



Youth Online Language: Characteristics, Intergenerational Conflict, Language Alienation, and Governance Programmes in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract. With the development of Internet technology, the internet has become the main platform for communication, and a series of online languages have been born with young people as the main force. Due to the complex network environment, governance challenges such as cyberbullying and the spread of online rumors have become increasingly prevalent. Therefore, in order to maintain the growth and development of young people and a healthy online culture, it is crucial to study the relevant issues of online language among young people. The use of online language by young people is currently one of the hot research directions. This study will start from the definition, classification, and characteristics of online language among young people, and systematically review more than ten recent literature to explain the related intergenerational conflicts and language alienation phenomena. It will explore the negative impact of artificial intelligence on young people and the feedback mechanism of online language on the construction of language autonomy among young people. This article also proposes governance proposals such as establishing intelligent gatekeeping theory, utilizing artificial intelligence to promote standardized online language intelligent management, and constructing a online language intelligent management system, providing systematic references and new directions for future research.

Keywords: Youth Online Language, Intergenerational Conflict, Language Alienation, Online Language Governance, Artificial Intelligence

1 Introduction

The 57th *Statistical Report on the Development of Internet in China* in 2026 shows that by December 2025, the number of Internet users in China has reached 1.125 billion, and the Internet penetration rate has exceeded 80% [1]. Among them, social media is an important channel through which contemporary youth acquire information, and also a key arena for the production, dissemination, and evolution of online language. Posting one's own opinions online, using emojis、Pop language and other internet slang used to express emotions, psychology, and values are important features of the digital life of the current youth population. The forms of online language used by young people are

highly varied, with multiple modes of formation. The specific content of online language used in different countries also varies greatly, and research on the online language behavior of young people is gradually emerging. It is worth noting that due to the non-standard use of online language, there are frequent incidents of cyberbullying, online rumors, and other irregularities; In addition, the current development of artificial intelligence (AI) has greatly increased the frequency of human-computer interaction, which has had a certain impact on online language and the language expression of young people, resulting in some adverse effects. Therefore, a systematic study on the basic characteristics, influence, and alienation phenomena of youth online language is of great significance for subsequent internet research.

This study focuses on the youth group and refers to more than ten academic literatures to review its online language. The study will elaborate on the definition of youth online language and improve its classification system and characteristics. On this basis, the intergenerational conflicts and alienation caused by the language will be summarized, and the influence of AI on youth online language and related online governance schemes will be discussed. This research will provide systematic reference and new direction for future research.

2 Introduction to Research Objects and Core Concepts

Young people are an important force in social development and a major group of Internet users. The *Medium and Long-term Youth Development Plan (2016-2025)* issued by the State Council of China in 2017 pointed out that the age range of young people is 14 to 35 years old [2]. As digital natives, young people generally exhibit strong social orientations, manifested in the frequent use of the Internet, accompanied by a higher ability to use online language.

With the rapid development of the Internet, social media has become the main platform for people's daily use. As a communication tool, the form of language is constantly evolving. Among them, online language is a communication language that originated and spread on the Internet [3]. It is mainly created and spread by young people. It is the main carrier for people to express their views and ideas on social platforms. Compared with traditional language, online language breaks through the normative limitations of traditional language system, showing greater flexibility and diversity in form, wider semantic range and more direct emotional expression. In the online language, the term "breaking the defense line" condenses the changes of psychological emotions into a concise form, but it can convey strong emotional resonance. This reflects the highly personalized expression tension of online language [4]. Online language has a unique discourse system, which is not limited to written expression. The combination of numerals and various language symbols can also be used as a way to convey information and express emotions.

The behavior of young people using online language refers to the process and status of their use of online language in specific internet environments such as social media and instant messaging [3]. Eliza Jerezano believes that technology and the Internet play a vital role in many factors affecting the growth of adolescents [5]. This is also the most

prominent feature of the younger generation. Technology is not a new thing for them, but an important part that has already been integrated into their lives. They can skillfully use network technology to obtain information, are keen to interact with people and share content, download and use complex and diverse applications, use the network for a long time on average, and are widely used on social platforms, which shows the active degree of youth groups on the Internet, and also lays the foundation for their generation and dissemination of a large number of online languages.

Nowadays, the emergence of AI such as DeepSeek and ChatGPT has improved the efficiency of human text production, further influencing people's communication and interaction modes. These represent emerging generative tools that have gained widespread popularity among young people. AI generated text content quickly catalyzed language transformation, and human-machine dialogue has to some extent influenced people's communication methods and content, and has had a significant impact on the online language use behavior of youth group [6].

3 Classification, Characteristics, and Existing Research on the Use of Online Language among Youth Group

3.1 Classification of Online Language Use among Youth Group

Chinese researcher Pan Tingyu divides online language into four types based on its external form: numerical, alphabetical, Chinese character, and mixed [4]. Numerical online language primarily exploits homophony, using numbers to represent Chinese characters with similar sounds, such as "521" (meaning "I love you") and "9494" (meaning "exactly right") [4]. Alphabets are often used as abbreviations or English letters of the first letter of a word to simplify expression, such as "YJJC" (riding in the dust), "PLQ" (comment section), "PTSD" (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) [4]. Chinese character-based online language employs words or phrases directly, many of which are derived from widely discussed social events, such as "avoid speaking, avoid speaking" and "purple sweet potato essence" (referring to people who love to seek petty gains, like to blame others and pretend to be pitiful) [4]. The mixed type is formed by combining numbers, letters, and Chinese characters in a relatively flexible manner [4], as illustrated by expressions such as "me2" (meaning "me too").

S.V. Dmitrichenkova et al. expressed the youth online language studied in this article as "youth slang in social network environments", believing that youth slang is a special sub language of the national language that can be used by the younger generation to communicate with peers through computer mediation [7]. The study first elaborates on the sources and definitions of slang, dividing it into two categories: "social slang" and "professional slang". "Social slang" refers to urban tribal community language or the youth online language studied in this article, with the aim of highlighting language in daily vocabulary and not being understood by others [7]. S. V. Dmitrichenkova et al. used Spanish youth and youth slang in the Spanish discourse system as research objects, and selected 250 chat messages on Instagram for analysis using discourse analysis and sampling methods [7]. According to their formation patterns, Spanish youth slang was

divided into six forms: semantic changes, compound words, word reductions, affixation, telescoping, English borrowings [7]. Among them, semantic and morphological types are the most productive, leading to the creation of a large number of online languages [7].

3.2 Characteristics of Online Language Use among Youth Group

S.V. Dmitrichenkova et al. believe that online language exhibits features of both spoken and written language [7]. Youth slang constantly evolves in form in online contexts and has a high degree of expressive tension, which constitutes a salient characteristic of youth online language [7]. Research has shown that communication in group chat situations is essentially a collective social enjoyment, where participants often engage in casual and superficial communication, but emotional expression is often stronger [7]. Anonymity provides participants with a comparatively uninhibited communicative environment, enabling them to engage spontaneously in online interactions and freely exchange emotional content and information. Due to the anonymity of identity, social constraints on language use are reduced, resulting in a more informal form of dialogue and a language style that is closer to spoken language, fully reflecting the freedom and immediacy of oral expression. Participants can join the conversation at any time or engage in real-time discussions, with the key being the transmission of information through visual channels, where the message creator focuses on the receiver [7]. This one to many transmission method can filter out the most suitable vocabulary for the target audience, forming a unique language in the process of community communication and interaction, namely the emergence of slang texting language.

In this study, texting language is an external manifestation of online language and a communication language commonly used by young people in online communities. The following analysis takes texting language—a sub-category of online language—as an illustrative example to examine the orthographic characteristics of youth online language. After analyzing the Spanish chat messages of young people on Instagram, researchers have summarized seven spelling features of texting language: firstly, using words to represent letters to represent word meanings; The second is the mixed use of numbers and letters; Thirdly, adopting atypical abbreviations; The fourth is to convert complete words into letter combinations; Five is to replace "gu" with "w"; Six is the omission of diacritical marks, improper use of capitalization and punctuation; Seven is to use nonverbal symbols as emoticons [7]. Collectively, these features reflect a strong orientation toward formal simplification and symbolic innovation in online written communication, reflecting the language psychology of young people pursuing efficiency and individuality in digital communication [7]. It is not difficult to conclude that online language also has special vocabulary units and spelling characteristics. Its form is short and fragmented, and the combination of different symbols has a certain regularity, mostly with special meanings.

In addition to its morphological features, there are also characteristics related to its attributes.

American scholar Erving Goffman emphasized in his Dramaturgical Theory that human interactive behavior in social life is to some extent a form of performance [8]. Dang Jie argues that the online language behavior of young people similarly carries a

collective performative quality, which can be further elaborated in three respects: fragmented expression, exaggerated emotions, and highly entertaining [8].

Pan Tingyu believes that online language has two characteristics: personality traits and group traits [4]. Similarly, scholars such as Guo Feiyu also believe that the generation of youth online language is closely related to factors such as the display of youth personality and the continuous rise of subcultural online circles. The rapid development of online communication media has accelerated the formation and dissemination of this special language [9]. Among young people, the post-90s and post-00s have grown up in the era of rapid development of the Internet, and the post-10th generation has been exposed to social media, electronic products and other information access channels since childhood. Their way of thinking, communication preferences, and expression language are deeply influenced by the Internet. As a language that emerged during the growth stage of the youth group, online language has more abundant emotional connotations and is more in line with the personalized needs of young people in terms of semantic expression. It can effectively convey demands more than traditional language and is in line with the characteristics of contemporary youth's pursuit of individuality, independence, and self-expression. The rapid development of the Internet has improved the efficiency of information circulation, opened up barriers between different circles and community cultures, and promoted the exchange and integration of diverse subcultures. The formation of interest circles is essentially the result of individuals seeking identity recognition and value belonging. Similar aesthetic tastes and lifestyles aggregate different young people into specific online communities [4]. As a result, online language has gradually shown distinct hierarchical characteristics, becoming a symbol system for distinguishing identities and strengthening a sense of belonging within specific communities. Therefore, online language is a communication language for young people, and also a label and an identity recognition [4].

3.3 The Influence and Alienation Phenomenon of Youth Group's Online Language

The Influence of Online Language on Youth Groups - Intergenerational Conflict Phenomenon. The strong hierarchical and personalized characteristics of youth online language, coupled with the short lifecycle and distinct era imprint of internet buzzwords themselves, make them somewhat exclusive to those who are not familiar with the discourse system of the community, which can easily lead to comprehension barriers and communication barriers. This can cause communication difficulties between the younger generation and the older generation, commonly referred to as the "generation gap". This phenomenon is called "intergenerational conflict" in the research of Dang Jie [8].

Intergenerational shift is a natural phenomenon in human society, symbolizing the decline of the discourse power and culture of the older generation and the establishment of the authority and sovereignty of the new generation [8]. As the main force of the internet, the younger generation's commonly used online language has typical characteristics of the times and is resistant to the mainstream language and culture of the past, reflecting the projection of Intergenerational shift in the cultural field. It is not difficult to conclude from Cultural Essentialism that different cultures inherently have essential

differences, and even communication and interaction will not completely assimilate or merge. Therefore, intergenerational conflict is an inevitable phenomenon, just like the online language behavior of the younger generation will challenge the traditional language habits of the elderly, in an effort to claim a dominant discursive position within society [8]. They have essential differences. With the development of the Internet, digital platforms have become one of the main fronts in people's lives. As digital natives, the young generation will be more adaptable and flexible to this new scientific and technological means. The internet thus facilitates generational replacement while simultaneously creating the conditions for intergenerational conflict.

Eliza Jerezano's exploration of "Generation Z slang" refers to the same type of language as the online language used by the youth group studied in this article. In this study, the analysis of teachers' perceptions of the impact of Generation Z slang on conversational language and composition also reflects the phenomenon of intergenerational conflict. Through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, Jerezano conducted a survey of ten-year teachers in Pamurayan Integrated School. The results show that the use of Z-generation slang can improve students' expression ability, enable them to use their mother tongue more fluently and confidently, and enhance their enthusiasm and participation in the classroom [5]. Moreover, the study also proves that generation Z slang has significant intergenerational resonance characteristics for students [5]. In addition, the researchers found that teachers have different attitudes towards slang, which can be divided into two types: acceptance and exclusion [5].

Some teachers believe that there is a clear boundary between slang and standard language. It is believed that slang is prone to ambiguity and communication barriers, thus affecting the effective communication between teachers and students. Therefore, students are prohibited from using similar slang when communicating with their elders or writing academic papers, and can only use standard language. However, other teachers support the use of Z-generation slang. They believe that this can enhance students' sense of belonging, help them better integrate into the classroom discussion atmosphere, and then transform their interest in slang into learning motivation [5]. The above cognitive bias in the use of Z-generation slang reflects the concrete manifestation of intergenerational conflict between students and teachers: some teachers believe that traditional normative language should be adhered to in daily life, while students use Z-generation slang freely. This study puts forward some teaching suggestions to alleviate this intergenerational language conflict, such as encouraging teachers to understand students' language habits with an inclusive attitude and seeking a balance between guiding formal writing norms and guaranteeing daily freedom of expression [5]. However, how to properly deal with intergenerational language conflicts in a broader social context still requires more systematic and in-depth exploration by future researchers.

Language Alienation Phenomenon of Online Language among Youth Group. As the main creator and user of online language, the young group has experienced a sense of alienation in the practice of language use. This phenomenon stems from the influence of negative ideology and the deterioration of social relations. This has a negative impact on the physical and mental health of young people. Furthermore, it creates a negative social atmosphere and hinders the development of internet science and technology.

However, with the development of the Internet, people's increasing demand for communication, and the continuous enrichment of language connotation and online language types, it is extremely difficult to completely avoid this alienation. Therefore, it is very important to study the formation process of youth online language alienation for maintaining the physical and mental health of young people. This is also conducive to continuously improving their internet technology capabilities and maintaining a good online environment.

The alienation of young people's online language behavior refers to the fact that in the virtual language communication activities of young people in the online environment, they gradually forget their own subject identity and lose their control over online language [3]. Instead, they are dominated by online language, which eventually leads to the deviation of the language connotation they try to express through online language from the original intention [3]. This alienation phenomenon can be divided into three dimensions: the alienation of the connotation level, the alienation of the communication mode level and the alienation of the subject state level [3].

Connotation alienation refers to the deviation of form and meaning in the use and dissemination of online language, resulting in incomplete or misunderstood understanding of language by language users, leading to a certain degree of cognitive bias [3]. In the classification of online language mentioned earlier, abbreviated and mixed symbolic online language is the most common. Its fragmented expression and highly condensed meaning restrict the complete transmission of language meaning. The receiver is prone to misinterpretation due to missing context, biased stance, and other reasons during decoding. Therefore, language often deviates from the expected goal of improving expression efficiency in the process of online transmission, leading to more negative phenomena such as disputes over meaning misunderstandings and malicious imitation of online language. This results in young people changing from pursuing efficiency to being innovative, and thus developing resistance to language, which actually strengthens the arbitrariness of language use.

Subjective communication alienation refers to the phenomenon in which young people deviate from their expected and actual situations in online communication, leading to a negative development trend in their communication relationships [3]. There are two main factors that lead to alienation: online language violence and the trend of youth network stratification [3]. Cyberbullying causes serious physical and mental harm to victims, and likewise undermines healthy social relationships between groups through the guidance of online public opinion. It exploits the herd mentality of young people to abandon their original views and instead disdain traditional norms, break through moral constraints, and turn online language into a tool for harming others and oneself [3]. This has a negative impact on the values and online language behavior of young people. The trend of youth network stratification is the formation of small group relationships among young people due to their interests, hobbies, personal needs, and other reasons [3]. They have their own common language and use online communication to attract more like-minded people to join the group relationships, thereby demonstrating the characteristics of stratification. The "fan circle" culture represents the most illustrative instance of youth network stratification in recent years. Due to their different favorite celebrity idols, fan groups have different factions. In order to maintain their idols and

highlight their unique charm, they will belittle and defame other celebrities, guiding other fans to attack and spread rumors against fans of opposing factions. This behavior pattern has a particularly significant negative demonstration effect on underage fans who are not yet mentally mature, making them easily view aggressive language as an expression of group identity, strengthening the internalization and replication of violent discourse, posing a serious threat to network security, increasing opposition and conflict, and deteriorating interpersonal relationships in the network environment.

Subjective state alienation refers to the gradual deviation of young people's initial goal of obtaining relevant online information to adjust their own development status with the alienation of the connotation of online language and subject communication. The improper use of online language gradually reflects the uncertainty of the subject [3]. The emergence of this phenomenon is primarily due to the increasingly heavy competitive pressure. The popular term "involution" in recent years can explain that in the structural context of intensified education competition and tight job markets, the youth group is facing increasingly fierce pressure for resource competition and is passively involved in homogeneous competition at the expense of individual autonomy. Secondly, there is the diverse psychological state of youth group. As mentioned earlier, Dang Jie believes that the expression of online language is emotional and highly entertaining [8], reflecting the humorous psychology of young people; The diverse types of online language reflect the innovative psychology of young people. In addition, with the increase of social pressure, the level of competition gradually deepens, inevitably leading to the existence of malicious competition. Faced with malicious competition, some people face difficulties head-on, while others choose to lie flat and avoid competition. These are different psychological states. These diverse and different causes of psychological states have led to the phenomenon of subject state alienation. Finally, there is the duality of subject state alienation. As mentioned earlier, in the face of competition, young people are roughly divided into two distinct opposing states on the internet: lying flat and being introverted. However, in reality, lying flat does not mean completely giving up competition. The society needs to look at it from multiple perspectives, trace the root causes, and find solutions [3].

4 Discussion and Suggestion

4.1 Reflection on the Current Situation

Due to the complexity of online language content and the diversity of online culture, young people's online language inevitably has a dual impact of positive guidance and negative dissolution on society and themselves [9]. Moreover, online violence occurs from time to time, and interpersonal relationships in virtual environments are becoming increasingly unstable. Consequently, from a general public perspective, online language tends not to be widely accepted, and the disorder within "fan circles" as discussed earlier has further reinforced such negative perceptions. Based on this, it is crucial to strengthen social governance and regulate and guide young people to use online language correctly. However, the negative impact of youth online language is not always

negative, as it plays an important role in resisting AI's invasion of human language expression subjectivity.

At present, artificial intelligence systems such as DeepSeek, ChatGPT, and Doubao are having a profound impact on human life through language interactions. These generative AI systems can interact with users naturally by collecting and processing large-scale language data and generating human-like text. While meeting the needs of users, they have objectively promoted the evolution and development of human language use patterns [6]. By contacting massive language data and interacting with humans, the AI model can quickly capture the subtle differences in human language, learn non-standard expressions such as memes, slang and idioms, and integrate multiculturalism [6]. After calculation and integration, the unified text is output, which fundamentally changes the way of language generation, perception and dissemination [6]. The language generated by AI is highly standardized and consistent, which promotes the standardization of language expression and reduces language barriers to a certain extent. However, this rapid development has virtually inhibited the development of language creativity and local dialects [6].

Young people are often highly sensitive to emerging trends. They will actively focus on the latest innovations to acquire knowledge and internalize it. Artificial intelligence is a typical example. However, although artificial intelligence can promote intelligent generation and human-machine dialogue, it has a certain negative impact on young groups. Due to the convenience of generative artificial intelligence, young people often use AI to replace themselves to complete tasks in learning and work. Making good use of AI to assist output can indeed improve work efficiency. However, if people completely rely on AI to replace young people's labor, they will lose their initiative and gradually accept the standardized language generated by AI, which will lead to problems such as decreased language ability and shallow critical thinking. In addition, human speakers may feel that their role as the subject of meaning construction is being quietly weakened by AI [10]. How to make AI better help young people improve their ability rather than acting as a substitute is worthy of further study.

Lau, Gabriel et al. believe that Brain Rot Slang (the youth online language studied in this paper) can help young people resist the negative impact of artificial intelligence on language expression [10]. This language is not only a tool for young people to protect their positive and unique social creativity, but also a practical way to meet the needs of entertainment and expression. The current communication environment dominated by AI poses a threat to the language subjectivity and identity of young people [10]. Due to its semantic instability, fast iteration and high context dependence, the existing big data language model is difficult to effectively capture and reproduce this online language. Young people can use this feature to maintain the discourse space created by human beings, realize the effective distinction with their peers, and regain the subjectivity of human language [10]. Therefore, the use of adolescent online language is not a simple phenomenon of language extinction, but an adaptive strategy adopted by young people in the digital age to resist the erosion of AI standardization, actively construct language autonomy and strengthen group identity.

4.2 Suggestions

On the issue of online language governance, Tan Tian and other scholars believe that AI should be used to achieve this governance goal. Specifically, they recommend the use of big data to establish a standardized intelligent management framework, and the adoption of AI-driven automated regulatory mechanisms in areas such as content review and language compliance assessment [11].

Firstly, it requires the joint cooperation of the government and technical personnel, the combination of administrative, legal, and technical means, the improvement of relevant laws and regulations, the enhancement of law enforcement efforts, the implementation of real name registration, and the use of online public opinion and public opinion monitoring to guide young people to actively and correctly use online language. Secondly, the online language corpus should be collected according to the national language standards, and the corresponding online language corpus system should be established. In addition, it is necessary to use artificial intelligence technology to construct an automatic semantic and contextual matching and classification recognition mechanism of online language, and accurately identify and filter cyberbullying, sensitive words and online rumors through in-depth analysis [11]. Finally, establish intelligent gatekeeping theory, continuously optimize gatekeeping algorithms, and achieve updates and dynamic adjustments based on actual situations [11]. As the main body of content governance, the network platform should actively fulfill its social responsibility, strive to eliminate the negative impact of algorithms such as information cocoons, and rationally use technical means such as AI. The platform should not only take economic interests as the core goal, but also use artificial intelligence to improve the level of online language environment governance and enhance the cognitive awareness of teenagers and the public on online language norms [11].

5 Conclusion

This study integrates the academic research results of many countries and systematically expounds the definition, classification and characteristics of youth online language. It summarizes and analyzes the intergenerational conflicts and alienation caused by the influence of youth online language, and discusses the influence of current artificial intelligence hotspot technology on youth online language. Based on this, some suggestions and feasible measures suitable for the current Internet environmental governance are put forward. The research conclusions provide practical guidance for maintaining the physical and mental health of young people, promoting their all-round development and optimizing the governance of online language environment. This study innovatively compares and analyzes typical cases in China, the Philippines and Spain, draws a unified conclusion, and reveals the differences in results caused by different research backgrounds. In particular, in the process of analysis, the role and influence of teenagers' online language are dialectically demonstrated in both positive and negative aspects. Finally, it expounds the important value of youth online language in dealing with the era of artificial intelligence.

Unfortunately, this study is relatively general and does not provide a detailed and systematic analysis of every aspect. When analyzing young people's online language, no more authoritative data was collected for analysis, only the relevant content of different aspects was listed together. In the future, in terms of the impact of AI on online language, researchers can continue to explore the operational mechanism of youth language creativity, further explore the feedback mechanism of human-computer interaction on human language, and the specific path of subculture coding mechanism, and conduct more detailed analysis and research. Based on the current real-time research hotspots, further research can be conducted on the limitations of generative AI in understanding online language, in order to seek solutions for young people's future development to be invaded by AI.

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