trends and cultural shifts. This can indicate a shift in language usage patterns, reflecting broader social and cultural changes. Researchers can use this data to track the evolution of language, analyze the integration of new vocabulary into everyday usage, and understand the contexts in which these words are most commonly used.

One significant aspect of this evolution is the increasing prominence of informal and conversational language in written form. The immediacy and brevity required by digital communication have popularized abbreviations, and acronyms which serve as

both linguistic shortcuts and expressive tools. All of the prominent words have become ubiquitous, transcending their origins in internet slang to enter everyday speech. Furthermore, these internet slang can be the context that can alter or enhance the meaning of textual communication, adding a layer of complexity to digital dialects.

To illustrate just how prevalent this new shift in meaning, just simply type it on the on the google image and it will immediately show it the new meaning context:

***Picture 1. illustrating on just how prevalent these new term or slang, with a simple search on google image, that shown the image results, showing that the new meaning of "drip" as sense of fashion.***



Additionally, the digital age has given rise to new sociolects, or social dialects, shaped by online communities and subcultures. Platforms like discord or steam, host diverse groups with unique linguistic practices, fostering the creation of specialized vocabularies and styles. Internet often encapsulate these linguistic trends, spreading them across different groups and contributing to a shared, yet continually evolving, digital lexicon. Gaming has played a significant role in shaping the evolution of digital age dialect, with its vibrant communities contributing numerous new words, phrases, and slang that have become widely adopted across the internet. As one of the largest and most influential forms of entertainment, the gaming industry has created a unique culture that transcends geographical boundaries, bringing together players from diverse backgrounds who share a common passion for gaming. One way gaming has impacted digital age dialect is through the creation of game-specific terminology and

jargon. Each game or gaming genre often develops its own lexicon to facilitate communication among players. Terms like "aggro," "OP," or "nerf" originated from gaming communities but have since been adopted more broadly, even outside of gaming contexts. This blending of gaming terminology with everyday language demonstrates how gaming culture has permeated digital communication, shaping the way people interact and express themselves online. Moreover, the rise of online multiplayer gaming has fostered the emergence of new forms of communication and collaboration. In multiplayer games, effective teamwork and coordination are essential for success, leading players to develop specialized communication strategies and tactics. This has given rise to shorthand, abbreviations, and callouts that streamline communication during intense gameplay. For example, phrases like "watch out for flankers," "healing needed," or "push the objective" have become common expressions used by gamers to convey crucial information quickly and efficiently.

The gaming industry's status as the largest entertainment industry globally has undoubtedly contributed to its impact on digital age dialect. With millions of players worldwide and billions of dollars in revenue, gaming has a massive reach and influence on popular culture. As gaming continues to evolve and diversify, so too will its linguistic footprint, shaping the digital language of the future in ways we are only beginning to understand. Overall, gaming's role in the evolution of digital age dialect underscores its significance as a cultural phenomenon that extends far beyond entertainment.

### ***Grammar***

The rise of internet communication has fundamentally altered traditional grammar, giving birth to a more dynamic and expressive form of language. One notable change is the use of non-standard capitalization, where users mix uppercase and lowercase letters to convey excitement or sarcasm, diverging from conventional capitalization rules. Punctuation has also evolved, with repeated exclamation points or question marks amplifying emotions like excitement or confusion, and ellipses indicating hesitation. The integration of emoticons and emojis adds a visual dimension to text, helping convey emotions and tones that words alone might miss Evans (2018). Additionally, the prevalence of acronyms and initialisms, such as "LOL" and "BRB," reflects a shift towards brevity and efficiency. Phonetic spelling and

abbreviations, like "u" for "you" and "thx" for "thanks," further streamline communication. Conventional grammar rules are often relaxed, resulting in more fluid and conversational exchanges. Moreover, the adoption of memetic phrases and unique syntactical structures from viral content enriches the language with cultural references. Collectively, these changes illustrate a move towards a more informal, immediate, and emotionally nuanced mode of communication, shaped by the interactive and fast-paced nature of the internet.

### ***Online Jargon that Transfers into Real Life Speech***

Fandoms and niche interest groups often create and propagate their own slang, which can cross over into mainstream usage, the prime example of this phenomenon is the word "Sus". "Sus", is an abbreviation for "suspicious" often used by players of the game "Among Us" when referring to those that are suspected of being an impostor. The slang term originally predates its use in the game but is used in the same context. The resurgence and widespread popularization of "sus" can be attributed to "Among Us." Players often use "sus" to describe someone they believe is acting suspiciously or is likely to be an impostor. The game had made "sus" a staple term in gaming and internet slang.

And with the internet the term "sus" has transcended its gaming origins and has become a part of internet culture. It is frequently used in memes and social media posts to describe anything that seems suspicious or off. This meme culture has further cemented "sus" in the vernacular of younger generations. Another prominent example of the popularity slang or abbreviation in the internet space are the usage of "GG".

As stated in one of the table above, (Table 1) the usage of the abbreviation is mainly used in gaming or online space, but with its popularity in internet, its usage bleeds over into the real time speech, notable evidence is its usage by Joe Rogan the main commentator of UFC and the biggest Podcast in the world, Dimitrius Johnson the most dominating flyweight seamlessly incorporate gaming slang, known as "GG" (Good Game), into their conversation at 47:29 (<https://open.spotify.com/episode/5qN8qMhKnAkZy61YbTYbYG>). This highlights the widespread influence of internet culture in mainstream media. Its niche origins to become part of everyday language, even among celebrities. The abbreviation is also notably being used by chess grandmasters like the current number one GM Magnus

Carlsen and the current number three GM Hikaru Nakamura after finishing their games. This blending of worlds showcases the evolving nature of communication and the impact of digital subcultures on broader society, furthermore proving that the popular slang that are formed in digital world are easily translated over into a speech dialect.

### ***The Limitation of the Research***

As a researcher deeply involved in the online community, my direct engagement inevitably introduces a degree of personal bias into this study. My immersion in the culture and language patterns of this community shapes my perspective, potentially swaying my interpretations and conclusions. While I strive for objectivity, I recognize that my close ties to the subject matter might limit the scope and generalizability of the findings. Therefore, I hope that other researchers will take an interest in this area, exploring different communities or subjects to complement and expand upon this work. By doing so, they can address any shortcomings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the evolving landscape of internet language and grammar.

The general analysis of the corpus revealed that the selected contemporary slang and colloquial terms collectively account for approximately 6.1% of the total word usage in the dataset. This significant proportion underscores the pervasive nature of these modern expressions in the corpus, which is likely representative of informal, everyday communication. The findings highlight how language evolves and adapts to cultural and social changes, with new terms rapidly gaining traction and becoming integral to contemporary discourse. The high frequency of these words suggests their relevance and importance in the current linguistic landscape, reflecting broader trends in language use among certain demographics, particularly younger generations.

The digital age has profoundly influenced the many aspects within modern English dialects, primarily through the introduction of new terms, the repurposing of existing words, and the rapid dissemination of slang and jargon. This linguistic evolution reflects the significant impact of technology, social media, and online communication on everyday language, this influence is evident in the expansion of vocabulary, introduction of new terms, repurposing of existing words, rapid circulation

of slang and jargon, and the Influence on syntax and grammar. styles that are unique to digital contexts, therefore contributing to the evolution of English dialects.

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