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Intergenerational Shifting of Profanity Words among Multilingual Generations: Millennial and Gen-Z

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Abstract: Social media over the years lately had shaped the language shifting or code mixing in global contexts. This qualitative research aimed to unravel the intergenerational language shifting in profanity usage between millennials and generation-Z; the corpus about profanity words uttered by both, reasons for the usage of profanity words, and how this research perceived the intergenerational shifting of profanity words under the paradigm of sociolinguistics point of view. This research deployed open-ended surveys as primary instrument to gather profanity words used by both generations, including their reasonings for using them. Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure relevant representations from two different generations. The respondents consisted of 20 Gen-Z English-major students from various universities, and 9 Millennial English lecturers. They were recruited using institutional networks and online survey distribution. This technique was required because it assisted the researchers to target participants with related linguistics contexts and generational characteristics. The results indicated that gen-Z favorite profanity words in social media usage in recent years were *cok* or *jancok*, and it was due to the socio-cultural reasons behind it. Contrastively, the millennials stated that the socio-cultural and linguistics were the reasons regarding their favored word which was *fuck*. Through document analysis, the researchers perceived that Gen-Z's shifting preferences for profanity words were driven by the social-cultural interaction, and FOMO (fear of missing out) as they seek peer acceptance and a heightened sense of belongings. In contrast, the millennials preferences were primarily to express their sense of group solidarity without concerns about social exclusion or ostracism. Although Gen-Z uttered profanity words to express themselves, the researchers highlighted that both generations feared feeling of remorse and potential consequences of using such language. Therefore, the researchers perceived that intergenerational shifting of profanity reflected a complex phenomenon that encompassed sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics frameworks.

Key words: intergenerational language shift; profanity words; multilinguals generations; Generation Z; Millennials; Sociolinguistics

Abstrak: Media sosial dalam kurun beberapa tahun atau code mixing dalam lingkup global. Penelitian kualitatif ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap pergeseran bahasa antargenerasi dalam penggunaan kata-kata makian antara generasi milenial dan generasi Z; mencakup korpus kata-kata makian yang diucapkan oleh kedua generasi, alasan penggunaan kata-kata makian, serta bagaimana penelitian ini memandang pergeseran antargenerasi dalam penggunaan kata makian melalui paradigma aspek sosiolinguistik. Penelitian ini menggunakan survei terbuka sebagai instrumen utama untuk mengumpulkan daftar kata-kata makian yang digunakan oleh kedua generasi, serta alasan mereka mengucapkannya. Partisipan dipilih melalui purposive sampling untuk menjamin relevansi

perwakilan dua generasi berbeda. Responden terdiri atas 20 orang Gen-Z mahasiswa bahasa Inggris dari berbagai universitas, dan 9 orang dosen milenial. Mereka direkrut melalui jaringan institusi dan distribusi survei daring. Teknik ini diperlukan karena membantu peneliti untuk memilih partisipan dengan konteks bahasa terkait dan karakteristik antar generasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pilihan kata makian oleh Gen-Z dalam sosial media beberapa tahun terakhir adalah “cok” atau “jancok” dan alasan sosial budaya menjadi latar belakang dari kecenderungan ini. Sebaliknya, para milenial menyatakan bahwa alasan sosial budaya dan linguistik menjadi dasar dalam penggunaan kata kasar favorit yaitu fuck.. Dengan menggunakan analisis dokumen, para peneliti menyimpulkan bahwa perubahan preferensi dalam penggunaan kata makian pada Gen-Z didorong oleh interaksi sosial-budaya di antara mereka, dan adanya FOMO (fear of missing out) agar diterima teman sebaya dan meningkatkan rasa kebersamaan. . Sebaliknya, preferensi milenial terhadap kata makian didorong oleh kebutuhan untuk mengekspresikan rasa kebersamaan tanpa konsekuensi seperti dikucilkan. Meskipun Gen-Z menggunakan kata makian untuk mengekspresikan diri, peneliti menyoroti bahwa kedua generasi sebenarnya menyimpan ketakutan akan rasa penyesalan dan dampak dari pengucapan kata-kata tersebut. Oleh karena itu, para peneliti memandang bahwa pergeseran antargenerasi dalam penggunaan kata makian menggambarkan fenomena kompleks yang mencakup kerangka kerja sosiolinguistik dan psikolinguistik.

Kata kunci: pergeseran bahasa antargenerasi, kata-kata makian, generasi multibahasa; Generasi Z; Milenial; sosiolinguistik

INTRODUCTION

Language possesses great value as a means of communication and also serves as the reflection of culture, identity, and emotion (Dzhambulova et al., 2024; Piszcz & Sierocka, 2020; Suryadimulya et al., 2023). Among the various forms of language use, profanity stands out as a controversial yet common element across different societies. Profanity, often associated with taboo, vulgarity, or strong emotional expression, plays a unique role in everyday conversations. People use profanity to express anger, surprise, frustration, humor, or even solidarity. While the use of profanity is widespread, the types of words used, their meanings, and the contexts in which they are said often vary significantly among different generations and cultural groups (Ahtif & Gandhi, 2022; X. Liu & Yan, 2022).

In multilingual societies, the use of profanity becomes even more complex. Speakers may draw from more than one language to express emotions or attitudes, often switching between languages depending on the situation, social group, or cultural context (Coats, 2021). This mixing of languages—commonly referred to as code-switching—can also be seen in the way people use profanity. For example, a bilingual speaker might choose a certain profane word from one language over another because it sounds stronger, carries a deeper emotional meaning, or is more socially acceptable within a specific group. As younger generations grow up exposed to global media, internet culture, and social networks, their language practices, including the use of profanity, are constantly evolving (Jebaselvi et al., 2023; E. A. & I. E., 2025; Khaeriyah et al., 2023).

The growing popularity of global social media platforms like TikTok, Twitter (X), Instagram, and YouTube has introduced new expressions and popularized certain profanity words, especially among Generation Z (henceforth Gen-Z). Millennials, on the other hand, may still hold on to older, perhaps more traditional forms of swearing influenced by their earlier experiences with music, television, and peer interactions in a slightly different technological

landscape. These generational influences shape not only vocabulary choices but also the meanings and functions of profanity in everyday discourse (Dlelengana et al., 2024; Kullolli & Trebicka, 2023).

Previous studies in multilingual contexts on general profanity usage focuses on how it addressed as emotional catharsis in relieving stress, anxiety, and depression which helps in raising the speakers' psychological state (Feldman et al., 2017; Husain et al., 2023; Wiraatmaja & Sabgini, 2024). However, the use of profanity in multilingual setting also offer sociolinguistics criticism since this particular choice of words are closely associated with negative stereotype, hostility, and rudeness (Ariani & Br. Kembaren, 2021; Wiraatmaja & Sabgini, 2024). In multilingual settings, these factors interact in complex ways that are still not fully understood, and present another challenge which might have shaped others' perception regarding profanity users' (DeFrank & Kahlbaugh, 2019).

To address this gap, this study aims to explore the intergenerational shifting of profanity words among two specific groups: Gen-Z and Millennials. Both generations are highly engaged with language through digital and offline interactions, yet they differ in terms of social upbringing, cultural exposure, and access to globalized content. In multilingual environments such as Indonesia, where local languages, Bahasa Indonesia, and English often co-exist, the dynamics of profanity usage become particularly rich and worth studying. Thus, the researchers utilized Document Analysis to view this issue as a phenomenon to constitute a better understanding about the proposed issues.

This research is guided by three main questions. First, what are the most commonly used profanity words by Gen-Z and Millennials in a multilingual context? By identifying and comparing the vocabulary choices of each group, we can gain insight into their linguistic preferences and cultural influences. Second, what are the reasons behind their choices of specific profanity words? This involves examining motivations such as emotional expression, humor, group identity, or imitation of popular culture. Finally, how do this profanity practices reflect broader sociolinguistic patterns? This part of the study will explore how swearing interacts with social norms, emotional processing, and language structure across multiple languages and generations.

The overall purpose of this study is to examine how and why profanity use changes between generations in multilingual communities. This will help us better understand how language evolves in response to generational, and socio-cultural influences. The findings are expected to provide insights not only into current trends in language use among young adults but also into the broader processes of language change, identity construction, and cultural adaptation in a multilingual world.

By analyzing profanity from both sociolinguistic perspectives, this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on intergenerational language practices. It also adds to the discussion on how global communication and multilingual exposure influence the everyday use of language among younger populations.

Although this study emphasizes on multilingual Indonesian speakers, the findings were interpreted within specific paradigms; cultural and sociolinguistics contexts of Indonesia, where the local languages, politeness and socio-religious values strongly affecting profanity use. The previous notions limit the direct generalization of the gained results to other multilingual societies with different cultural traditions. Therefore, particular sociolinguistics patterns, such

as the role of profanity in emotional expression and socio-interactions, including identity constructions may be relevant with other multilingual contexts, hence further comparative research would be required to confirm the similarities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Intergenerational Language Shift and Profanity usage

Since language represents a vital aspect of culture, identity, and wellbeing for many communities (Gomashie, 2019), intergenerational language shift leads to the phenomenon where newer generations adopt a dominant or majority language over their heritage language, including mixing profanity that regards as a form of rebellion against social conventions to asserts their identity (Nugroho et al., 2023). This process is particularly prominent in multilingual societies, where linguistic and cultural connotations between languages hold prominent role in shaping the dynamics of social interactions communication patterns (Yekple et al., 2023), including language maintenance, shift, and identity among speakers from different groups (Wilson, 2024). Understanding these phenomena necessitates an exploration of various social, cultural, and linguistic factors that influence language practices and preservation initiatives across generations (Gomashie, 2019; Lev-Ari & McKay, 2023; Sheng & Buchanan, 2022).

One significant driver of intergenerational language shift is the sociolinguistic environment of migrant communities. According to Akintayo et al., the acceptance of a dominant language often occurs alongside the need to integrate socially and culturally into new settings, which influences community cohesion and identity formation (Atobatele & Mouboua, 2024). This perspective is further supported by Erniati and Wijaya (2023), who emphasize the role of social dynamics and positive attitudes towards language preservation among younger generations in family environments. Thus, fostering awareness and valuing linguistic heritage is crucial for counteracting language shift.

Moreover, research conducted by Yu et al. highlights the ecological implications of language maintenance and shift in ethnic minorities, indicating that cultural contact plays a crucial role in language use and preservation within multilingual ecologies (Yu et al., 2024). As minorities encounter dominant cultures, the pressures can result in language shift; however, these languages can persist when supported by robust cultural and community networks. Furthermore, Jung's study on the Korean community in Australia illustrates that migration patterns and external factors, such as global events like the COVID-19 pandemic, strongly influence language dynamics and intergenerational transmission of language (Jung, 2023).

The role of language ideologies is another important dimension of intergenerational language shift. Rosillo-Rodes et al. argue that dominant language ideologies can significantly impact the mechanisms of language maintenance and shift, creating environments where certain languages may be privileged over others, thus affecting children's language choices (Rosillo-Rodes et al., 2023). This ideological influence often manifests in educational and governmental policies that can either support multilingualism or enforce monolingualism, shaping community attitudes towards language use.

Further insights emerge from research on community-specific language practices, such as in the case of the Keralites in Oman. These studies show that while heritage languages may be at risk, the multinational context provides avenues for multilingualism and resilience (Veettil et al., 2020). Similar findings from Yarahmadi regarding Kurdish-speaking communities emphasize that language shift often correlates with socio-economic factors and broader sociopolitical dynamics, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to support bilingualism (Yarahmadi, 2021). In summary, intergenerational language shift is influenced by a myriad of factors, including social integration, cultural attitudes, and language ideologies. These elements work together within multilingual societies to either support or undermine heritage language transmission. Consequently, effective strategies for language maintenance must engage with the sociocultural fabric of communities while promoting positive language attitudes amongst younger generations to ensure linguistic diversity survives amid shifting language landscapes.

Additionally, Intergenerational language shift and profanity usage are interconnected phenomena that reflect broader sociocultural dynamics. Language shift occurs when a community adopts a new language, typically a more dominant or socially prestigious one, while abandoning their heritage language. This shift is influenced by various factors, including social integration, education, and globalization (Akintayo et al., 2024; Gautam & Adhikari, 2023; Nurhalima et al., 2023). It can lead to the decline of minority languages, particularly in the context of migration and subsequent assimilation into the dominant culture (Batubara & Shafira, 2023; Riaz et al., 2021). The interplay between language and identity is significant as younger generations increasingly adopt the dominant language for social and economic mobility, putting their native languages at risk of extinction (Akintayo et al., 2024; Et-bozkurt, 2022; Gautam & Adhikari, 2023).

Profanity usage serves distinct social functions within various contexts. It is not merely a linguistic expression of anger or disdain but can also construct identity and social belonging among peers (Diabah, 2020; Fine & Corte, 2024). Sociolinguistic studies have revealed that in specific environments, such as youth culture or male-dominated spaces, swearing can signify camaraderie and reinforce social bonds (Husain et al., 2023). Moreover, the semantics of swearing are evolving; for instance, among younger generations such as Generation Z, swearing may be used more liberally without the same societal stigma as in previous generations (Nugroho et al., 2023).

The connection between profanity and language shift is observed in how younger generations utilize profanity differently than their elders. As they navigate multicultural environments, the use of profanity may incorporate various language influences, transforming traditional swearing into markers of modern identity (Al-Shawi, 2024). Additionally, the normalization of profanity in public discourse illustrated by political figures utilizing foul language as part of their populist appeal shows how the boundaries of acceptable language can shift alongside broader societal changes (Montiel et al., 2022; Wodak et al., 2021). This usage not only reflects but also reshapes social norms regarding language, civility, and authority (Song et al., 2021; Stevens et al., 2022).

Intergenerational language shift in this study can be identified as code mixing category since they offer the significance of linguistic and cultural contexts (Prasad & Lory, 2020). In addition, Valieva et al., (2019) also expressed that this kind language usage in multilingual settings offer additional means for the speaker to express themselves in diverse social context. Thus, intergenerational language shift and profanity usage are intertwined phenomena that

highlight how cultural, social, and linguistic practices evolve over time. Understanding these shifts is crucial as they have implications for language preservation efforts, identity formation, and the very fabric of social interactions in an increasingly globalized world (Mauk et al., 2023; Melaku & Semu, 2023).

B. Profanity Words on Multilingual Speakers

The study of profanity among multilingual speakers reveals complex interrelationships among language, culture, and emotional expression. One key finding is that swear words convey varying levels of emotional weight depending on the speaker's linguistic proficiency. Research indicates that first-language (L1) swearing elicits a stronger emotional response compared to second-language (L2) swear words. Fägersten et al. demonstrate that first-language swear words are perceived as more taboo and powerful than their L2 counterparts, particularly within bilingual and multilingual contexts. Furthermore, the emotional impacts and cultural perceptions of swearing significantly differ based on a speaker's language familiarity; this phenomenon underscores a deeper sociolinguistic engagement with both L1 and additional languages (Coats, 2021; Fägersten & Bednarek, 2022).

The phonetic structure of profanity also plays a critical role in cross-linguistic swearing. Lev-Ari and McKay conducted research indicating that certain phonemic patterns are universally accepted in the formation of swear words. They found that the absence of approximants in swearing across languages makes certain words less likely to be recognized as swear words by native speakers of different languages, suggesting deeper cognitive and societal functions tied to swearing (Lev-Ari & McKay, 2023). This potential universality of phonetic characteristics points to inherent patterns that could facilitate mutual understanding among multilingual speakers.

Moreover, the use of profanity in social media platforms has introduced innovative forms of swearing that transcend traditional linguistic boundaries. Zhu's research highlights the creative manipulation of language by Chinese netizens, who engage in translanguaging—utilizing a blend of languages in their swearing. This innovative linguistic approach reflects cultural attitudes towards identity and playfulness against a backdrop of societal tensions, such as those arising from anti-Chinese sentiments during the COVID-19 pandemic (Zhu, 2020).

The process of translating swear words presents further challenges and insights into how multilingual speakers navigate the emotional and cultural nuances embedded in profanity. Studies on subtitle translation, such as those by Majeed and Saideen, reflect diverse strategies including substitution, deletion, or literal translation, thereby illuminating how cultural contexts and sociopragmatic considerations complicate swearing in multilingual settings (Majeed, 2023; Saideen et al., 2024). The operational choices made during translation often aim to balance the preservation of the original emotional weight and the cultural appropriateness of the content.

In conclusion, exploring profanity among multilingual speakers necessitates an understanding of the emotional weight of swear words across languages, the phonetic attributes that define their universality, innovative linguistic practices on various platforms, and the complexities of translation. These aspects highlight the multifaceted nature of swearing, rooting it firmly in both individual experience and cultural context.

Based on the aforementioned literature review, this proposal aimed to provide new and profound insight, and investigate the most frequent profanity words used, the use of profanity words among Gen-Z and Millennials in multilingual contexts, and the reasons

why they use particular profanity words, and lastly to investigate the connection between profanity practices within sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics patterns.

METHOD

This research collected the data to assist in elaborating all three research questions by using open-ended survey through google forms mailing list to determine the respondents' use of profanity words and its' reasons for using profanity words, and sociolinguistics-psycholinguistics aspects. The open-ended questionnaire was categorized into six thematic sections aligned with the research questions. Section 1 addressed Research Question 1 by eliciting commonly used profanity vocabularies or terminologies across multilingual contexts. Section 2 explores motivational factors related to profanity usage and dealt with Research Question 2. Section 3 investigated sociolinguistics dynamics which formed the notion of Research Question 3. Meanwhile, Section 4, 5, and 6 provide supporting and elaborative data which enable deep and thorough interpretation of generational, cultural, and socio-cultural influences on profanity practices.

The questionnaire was a structured questionnaire with open-ended questions because a structured questionnaire provided particular framework for reliability and comparability in responses, and the open-ended questions assisted the respondents to open-up their opinions and experiences (Alanazi, 2018). This notion benefitted this research since it assisted the researchers greatly in collecting in-depth perspectives on proposed issue (Lederman et al., 2002). Afterwards, the researchers employed Document Analysis to investigate this issue in a rich and thorough manner, thus, since the result of the open-ended questionnaires were detailed and text-rich the researchers regarded the result as textual data. This notion was concluded by the researchers due to the nature of document analysis in qualitative focus which able to provide a broad understanding on how socio-cultural phenomena were shaped by historical context and current societal dynamics (Khamdan & Wiharyani, 2024; Marukhovska-Kartunova et al., 2024)

A. Type of Research

This study applied a descriptive qualitative research design, aiming to interpret the research domains as phenomena. To address all of the research questions, the initial procedure involved distributing questionnaires via Google Form to access a broader audience, while the third research question may require deeper contextual data, the researchers already mentioned several variables in the questionnaire to deal with sociolinguistics features. Consequently, all data in this upcoming research were qualitative in nature.

B. Research Subjects

This study utilized purposive sampling and the participants were selected based on the specific characteristics related to the research objectives as the following requirements: (1) Millennials (born 1980-1994), and/or Generation Z (born 1995-2012), (2) experienced learning in multilinguals classroom. The respondents consisted of 20 respondents which were classified as Gen-Z university students majoring in English from various universities and origins, and 9 respondents were Millennials lecturers majoring in English department. These participants were involved because they represented multilingual individuals which had been academically exposed to English and made them suitable regarding intergenerational distinction of language use. The researcher underlined that although the total number of the respondents were relatively

small, but the use of purposive sampling ensured that all participants met specific criteria to the research objectives, especially generational classification and multilingual academic experience. In addition, the unequal distribution between two generations reflected differences in participant availability, especially among Millennial lecturers who met the multilingual and professional requirements. Nevertheless, the selected Millennials participants had contributed substantial linguistics prowess which enabled profound comparison between these generations. Thus, the study further examined profanity usage, contextual and motivational aspects within and across generational groups. Therefore, the findings were aimed to offer explorative insights that provide initial understanding of intergenerational distinctions in profanity usage among multilingual English users.

C. Research Procedure

The researchers utilized the techniques and instrument in collecting the data by using questionnaires. The procedure for data collection that was proposed to answer the research questions was by distributing open-ended questionnaires through Google Form to reach wide-ranging respondents confirming about the following aspects; the participants' details and contacts, popularity of profanity words, reasons for uttering profanity words, sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics interactions, intergenerational perspectives, and cultural and linguistic dynamics. The questionnaire was disseminated by using mailing list, and social media platforms. Whilst majority the Gen-Z respondents were university students from various universities in Malang, and the majority of Millennials respondents were varied; university lecturers at UMM, and English instructors from Language Courses in Malang.

The use of self-reported questionnaire may propose socio-cultural bias due the sensitivity of the proposed topic in various cultural contexts. Hence, participants may subconsciously avert or moderate their responses with acceptable social-conventions. However, the use of open-ended questionnaires distributed through an online platform was meant to reduce the aforementioned bias because the respondents would have extra privacy and flexibility in answering sensitive questions. The design of the questionnaire offered anonymity and confidentiality for the participants to disclose their identifiable personal information. Therefore, the respondents were encouraged to provide honest response and to minimize evaluative pressure. However, it could be inferred that certain degree of responses might contain bias, consequently, the findings should be interpreted as the perceived patterns of profanity usage rather than behavioral responses.

Further, the research questions were adapted and further divided into several sections based on the proposed aforementioned research questions (Appendix 1). First, popularity of profanity words (question 1-3) was determined as the initial screening where the respondents required to fill several aspects to assist in answering the first research questions (Dobrushina, 2024; Morse, 2023). Second, the reasons for uttering profanity words (question 4-6) were determined to answer the second research questions (Dobrushina, 2024). Third, sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics interactions (question 7-18) were required for the respondents to assist in answering the reflection of socio-cultural and linguistics dynamics in profanity words usage among these two generations under the paradigm of Document Analysis (Auriemma, 2024; Couper-Kuhlen, 2021; Fossland et al., 2024; Morse, 2023).

The researchers collected the data by distributing the questionnaire to university students, alumni, and fellow researchers through google form to reach wider Gen-Z and Millennials

The completion of data collection will lead the researcher to data analysis. The first and second research questions will be answered based on the result of questionnaires. In addition, to answer the third research question, as well as to constitute deeper and better insight regarding the proposed issues, the researcher employed document analysis as an essential aspect to reveal socio-cultural framework within human interactions(Astudillo, 2025; Esmeraldo, 2024).

The researchers discovered several aspects to answer the proposed research questions; the most common profanity words used by both multilingual generations, the reasons for using profanity words by both multilingual generations, and discover the significance of profanity practices to sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics aspects.

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thoughts by verbalizing the profane words. Some of the Gen-Z respondents clearly expressed that they deliberately use profanity words to show their emotional state such as anger, disappointment with something or someone. They also said that they deliberately outspokenly use profanity words to intimidate their interlocutors. Another response stated that due to their social upbringing they are required to use profanity words and it became a habit for them, in other words a FOMO (Fear of Missing out). Unless they were with their peers or in a certain social setting that do not require appropriate choice of words. One of the respondents also bluntly said that he did not have specific urge but due to emotional expression and it became a habit, some respondents even said that the use of profanity words was just a practical joke between close friends. A female respondent here also added that using profanity words were considered a standard norm among their peers, and sometimes she felt FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) if she did not use profane words. Although there were several respondents who clearly contradicts that by saying that they were never using profanity words in any occasion out of habits, and that was how their parents raise them. Additionally, since Gen-Z also known as digital natives, the respondents also thought that since majority of their life already in touch with social media so it would not be a surprised if they already familiar with the use of profanity words. Some of the Gen-Z respondents also added that the use of social media and/or their social-upbringing actually have normalized the use of profanity words in digital worlds, and it became a habit when they meet in real-world. Some of the respondents even said that when playing online games with embedded voice chat-bot within the games, and having social interactions in social media they happen to use profanity words. Lack of attention from adults (parental supervision) when using gadget or social media from early age also noted as one of their responses, notably lack of intervention or guidance regarding dictions related to profanity words uttered by social media influencers or others alike. Additionally, sometimes they did not have reveal their real identity in social media, so they would not receive any repercussions for any profanity words they used in it. Surprisingly, the Gen-Z mentioned that the use of profanity words among their peers were not only used for expressing their anger, but also to show something that amuse or excite them. One of the respondents said that nowadays when Gen-Z socializing at one place they also tend to use profanity words such as *cuk* to show something that amuse them. Another one also stated that they use it when they are among friends that considered having close-bond. However, some of Gen-Z respondents also mentioned that they were wary of the use of profanity words in family settings, since their parents were quite strict about it.

Lastly, the researchers discovered that profanity practices among millennials and Gen-Z offer significant impact to sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics aspects. More importantly on mapping the shifting between generations in these two respective aspects. The Millennials' respondents stated that the use of profanity back in the days were deemed inappropriate and did not represent their cultural and religious norms. The elder generations also stated that the use of profanity had become a standard norm, or perceived as normal utterance to say, even they had some repercussion from their elder if they happened to use it. Some of the respondents who are now working as educators even said that when they were still studying, they would get reprimanded by their parents and teacher, and it remains the same for them that they would reprimand their students who happen to utter profanity words. Since most of the millennial's respondents are already a parent, they would not tolerate such actions and would reprimand their kids if they happen to use profanity words since it was against local norms and religious belief as Muslim. However, there was one respondent who were growing up in Gorontalo and

said that the use of profanity was regarded as a means of expressing anger although it was against local wisdom.

The Millennials also mentioned that since they were not growing up surrounded by social media unlike Gen-Z, so they were surprised by the evolution and influenced of social media influencers to the use of profanity among Gen-Z lately. Some respondents expressed that it was normal for kids nowadays to imitate profanity from online interactions, including from influencers, and they thought there was a change of social norms regarding the use of profanity words. They also stated that lack of parental supervision about the use of social media was one of the reasons why Gen-Z were more accustomed to use profanity words daily. Additionally, one particular respondent said that using profanity among Gen-Z was to show their cool side in front of their peers, but this respondent said that using profanity was not seen as a sign of maturity and ability to handle emotion.

The millennials perceived that using profanity might shaped others' opinions about someone regardless the fact the profanity used by Gen-Z were directly used to express their feeling of surprise or awe about something and not feeling of anger or disappointment. Here, some of the millennials said that using profanity show that he/she did not have proper education on being civilized or having proper etiquettes. Another one also added that using profanity might influence their religious, social, and politeness values of certain individuals in the future. Including normalizing profanity which originally seen as something taboo if people keep on using it as a means of part of normal social interactions.

On the opposite side, partial of the Gen-Z as the younger generations tend to think that profanity words were already seen as a normal thing to do on daily basis to represent close-bond between them, but the rest said that it was still considered inappropriate and against their cultural and religious upbringing. Some of the Gen-Z respondents even stated that profanity words were no longer seen as taboo in any public places, even surprisingly they use it to show feeling of surprise or awe. Then, they believed it transformed into normal occurrences and for the conservatives Gen-Z who were not saying them would be seen as weird or as anomalies. Surprisingly, one of the Gen-Z said that they even use profanity which originally from English language to be imbued into conversation in *bahasa Indonesia* or local dialect since they think that the profanity level was milder compare to the local ones. However, not all of them on the same page, some of the respondents said that since their family highly values politeness and local wisdoms including avoid using profanity words.

The younger generations also believed that lack of parental supervision on social media and online games had massive influence on the Gen-Z mindset that the utterances mentioned by said influencers were the standard norms and it was okay to use them expressively on daily basis. Profanity words were initially thought as offensive words, and due to the absence or lack of parental supervision, lately profanity had seen as normal occurrences or as a form of joke, said one of the Gen-Z. Several respondents even added that normalization of profanity words in social media also indicated a shifting linguistics phenomenon in a globalized world. They also said that these occurrences also represent how verbal expression had transformed into something less formal to accommodate direct and expressive communicative style among Gen-Z.

Lastly, the Gen-Z also added some of them still thought that by using profanity words they would still receive repercussion such as people would judge them and afraid of labelled as illiterate and uncivilized people. Therefore, some of the Gen-Z were wary of tarnishing their

images and avoid using profanity words. Surprisingly, since social media's characteristics allow the users to be totally anonymous, the Gen-Z were not that afraid of repercussion for any profanity or online activities that they had done. However, there were also some of the Gen-Z who said that using profanity considered okay since it was just their way to express their emotional state and not to provoke others.

Based on the previous premises in this Result and Discussion section, the researchers well-argued that there were several aspects that need to be highlighted; first the most dominant profanity words for both generations, the reasons for using specific profanity words, and sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics dimension of profanity words under the DRA's paradigm.

First, millennials tend to use well-known profanity words that had been labelled as part of socio-language interaction in daily context (Nye & Ferreira, 2017; Wiraatmaja & Sabgini, 2024), namely *fuck*. This particular word had been known as one of the most prevalent profanity terminologies in English language since it had earned flexibility to be used in wide array of context (Ibnus, 2021; Wiguna et al., 2024). It also served as emotional catharsis, attention-grabbing, dramatic expression as well embody a status as a cultural artifact that closely associated with expressing various feelings such as frustration, and surprise (Fägersten & Bednarek, 2022; Husain et al., 2023; Wiguna et al., 2024; Wiraatmaja & Sabgini, 2024). This term even has garnered much attention in social media and had become not only tolerated but embrace as an authentic mode of expression (Adams, 2025). On the other hand, the Gen-Z had placed *Jancok*, a profanity word that originated from Javanese culture, as the most dominant profanity words among Gen-Z. This term, along with its variant *Cok*, possessed significant status as one of the most popular profanity words in Indonesia. The affinity for this distinctly Javanese term had echoed beyond regional boundaries, and seen as a testament to Javanese cultural hegemony in Indonesia ((Syafuruddin et al., 2021), including to indicate solidarity and distinctive quality among groups, as well as establishing their status within Indonesian communities (Suganda et al., 2022; Wibowo, 2020). This particular terminology also had been long known as a Javanese vernacular in Surabayan community in East Java that served to express strong emotion such as humor, annoyance, surprise, shock, and disbelief especially in informal settings (Asria Sadda et al., 2022; Nofendralova & Sartini, 2024; Suganda et al., 2022; Wibowo, 2020). Lastly, using profanity in their native or L1 was deemed more satisfying since it possessed deeper ingrained cultural and emotional significance to its' users (Beers Fägersten et al., 2024; Huang & Nicoladis, 2020)

Secondly, both Millennials and Gen-Z presented various reasons for using profanity words which fashioned its usage in different public and social contexts. Millennials' stance on profanity was driven by emotional triggers such as anger, shock, and frustration (Asria Sadda et al., 2022; Febriyatko et al., 2023; Ibnus, 2021; Suganda et al., 2022; Wibowo, 2020; Wiguna et al., 2024). These group of people also believed that such language was inappropriate in family and formal settings (Coats, 2021; Solntseva & Kuzmenko, 2024). Since the millennials' respondents were already adults with academic and professional achievements, they were consciously aware by avoiding using profanity words to maintain their social decorum and reflect maturity, with many of the respondents expressing their importance as role models, either as parents or educators (Abu Darda et al., 2023; Coats, 2021; Degn et al., 2024; Husain et al., 2023; M. Liu, 2022). They also expressed that since they already becoming a parent, family holds significant role in discouraging profanity, although peer interaction outside family settings often normalized this notion among Gen-Z (E. A. & I. E., 2025; Nugroho et al., 2023). Several respondents also emphasized the limited usage or influence of social media during their upbringing reduced the

online exposure as well compared to younger generations (ABUŞOĞLU & BALCI AYDOĞAN, 2022; Esau, 2021). In contrast, Gen-z dominantly stemmed from emotional expression, online and peer influences. Some of them even admitted to using it habitually, as a form of intimidation, or as a joke among close-friends in various context, frequently on social media platforms where it served as a primary tool among Gen-Z to build sense of community (Anne C. Sedanza et al., 2023; Kandiawan, 2022; Puspita & Ardianto, 2024). As there was differing approaches to profanity words in multilingual context, where the intent of profanity might range from aggressive expression to humor depending on the context (Teghipco et al., 2023). Notable contributing factors that urged them to use profanity words were dominantly due to FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) since they could be branded as an outcast among their peers, and due to normalization of profanity usage through various social media platform and online gaming which has chat-bot which made online communication with various users much easier (Kabbaro et al., 2025; Lightfoot et al., 2022; Nugroho et al., 2023). Unsupervised or lack of parental advisory also often led to negative influence from social media influencers (Douglas et al., 2023; Smout et al., 2021) and excessive use of gaming experiences and communication behavior within games (Charmaraman et al., 2020) contributed significantly to unfiltered and aggressive usage (Abi-Jaoude et al., 2020; Noori et al., 2023) of profanity words among youth. While some of the Gen-Z deliberately avoid profanity due to strict family values, the others might use it casually to express amusement or closeness between peers (Ebohon et al., 2021). Lastly, the drawbacks of online interaction nowadays also able their users, including Gen-Z, to be totally anonymous without fear of judgment or repercussion from others (MUZAMMIL et al., 2020), thus, they were able to unleashed themselves digitally using profanity without having to worry about being reprimanded one day.

Thirdly, the researchers discovered that profanity practices among Millennials and Gen-Z significantly impact sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics dynamics in mapping generational shifts. Within the framework of sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics patterns, both of these generations perceived profanity as something inappropriate and often clashed against cultural and religious values.

In a sociolinguistics framework, profanity had significant impact in public perceptions in the realm of marketing studies (Fjelldal et al., 2022), thus, millennials believed that the use of profanity deemed unfit and heavily impact individual behaviors and attitudes since they would have faced backlash and repercussion during their formative years under parental and pedagogic oversight (Dalessandro, 2022; Zachara-Szymańska, 2021). In the context of language practices, profane language was subject to greater social scrutiny as well (Coats, 2021). Therefore, in order to maintain the social and cultural convention that were instilled to the majority of the respondents who are educators during childhood (Imam Tabroni & Lani Rahmawati, 2021; Sya'bana et al., 2024), as role model they also must pass on the moral and ethical characters embedded to them regarding the use of respectful choice of words to their own biological children and students (Maolana, 2024; Rusdi et al., 2023; Subairi, 2024). The millennials also mentioned that since social media were not present until they were teenagers or some of them young adults, they were already instilled enough wisdom and well-aware of the pro and cons of using social media (Chikweche et al., 2024; Djamen et al., 2022; Motta & R., 2023; Prihananto et al., 2022) Including the broader implication of the social media to mental health and awareness of digital footprints (Djamen et al., 2022; Kaur & Kumar, 2022; Oksa et al., 2021). Surprisingly, they also highlighted on how the communicative language used on social media, that they initially used back in the days, were evolving rapidly and they even had to dig deeper

to get what the languages used by Gen-Z meant (Sophomore Talle Vacalares et al., 2023; Vickery, 2023). This linguistic gap emerged due to how social media had to be tailored to resonate with Gen-Z (Martaningrat & Kurniawan, 2024; Sohail et al., 2020), including how the language on social media engagements had shifted to the dynamic communication of Gen-Z since language reflects cultural environments where it emerged (Sophomore Talle Vacalares et al., 2023). On the other hand, majority of the Gen-Z tend to believe that profanity words usage nowadays was seen as a normal and playful aspect within their communicative behavior (Anne C. Sedanza et al., 2023; E. A. & I. E., 2025; Nugroho et al., 2023). Especially if they were already having close relationships with their peers and understood that it was not meant to harass their peers (Kandiawan, 2022; Puspita & Ardianto, 2024). Although there were minority of the Gen-Z who were still expressing that the use of profanity words still thought as inappropriate since their parents were upholding conservatives' values (Rathus & Watson, 2021), and quite strict during their formative years, especially during cultural and religious upbringing (Imam Tabroni & Lani Rahmawati, 2021; Maolana, 2024; Smith-Christmas, 2014; Sya'bana et al., 2024).

Within the psycholinguistics framework, the researchers perceived that profanity also had different approach since it can serve as a means of emotional catharsis (Wiraatmaja & Sabgini, 2024), although majority of the millennials in this research delivered the notions that profanity word was commonly used when they were under emotional upheaval (Pamungkas et al., 2023) and under certain state of mind such as stress, agony, or surprised (Dubey, 2020; Husain et al., 2023). Within the framework of socializing with others they also preferred not to use profanity words if not required to do so especially in formal or academic settings (Northcott et al., 2022; Seraj et al., 2021), since they thought that it might shape others' opinion about them (Pamungkas et al., 2023). Based on the previous premises within this framework, the cognitive reactions and language processing of the millennial's perceptions, as digital pioneers, were differed to Gen-Z since they witnessed firsthand the transition from traditional forms of communication during their formative years to the rise of internet and social media (Devina, 2022; Jhavar et al., 2023), and the exposure was less intense compare to the early exposure among Gen-Z which greatly influenced their social interactions (Jhavar et al., 2023; Schapsis et al., 2025; Trang et al., 2024). On the opposite, the Gen-Z clearly stated that using profanity nowadays seen as a normal thing to do and was part of their youth culture which favor directness and immediacy in language use as long as it was not directed to harass or confront others (Kandiawan, 2022; Schapsis et al., 2025), and as a means to express their emotional state which reinforces their collective identity (Kandiawan, 2022; Yağmur, 2024). This notion was expressed by the Gen-Z due to the absence or lack of parental supervision when they were in touch with digital cultures (Medez & Gayoles, 2021), notably when they were interacting using specific feature to let them to talk to each other using social media (Mude & Undale, 2023), watching social media influencers (Hidayat et al., 2023; Pradhan et al., 2023), and playing online games (Mude & Undale, 2023). Thus, the permissiveness in this kind of parenting style resulted to certain situation where profanity becomes a standard norm and celebrated among Gen-Z (Mansha & Soumya, 2024). Therefore, since they were exposed to these digital platforms on daily basis, they thought of using profanity as the standard norms (Hidayat et al., 2023; Nugroho et al., 2023). Although they were still wary of repercussion from others around them, several respondents also emphasized it became a standard norm when socializing, and for those who were not using profanity words would be deemed as an outcast (Nugroho et al., 2023). However, the Gen-Z were still minding the appropriateness regarding the usage of profanity based on the surrounding social norms and expectations (Hidayat et al., 2023; Nugroho et al., 2023).

The result of this research merges sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics perspectives to explore profanity use among two generations; Millennials and Gen-Z. Sociolinguistically, profanity reflects the ingrained cultural norms, religious values, and generational identity. Here, millennials serve as the linguistics gatekeeper who are trying to bridge their previous wisdom taught by their parents with newly-acquired values brought by Gen-z. Whilst the Gen-Z's stance on profanity marks rebellion and solidarity which drawn closely to popular medias and peer influences. Language in this context displays group identity and social conformity, variation, generational identity, and cultural tension. Psycholinguistically, the focus shifts to how individuals within these two generations perceive and emotionally process profanity usage. Language choices between them reflect internalized social norms, emotional regulation and cognitive responses. Hence, it results on how profanity has not only regarded as the symbol of linguistics expression, but also reflects personal experiences, emotional needs, and the rigorous conflict between expression and acceptability.

CONCLUSION

This research concluded that the profanity use among Millennials and Gen-Z reflects both sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics paradigm. Both of these generations also found to be familiar with both popular profanity words *fuck*, and *jancok* (or its' variant *cok*). Millennials use "fuck" as emotional expression and emotional impact which reflected its' cultural flexibility and acceptance. On the other hand, Gen-Z favored "jancok" a Javanese profanity symbolizing solidarity and identity, as well as offering deeper emotional satisfaction due to its' strong cultural and personal significance. Based on that premises, sociolinguistically, profanity words signified cultural norms, generational identity and the tension between tradition and modern values. As millennials acted as the linguistics gatekeepers, Gen-Z utilized profanity to exhibit rebellion and solidarity which greatly influenced by media and peers alike. Psycholinguistically, profanity disclosed how individuals perceived language emotionally and cognitively, and how to balance these profane expressions with social norms. Hence, profanity served not only as linguistics tools but also as the reflections of personal experience, emotional regulation, and the ongoing negotiation between expression and social appropriateness. However, the researchers here also keen to highlight that this research possesses few limitations which could be investigated deeper for the upcoming research; (1) this research has not classified the respondents based on their respective gender, since male deemed to utilize profanity in greater frequencies than their female counterparts for both generations (Coats, 2021), (2) this research was only conducted to a small number of Millennials and Gen-Z in Indonesia due to the sensitivity of the topic. Thus, the researchers suggest that exploring this limitation would surely provide a deeper and thorough analysis about this sensitive topic.

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APPENDICES:

Questionnaires

Demographic Information

- 1) Millennials (born 1980-1994), and/or Generation Z (born 1995-2012),
- (2) experienced learning in multilinguals classroom

List of Questions

Section 1: Popularity of Profanity Words

1. What are 5 profanity words you most frequently use or hear others use?
2. Are there any specific profanity words that are unique only to your region or cultural background?
3. How would you describe the most noticeable changes in the profanity words you encounter today compared to a few years ago?

Section 2: Reasons for Uttering Profanity Words

4. What motivates you or others to use profanity in daily conversations?
5. Are there situations where you avoid using profanity? Why?
6. How does your choice of profanity change when speaking in different languages or dialects?

Section 3: Sociolinguistic and Psycholinguistic Interactions

7. How does using profanity in one language differ from using it in another (e.g., native vs. second language)?
8. How do social settings (e.g., family, friends, workplace) influence your use of profanity?
9. Do you feel that using profanity impacts how others perceive you? If so, how?

Section 4: Intergenerational Perspectives

10. What differences do you notice in how younger and older generations use profanity words?
11. How do you think social media or online platforms have affected the use of profanity words across generations?
12. In your opinion, what factors contribute to the differences in profanity usage between Generation Z and Millennials?

Section 5: Cultural and Linguistic Dynamics

13. How do cultural norms in your community influence attitudes toward profanity usage?
14. Are there any specific profanity words that carry different meanings or levels of offensiveness in different languages or cultures you know?
15. Do you believe using profanity can ever be seen as a positive form of expression? Why or why not?

Section 6: Additional Insights

16. How do you think the use of profanity reflects broader cultural or linguistic changes in society?
17. Are there any specific examples of how you've seen profanity evolve in your community or social circle?
18. What do you think are the potential benefits or drawbacks of studying profanity as part of sociolinguistic research?

