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IT'S COCACOLASTIC, BRO!: MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF POLISH GEN Z LANGUAGE

IT'S COCACOLASTIC, BRO!: ANALIZA MORFOLOGICZNA JĘZYKA POKOLENIA Z W POLSCE

Abstract: This article explores the dynamic evolution of language within Generation Z, focusing particularly on the impact of social media and digital communication on linguistic practices among Polish youth. The study examines the morphological aspects of Gen Z slang, including acronyms, clippings, borrowings, derivations, and compound formations. Through a comprehensive analysis of linguistic data collected from online repositories, the study uncovers recurring morphological processes and sheds light on the underlying motivations and cultural influences driving language change within this demographic. Findings reveal Polish Generation Z's creativity, and global connectivity in shaping linguistic norms and expressions. The study emphasizes the dynamic nature of language evolution within digital contexts, highlighting the role of younger generations as agents of linguistic innovation. This study contributes to the understanding of contemporary language dynamics and offers valuable insights into the evolving landscape of human communication in the digital age, specifically within Polish context.

Keywords: Gen Z, social media, morphology, language change

Abstrakt: Niniejszy artykuł stanowi próbę zbadania języka pokolenia Z w Polsce, skupiając się na wpływie mediów społecznościowych i komunikacji cyfrowej na transformacje w sferze języka. Badaniu poddano morfologiczne aspekty slangu pokolenia Z, w tym skrótowce, ucięcia, derywacje czy kompozycje. W celu wyodrębnienia i pełniejszego zrozumienia znaczenia badanego materiału językowego jako metodę badawczą zastosowano analizę jakościową. Analiza ta ujawniła powtarzające się procesy morfologiczne oraz przyczyny zmian językowych wśród pokolenia Z w Polsce. Wyniki analizy ukazały nie tylko kreatywność językową tego pokolenia, ale także wpływ kultury globalnej na kształtowanie norm językowych. Badanie materiału językowego potwierdziło również dynamiczną naturę ewolucji języka oraz rolę pokolenia Z w kształtowaniu języka polskiego. W rezultacie niniejsza analiza przyczynia się do głębszego zrozumienia współczesnej dynamiki językowej i dostarcza istotnych wniosków na temat zmieniającego się krajobrazu ludzkiej komunikacji w erze cyfrowej w Polsce.

Słowa kluczowe: pokolenie Z, media społecznościowe, morfologia, ewolucja języka

1. Introduction

Language is a dynamic and ever-evolving aspect of human communication, reflecting the cultural, social, and technological changes within societies and across different generations (Crystal, 2010). Across the annals of history, language has undergone continuous evolution, shaped by societal, technological, and cultural shifts. Each generation leaves its mark on language, contributing to the gradual transformation of linguistic norms, vocabulary, and syntax. From the archaic dialects of antiquity to the vernacular expressions of contemporary times, language change is a testament to the dynamic nature of human communication.

With the rise of social media platforms and the prevalence of digital communication, language evolution has accelerated, particularly among younger generations. Generation Z, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, has embraced social media as a primary mode of interaction, shaping their linguistic expressions in profound ways. The emergence of Generation Z marks a pivotal moment in linguistic evolution, particularly within the realm of social media. Generation Z, born into a world of rapid technological advancements and digital connectivity, has become synonymous with innovation, creativity, and adaptability in communication. This generation's unique linguistic practices, influenced by their digital upbringing and extensive use of social media platforms, have contributed to profound shifts in language use and evolution (Sidorcuka, Chesnovicka, 2017, p. 809).

As the first digital natives, Generation Z has pioneered linguistic innovations that transcend traditional boundaries of communication. Emojis, memes, hashtags, and abbreviations have become integral components of Generation Z's linguistic repertoire, facilitating nuanced expression, emotional conveyance, and cultural exchange in digital spaces. Social media platforms have provided Generation Z with unprecedented avenues for communication, expression, and interaction. From the concise confines of a tweet to the visual storytelling of Instagram stories, social media offers a diverse array of linguistic mediums through which Generation Z can shape and redefine language norms.

This article discusses changes in contemporary Polish language as influenced by Generation Z. As Polish digital natives engage with global social media trends and integrate them into their local context, they contribute to the evolution of Polish language. The influence of English, the creative use of compounding, and the adaptation of international slang into Polish demonstrate the dynamic interplay between global digital culture and local linguistic identity. By exploring these changes, we can better understand how Generation Z in Poland is both shaping and being shaped by the broader currents of linguistic innovation and digital communication.

2. Polish morphology – an overview

Polish morphology is a complex and dynamic field that encompasses a wide range of phenomena including inflection, derivation, compounding, and lexical blending. The works of scholars such as Dyszak (2019), Grzegorczykowa and Puzynina (1998), Konieczna (2012) and Nagórko (2016) provide a comprehensive overview of the intricacies of Polish word formation and its evolution under the influence of internationalization.

Polish, as an inflectional language, exhibits a notable degree of morphological complexity, with words undergoing various modifications to convey grammatical functions such as case, number, gender, tense, aspect, mood, and voice. This characteristic is particularly evident in the declension of nouns and the conjugation of verbs. In their seminal work *Rzeczownik*, part of the larger volume *Gramatyka współczesnego języka polskiego. Morfologia*, Grzegorczykowa and Puzynina (1998) provide an exhaustive analysis of noun morphology. They delineate the diverse declension patterns for nouns, which differ according to gender and case. The meticulous examination by Grzegorczykowa and Puzynina (1998, pp. 389–468) underscores the intricate and rich nature of Polish as an inflectional language. Their scholarly work offers profound insights into the structure and regulatory principles governing noun inflection in Polish.

Derivational morphology in Polish involves creating new words by adding prefixes, suffixes, and infixes to base words. Nagórko (2016) in her contribution to the *Word-formation: An international handbook of the languages of Europe* provides insights into the productivity of derivational processes in Polish. Nagórko (2016, pp. 2831–2852) asserts that word-formation is the primary means of expanding the Polish vocabulary, surpassing other possibilities like lexical borrowings, neosemantisation, which includes processes like metaphorisation (e.g. rękaw "sleeve" becoming "corridor to the plane"). Nagórko's work sheds light on the mechanisms through which new words are created, such as the integration of international elements, terminologisation, and the specialization of suffixes. This understanding is essential for linguists studying the processes of language change and the impact of globalization on Polish. By examining the evolution of word formation, Nagórko's research contributes to the historical and cultural understanding of the Polish language. It reveals how historical events, cultural changes, and external influences shape the language over time.

Konieczna (2012) explores lexical blending in Polish in her chapter in *Crosslinguistic perspectives on lexical blending*. In her examination of lexical blending in Polish, Ewa Konieczna (2012) elucidates that such blending was exceedingly rare prior to the influence of the English language on Slavic languages, an influence that began in the 1960s and became markedly more pronounced following the conclusion of the Cold War. Drawing on the work of Ralli and Xydopoulos, Konieczna's study compiles 234 blends from contemporary Polish, the majority of which are nonce-formations. Her research meticulously details the principal formal and se-

mantic characteristics of these blends. Of particular interest is her observation that, in Polish, the overlapping segments of source words are significantly associated with pejorative connotations. Additionally, she identifies a notable subtype of graphic blends – those that are discernible only through written representation, such as przeNIKanie. The creation of hybrid terms through blending reflects the dynamic and evolving nature of Polish, highlighting its ability to absorb and adapt foreign elements while maintaining its own linguistic identity. This process of blending not only enriches the Polish lexicon but also showcases the creativity and adaptability of Polish speakers in navigating a globalized linguistic landscape.

Dyszak (2019) discusses the phenomena of word-formation and adaptation in the context of "najmłodsza polszczyzna" (the youngest Polish), focusing on how contemporary Polish adapts to new realities. This involves the integration of loanwords and the creation of neologisms through processes like blending, borrowing, and calquing. Dyszak highlights how modern Polish evolves rapidly, incorporating terms from technology, science, and popular culture to keep up with global developments (Dyszak, 2019, pp. 18–31).

The works of Grzegorczykowa and Puzynina (1998), Nagórko (2016), Konieczna (2012) and Dyszak (2019) offer a comprehensive view of Polish morphology, showcasing how words are built and modified to convey precise meanings and grammatical functions. Their research underscores the dynamic nature of Polish, where morphology not only follows systematic rules but also allows for creativity and adaptation. By studying these processes, they have significantly enhanced our understanding of Polish and contributed to the broader field of linguistic morphology, demonstrating how languages evolve and adapt through their morphological structures.

3. Research method

This article employs a content analysis to identify and analyze the content and structure of Polish Gen Z's posts. This research method offers a comprehensive approach to assessing the construction and linguistic conventions of Polish Gen Z language, facilitating a thorough evaluation of its composition and underlying rules. By focusing specifically on the language used by Polish Gen Z, this study aims to uncover unique linguistic patterns and cultural influences that shape their communication. Additionally, the analysis provides insights into how digital communication platforms impact language evolution within this demographic, highlighting both the creativity and innovation inherent in their online interactions.

Multiple nuanced definitions of content analysis exist, reflecting its historical development. Content analysis is characterized as a systematic and replicable method used to condense large volumes of text into fewer content categories through the application of explicit coding rules (Berelson, 1952; Weber, 1990). Holsti (1969, p. 14) provides

a comprehensive definition of content analysis as "any method aimed at drawing inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specific attributes within messages". Krippendorff (2004, p. 18) defines content analysis as a research methodology used to derive replicable and valid conclusions from textual or other meaningful data.

It needs to be noted that employing content analysis as a research method in this article facilitates identification of linguistic trends and shifts within Gen Z language over time. By analyzing a corpus of texts, the evolution of vocabulary and slang terms can be tracked, providing insight into the dynamics of language change within this demographic. In addition, content analysis helps examine the unique communication practices and conventions employed by Gen Z in digital environments, including the use of acronyms, providing insights into their digital literacy and online interaction styles.

4. Mode of data presentation

This study employs the framework matrix, a method for summarizing and analyzing qualitative data using a table format of rows and columns. This approach allows for the systematic organization and categorization of data by themes (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, Redwood, 2013). The research tool will feature tables named after different morphological structures or word formation processes relevant to Gen Z slang. Each table will consist of columns, with the first column containing numerical identifiers. The subsequent columns will list Polish Gen Z slang words, with each word accompanied by an explanation in the last column detailing its meaning. Subsequently, each table will be accompanied by a discussion that outlines the particular morphological structures and how the slang terminologies correspond to these processes.

It ought to be stressed that by categorizing Gen Z slang words according to morphological structures or word formation processes, the framework matrix helps identify recurring linguistic patterns and conventions within the data. This allows for a more detailed understanding of how Gen Z constructs and uses language in different contexts. Moreover, the framework matrix organizes qualitative data, such as Gen Z slang words, in a clear and coherent manner. This facilitates the systematic examination and comparison of linguistic patterns and trends within the data set.

5. Data collection and analysis

The corpus utilized in this study consists of a compilation of lexical-semantic Gen Z slang. Linguistic (words, phrases) and textual (definitions provided by the Gen Z users) data were sourced from various repositories, including the Youth

Word of the Year database, the Observatory of Youth Language and Culture corpus, and the dynamically updated online Slang Dictionary on Miejski.pl. The data collection encompasses 100 examples of Gen Z slang spanning from 1 January 2022 to 4 March 2024. It needs to be noted that the frequency of each word formation process was counted manually. The process of manually counting frequencies allows for real-time quality control. Any inconsistencies or ambiguities can be addressed immediately, ensuring a more reliable dataset.

The data analysis stage involved six steps to examine the word-formation processes. The initial stage involved organizing and preparing the data for analysis. Subsequently, the researcher thoroughly read through the entire dataset. Each word was then coded in the third stage according to its respective word-formation process. In the fourth stage, connections between the data based on their processes were established. Following this, the researcher outlined how the identified themes were represented in a qualitative narrative. Finally, the findings of the analysis were presented (Creswell, 2009).

6. Research questions

This study was structured around research questions designed to delve into the intricacies of Polish Gen Z language. The following research questions were considered:
(1) What are the common morphological processes observed in Gen Z slang?
(2) Are there any patterns or trends in the adoption of specific morphological processes in Gen Z slang?
(3) Does the study of Gen Z slang provide insights into broader linguistic phenomena, such as language change or creativity?

The above research questions served as the guiding framework for this study, providing a systematic approach to exploring the morphological processes inherent in Polish Gen Z slang. By addressing these questions, the study not only aims to uncover the structural characteristics of contemporary youth language but also to contribute to broader discussions on language dynamics and creativity in the digital age, specifically within the Polish cultural context.

7. Findings and discussion

The present study aligns with the comprehensive list of word formation processes outlined by Yule (2016). This list encompasses distinct morphological processes, including compounding, coinage, borrowing, blending, clipping, back formation, conversion, acronym formation, derivation, and multiple processes. These processes

serve as the analytical framework, with this study focusing particularly on the most frequently occurring ones within the analysed corpus of Gen Z slang. Additionally, analyzing every word within the Gen Z corpus would be an overwhelming task. Consequently, this study narrows its focus to delve into the discussion of the most compelling examples. It needs to be stressed that the sentences containing Gen Z slang will be coded to enhance the readability and accessibility of the provided information. The structure of the coded sentence consists of the quote number, with "Q" representing "quote". All sentences containing the quote can be found in Appendix.

Table 1 presents the examples of acronyms found in the analysed corpus of Gen Z slang. A total of 25 acronyms, accounting for 25% of the entire corpus, were identified. This illustrates the diverse and creative language used by this generation. It may be noticed that acronyms serve as a shorthand communication tool that reflects Gen Z's digital fluency and penchant for brevity. These shorthand expressions not only facilitate efficient communication but also encode social meanings and reflect the broader cultural context in which they emerge.

Table 1. Examples of acronyms used by Gen Z

No.	Acronym	Explanation
1.	nmg [Q1]	used when speaker is unable to do something
2.	GOAT [Q2]	refers to someone or something considered the best in history, unparalleled
3.	ngl [Q3]	used to preface a candid statement; not gonna lie, to be honest
4.	NPC [Q4]	refers to a person who behaves in a non-rational, unnatural manner, often used in gaming contexts and metaphorically in other situations
5.	IJBOL [Q5]	I just burst out laughing; commonly used on Twitter
6.	FR [Q6]	used to affirm or agree with what the previous speaker said
7.	tbh [Q7]	used similarly to "ngl" to preface a candid statement

The examples of acronyms in Table 1 demonstrate the variation in capitalization among Gen Z users. This variation reflects the evolving nature of digital communication and highlights how language adapts over time. Also, the variation in spelling may be driven by a desire to emphasize, evoke emotions, or stand out in a crowded digital landscape. It may also be noticed that Gen Z-ers incorporate acronyms originating from gaming culture into their online conversations, among others. For instance, in the gaming world, NPC stands for Non-Player Character which is controlled by the game's artificial intelligence rather than by a human player. Outside of gaming, NPC is used to refer to individuals who seem to lack autonomy or critical thinking.[1] It may be assumed that this acronym reflects Gen Z's skepticism towards conformity and their desire for authenticity and individuality. NPC illustrates Gen Z's propensity to repurpose the language to criticise societal norms and assert their own unique identities. It needs to be stressed that acronyms,

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[1] NPC, https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/npc/ (13.02.2024).

such as IJBOL, serve as tools for expressing complex ideas, emotions and social commentary within Gen Z's digital communication landscape. Interestingly, the analyzed corpus revealed alternative ways of expressing emotions, such as the substitution of "UwU" [Q8] for traditional emojis. It's believed that "UwU" has gained popularity as an expression to convey a sense of cuteness or happiness, often used in response to something adorable. The "U" represents closed eyes, while "w" and "U" together resemble a smiling face. This phenomenon emphasizes the evolving nature of Internet communication, where users creatively integrate symbols and text to convey various emotions, such as affection, happiness or excitement. Additionally, the use of "UwU" may stem from a desire for uniqueness and creativity. Generation Z values authenticity and originality, and by employing alternative forms of expression like "UwU", they can differentiate themselves from mainstream communication trends and establish their own digital identity.

Acronyms such as these presented in Table 1 are used by Gen Z members for their brevity and efficiency in communication, especially in the context of digital platforms where character limits of fast-paced exchanges are common (McCulloch, 2019). Additionally, the use of acronyms can also serve a social function, allowing young people to communicate covertly or discreetly, particularly in contexts where privacy is valued. By employing acronyms familiar to their peers but potentially unfamiliar to parents or other authority figures, young people may feel a sense of autonomy and agency over their communication, establishing a form of linguistic code that fosters a sense of exclusivity within their peer groups. Indeed, research by Ćurković, Grbaš Jakšić, and Garić (2017) supports these observations, affirming that young people frequently employ acronyms not only for efficiency but also as a means of concealing or safeguarding their communication from parental scrutiny.

Another morphological process identified in the analyzed corpus is clipping. According to Yule (2016, p. 71), clipping involves "the reduction of a word to one of its parts (usually the beginning)". Table 2 below presents an example of clipping commonly used by Gen Z. A total of 16 clipped words (16% of the entire corpus) were extracted, highlighting the trends in language simplification among this generation.

Table 2. Examples of clipped words in Gen Z slang

No.	Clipping	Explanation
1.	bro [Q9]	friend, buddy, pal; used as a form of address
2.	rel [Q10]	relate to, identify with something
3.	obvi [Q11]	obviously, definitely yes

It can be assumed that clipping plays an important role in Internet communication due to its brevity and efficiency (Yule, 2016, p. 71). It allows users to convey messages quickly and concisely, which is particularly important in online interactions where character limits may apply (Benedito, 2003, p. 13). For instance,

by using "rel" instead of "relatable", individuals can quickly convey their understanding and agreement with something, adding to the efficiency and informality characteristic of online communication among Gen Z. Clipped words convey a laid-back and casual tone, which aligns with Gen Z preference for informal language styles in both online and offline interactions. The prevalence of clipped words in online communication illustrates the adaptive nature of the Polish language. It highlights how language evolves to meet the needs of its users, adapting to new contexts and technologies. For Gen Z, who navigate multiple digital platforms daily, the ability to modify and streamline language ensures that communication remains effective and relevant. Clipping not only serves a practical purpose by reducing word length but also contributes to the development of a distinct youth culture and digital identity, emphasizing linguistic creativity and adaptation to new communication technologies. This linguistic trend reflects broader social dynamics and the influence of globalized media on Polish language usage among the younger demographic (Nagórko, 2016).

Another prevalent word formation process observed in the analyzed corpus is borrowing, which serves as a means of expanding the vocabulary of a language. Borrowing is defined as the importation of linguistic elements from one system into another, a phenomenon that occurs whenever two cultures come into contact with each other over an extended period of time (Hoffer, 2002). In the context of Polish, Nagórko (2016, p. 2831) discusses borrowing as the adaptation of linguistic elements from one language to another to fulfill communicative needs and expand expressive capabilities. Grzegorczykowa and Puzynina (1998, p. 462) define borrowing as the transfer of words and structures from another language into Polish, often due to the need to express new concepts or phenomena lacking native equivalents.

Table 3 below presents examples of borrowed words used by Polish Gen Z in their online communication. A total of 37 borrowings (37%) were identified in the analyzed corpus. They demonstrate the linguistic adaptability and creativity of young Poles in navigating digital and cultural landscapes, as described by Polish linguists. Table 3 provides a view of how borrowing enriches Polish language usage among younger speakers, reflecting contemporary linguistic practices influenced by global connectivity and cultural exchange.

Based on the examples of Gen Z borrowings, it becomes evident that their slang is highly dynamic and adaptable. The presence of words like "skipnąć" and "misscliknąć" reflects the digital-centric nature of Gen Z's everyday lives. These words are directly related to online activities, such as navigating websites or using digital interfaces, highlighting the importance of technology in shaping their language. The borrowing and adaptation of words like "itemy" demonstrates Gen Z's creativity and linguistic flexibility. Gen Z members are adept at repurposing existing words or creating new ones to suit their communication needs, reflecting the innovative nature of their language use. The examples provided in Table 3

above demonstrate Gen Z members' openness to diverse influences. This reflects a globalized worldview and willingness to engage and incorporate elements from various cultural backgrounds. It needs to be stressed that Gen Z's impact on the Polish language is profound, shaping its evolution in response to contemporary technological advancements and cultural dynamics. This influence not only enriches the Polish language but also provides insights into how linguistic innovation occurs in contemporary contexts.

Table 3. Examples of borrowed words in Gen Z slang

No.	Borrowing	Explanation
1.	fejm [Q12]	fame, recognition, respect
2.	skipnąć [Q13]	to skip, to omit something
3.	missclicknąć [Q14]	to misclick, to make a mistake by clicking, to commit a blunder
4.	itemy [Q15]	items, objects
5.	rage'ować [Q16]	to rage, to get angry
6.	zmadowany [Q17]	annoyed, angry
7.	banger [Q18]	an excellent musical piece, catchy song
8.	żyć pod kamieniem [Q19]	to be out of touch with the latest trends
9.	side eye [Q20]	disapproval, lack of approval, disdain
10.	dla kontentu [Q21]	to do something for pleasure or to pass the time

"Rage'ować" is an intriguing illustration of a borrowed word that has found its way into Polish lexicon. It serves as a testament to the dynamic nature of language, emphasizing its ability to absorb and adapt to new influences. Despite being a loanword, "rage'ować" undergoes conjugation according to Polish rules, enabling integration into sentences, e.g. "Młody, co tak rage'ujesz? Luz…" [Q16]. Not only have verbs been adapted to fit Polish grammar rules, but also adjectives, such as "zmadowany" have found acceptance within the Polish language framework. It follows Polish grammar rules for adjective agreement, demonstrating how linguistic structures are adjusted to maintain coherence within the language system. It may be noticed that the verbal loanwords are relatively easily adapted into the Polish inflectional system.

Different stages of adaptation of English borrowings have been observed in the analysed corpus of Polish Gen Z slang. This includes instances such as "banger," and "missclicknąć". One possible explanation for the observed spelling variation may be related to the way, for example, the noun "banger" is transcribed (banger as /ˈbæŋ.ər/). The vowel sound /æ/ is pronounced in two alternative ways by the Gen Z members, either as /e/ or /a/. This may explain why the word has two alternative spellings. Similarly, both Batman (/ˈbætˌmæn/) and Superman (/ˈsuːpə(r)ˌmæn/) are pronounced in two different ways by Polish speakers as /ˈbatˌman/ (E: /æ/ → P: /a/) and /ˈsuːpə(r)ˌmen/ (E: /æ/ → P: /e/). The reason behind the existence of

these alternative pronunciations lies in the specific vowel sounds utilized in the initial components of the words. The vowel sound /æ/ in the "bat-" component of "Batman" and the vowel sound /e/ in "Superman" influence the pronunciation of the subsequent "-man" component in each word. This phenomenon reflects the intricacies of phonetic adaptation and pronunciation variation observed across languages and speech communities. Gen Z users endeavor to utilize their phonetic inventory to approximate the sound of borrowed words as closely as possible. This behaviour highlights the adaptability and creativity of younger generations in navigating linguistic boundaries and integrating foreign elements into their communication practices. Additionally, it underscores the dynamic nature of language evolution within digital and cross-cultural contexts.

The analysis of Gen Z slang reveals the presence of prepositional calques. One of the examples is "żyć pod kamieniem" (live under a rock) or "dla kontentu", where, the prepositions "pod" and "dla" are calques of the English "under" and "for" respectively. It may be noticed that Gen Z members "try to render the meaning of prepositions used in their English equivalents" (Otwinowska-Kasztelanic, 2000, p. 112). Otwinowska-Kasztelanic (2000) suggests that such linguistic borrowing may be driven by the need to capture the precise connotations of English prepositions within the constraints of Polish syntax and semantics. This process reflects the globalized nature of communication in the digital age. Moreover, the adaptation of English prepositions into Polish can be seen as a form of linguistic hybridity, where speakers creatively blend elements from different linguistic sources to meet their communicative needs (Pavlenko, 2005). This phenomenon underscores the dynamic nature of language, constantly evolving to accommodate new cultural and communicative practices, particularly among younger generations immersed in digital and globalized environments.

Another example of calque is "boczne oko", which serves as a potent expression of discontent or skepticism, disapproval or irony. It may be assumed that in the realm of social media discourse, where brevity is of paramount importance, "side eye" encapsulates a range of emotions in two words, making it a popular choice for users who seek to convey emotions succinctly.

In addition to borrowing, the analysis of the corpus also revealed instances of derivation, a fundamental process in language formation whereby new words are created from existing ones through the addition of affixes (Yule, 2016, p. 71). Table 4 below presents the examples of word formation processes that have been identified, with a total of 14 examples.

The examples provided above serve as compelling illustrations of the dynamic nature of language, which undergoes continuous evolution to mirror the shifting cultural landscape and the emergence of novel ideas and concepts. As language users engage in experimentation with innovative forms and expressions, they actively contribute to the ongoing evolution of linguistic norms. For instance,

"cocacolastic" emerged from a viral animated video where a child misinterpreted the word "fantastic: as a playful reference to the soft drink Fanta", responding with "cocacolastic" as a whimsical pun on "Coca-Cola". Since then, "cocacolastic" has been enthusiastically embraced by youth as a colloquial expression denoting something remarkable, marvelous, or extraordinary. The incorporation of "stupkarz" into Gen Z's lexicon also emphasizes its willingness to cross conventional boundaries, even in spelling. By intentionally misspelling words, Gen Z showcases its inclination to challenge traditional language norms. This willingness to play with spelling reflects not only a desire for linguistic creativity but also a departure from strict adherence to grammatical rules. It may be assumed that "stupkarz" not only humorously captures a specific fascination but also symbolizes Gen Z's broader cultural ethos of breaking away from linguistic constraints and embracing linguistic evolution.

Table 4. Examples of derivation processes in Gen Z slang

No.	Word formation process	Explanation
1.	cocacolastic [Q22]	fantastically, very well
2.	romantyziara [Q23]	a person with a romantic disposition, enjoying a moody atmosphere
3.	stupkarz [Q24]	humorously, someone interested in foot fetishes or pictures of another person's feet (intentional spelling error)
4.	gigachad [Q25]	an ideal person, someone admirable; someone very skilled in a particular field

In the analyzed corpus, instances of compounding have been identified. Compounding involves the process of merging two distinct words to create a unified form, as defined by Yule (2006, p. 54). Compounding in Polish involves combining two or more words to create a new word, often with an interfix or infix that connects the components. In Polish, interfixes play a significant role in the formation of compound words, serving as elements that connect the components of the compound and often influencing the meaning or structure of the word. Unlike prefixes and suffixes, which attach to the beginning or end of words respectively, interfixes are inserted between the components of a compound word, for example, "gwiazd-o-zbiór", "łam-i-strajk", "siark-o-wodór" or "mocz-y-mord-a" (Szymanek, 2017, p. 52).

The examples of compounding processes are illustrated in Table 5, showcasing how the Polish language incorporates lexical innovations through creative combinations of words. The total of 8 compound words were found in the analyzed corpus.

"Egotop" exemplifies the inventive nature of linguistic evolution, particularly within the lexicon of Generation Z. Through compounding, wherein disparate elements ("ego" and "top") converge to form a cohesive lexical entity, Generation Z demonstrates a capacity for succinctly encapsulating complex concepts. This morphological process transcends mere lexical combination; it serves as a testa-

ment to Generation Z's ability to innovate within linguistic frameworks. "Egotop" amalgamates "ego", denoting self-centeredness or self-importance, with "top", connoting supremacy or preeminence. This compound thus potentially signifies a notion of personal achievement or the prioritization of self within competitive or social contexts. Such compounds not only function as linguistic shortcuts but also encapsulate cultural sentiments and attitudes prevalent among Generation Z. Generation Z's influence on the Polish language is characterized by a dynamic interplay between local linguistic traditions and global digital culture. Their linguistic practices not only reflect technological advancements and societal changes but also contribute to the ongoing evolution of Polish as a medium of cultural expression and communication in the 21st century.

Table 5. Examples of compound words in Gen Z slang

No.	Compound word	Explanation
1.	egotop [Q26]	a person who is overly confident, treating everyone as beneath them
2.	friendzone [Q27]	refers to a situation where one person has romantic feelings for another, but the other person only sees them as a friend. This term is often used to describe the disappointment or frustration of unrequited love, where the romantic feelings are not reciprocated, and the relationship remains strictly platonic.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study of Gen Z slang highlights the dynamic and adaptive nature of the Polish language in the digital age. Through the examination of various morphological processes such as acronyms, clipping, borrowing, and compounding, it becomes evident that Gen Z members are at the forefront of linguistic innovation. Their language use reflects their digital fluency, cultural openness, and creative adaptability. The integration of global influences, particularly from English, into Polish slang showcases a blending of local and international elements, enriching the Polish lexicon and demonstrating the fluidity of modern communication.

This investigation into Polish Gen Z slang offers valuable insights into the broader phenomena of language evolution, creativity, and the interplay between technology and communication in contemporary society. It sheds light on the processes through which new linguistic forms are generated, disseminated, and sustained. The study also highlights the role of youth culture in driving linguistic change, suggesting that the voices of younger generations are pivotal in shaping the future of language.

In the analyzed corpus of Polish Gen Z slang, borrowing and acronyms emerge as notably productive morphological processes. The productivity of borrowings and acronyms can be attributed to a few factors. Firstly, borrowing allows for the

rapid integration of new concepts, trends, and expressions from global cultures into the Polish language. Given the widespread digital connectivity and exposure to international media platforms among Gen Z, there is a natural inclination to adopt foreign words or expressions that resonate with their cultural interests and identities. This process not only enriches the lexical diversity of Polish slang but also reflects the generation's openness to global influences. Secondly, acronyms serve as efficient and succinct forms of expression in digital communication contexts. In the fast-paced and often text-based environments such as social media and instant messaging, acronyms streamline communication, enabling users to convey complex ideas or emotions quickly. This linguistic economy aligns with the generation's digital fluency and preference for concise, impactful messaging.

Conversely, compounding appears less productive in the analysed corpus. This could be attributed to the preference for immediacy and novelty in linguistic expression among Gen Z. Unlike borrowings and acronyms, which offer direct access to new or specific meanings, compounding may require more cognitive effort and familiarity with linguistic rules, potentially rendering it less attractive in informal digital exchanges.

In conclusion, the linguistic practices of Generation Z provide a compelling example of how the Polish language evolves in response to cultural, social, and technological changes. This generation's innovative use of morphology, coupled with their engagement in global digital culture, highlights the dynamic nature of human communication. As digital natives, Gen Z continues to shape and redefine language norms, contributing to the ongoing evolution of the Polish language in the contemporary era.

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Appendix

[Q1] "Napisałam do niej czy przyjdziesz na urodziny a ona odpisała o zapomniałam nmg". Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/nmg/ (8.02.2024)

[Q2] "GOAT polskiego rapu". Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/goat/ (8.02.2024).

[Q3] "ngl, nigdy za tym nie przepadałam". Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/ngl-ngl/ (8.02.2024)

[Q4] "Ten NPC na korytarzu już poszedł?" Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/npc/ (8.02.2024).

[Q5] "x: ten frajer nawet nie wie jak poprawnie napisać mrówka"
"y: IJBOL takich debili to już dawno nie widziałem". Retrieved from: https://www.miejski.pl/slowo-IJBOL (8.02.2024).

[Q6] "-Jak ja nie lubię matmy; -FR". Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/fr-fr/ (2.03.2024).

[Q7] "*cały weekend byłam przekonana, że mam dzisiaj sprawdzian z niemca i teraz czuje się oszukana siedząc na lekcji świątecznej. tbh, wolałam już mieć to z głowy, a tak...*" Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/tbh/ (2.03.2024).

[Q8] "Ale słodziak! UwU!". Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/uwu-uwu-owo/ (26.03.2024).

[Q9] "Jak tam leci, bro?" Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/bratku/ (9.03.2024).

[Q10] "-Szkoła jest mega stresująca. -Rel, jest traumą jakich mało". Retrieved from: https://www.miejski.pl/slowo-rel (9.03.2024).

[Q11] "-Idziesz na Fagatę? -Obvi!" Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/mlodzianizmy/obvi/ (26.03.2024).

[Q12] "Hejter to sprzedajny człowiek, liczy się tylko jego fejm". Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/fejm/ (9.03.2024).

[Q13] "Możemy już skipnąć lato I przenieść się do jesieni??!!!!!?" Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/skipnac/ (9.03.2024).

[Q14] "Missclikniesz? Serio?" Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/missclicknac-misscliknac/ (9.03.2024).

[Q15] "Ja grałem na candii i mnie shakowano… nawet wiem kto, straciłem wszystkie **itemy** i kase ale może to i dobrze bo w końcu na dobre wyszedłem z tego nałogu". Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/itemki-itemy-itemek/ (9.03.2024).

[Q16] "Rage'ować trzeba uczyć się od małego". Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/rage-zlapac-rage/ (26.03.2024).

[Q17] "Zmadowany 12 latek". Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/zmadowany/(26.03.2024).

[Q18] "Żabson zrobił banger". Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/banger/ (26.03.2024).

[Q19] "Ej, o co chodzi z tą piosenką, bo żyję pod kamieniem". Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/zyc-pod-kamieniem/ (26.03.2024).

[Q20] "Tzn boczne oko z pogardą, bo zamiast zapewniać tym słodkim ancymonom rozrywkę to ty zdjęcia robisz". Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/boczne-oko/ (26.03.2024).

[Q21] "Ta osoba która żyje dla kontentu". Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/dla-kontentu-dla-contentu/ (26.03.2024).

[Q22] "-Dobre! -No, cocacolastic!" Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/cocacolastic/ (26.03.2024).

[Q23] "Kto to romantyziara?" Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/romantyziara/ (26.03.2024).

[Q24] "Czy jesteś stupkarzem?" Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/stupkarstwo-stupkarz-stupkara/ (26.03.2024).

[Q25] "Karol to taki prawdziwy gigachad, samiec alfa". Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/gigachad-gigachad/ (28.03.2024).

[Q26] "Laska, ale ty masz egotop!" Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/haslo/egotyp/ (26.03.2024).

[Q27] "A co jeżeli dziewczyna jest w tym friendzone, chciałaby z tego wyjść, ale z powodu wspólnej pracy nie może ograniczyć kontaktu z tym chłopakiem?" Retrieved from: https://obserwatorium-mlodziezy.ujk.edu.pl/hasla/friendzone/ (26.03.2024).