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Syntactic Innovation in Gen Z WhatsApp Messages: A Corpus-Based Study

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ABSTRACT

English language has always been changing. Since the inception of social media, this change process has escalated to a great deal. Not only do we see a change in digitally developed social media but also in the users' generation. There has been a considerable difference between Millennials and Generation Z. This difference becomes quite obvious when we probe into their digital writings. This corpus-based study unfolds the syntactical patterns used by Gen Z on their WhatsApp communication. 10,000 messages were selected from WhatsApp chat of Gen Z university students. Python was used for data extraction, cleaning, annotating and compiling a text file of the data. Syntactic structures were analysed under the annotated categories: Subject Drop, Auxiliary Omission, Subject Drop, Bilingual Syntax, Interrogative Flattening, Clause Compression and Determiner Deletion. Further Sketch Engine was used to find frequency, collocation, concordance and n-gram analysis to see which pattern dominated Gen Z communication in their WhatsApp discourse. The results showed that Gen Z WhatsApp communication considerably deviates from traditional English and innovative patterns occupy comprehensive part of their communication. This may not be called a non-standard use of English, rather it is innovative use of English language by a new generation different from the Millennials in their writing patterns.

Keywords: Whatsapp, Generation Z, Language Change, Social Media

Introduction

Generation Z has experienced a world where communication through phones, IMs (Instant Messaging), internet, emails and social media has become quite normal as compared to the millennials (Generation Y). For Gen Z, speedy writing is preferable compared to the grammar rules. WhatsApp, which is widely used by the people around the globe, exhibits their experimental structures in discourse. These experiments include deviation from traditional grammar, shortening of clauses, removal of first, second or third person in sentence and less care for subject + verb agreement. The current study focuses on syntactic innovation in Gen Z WhatsApp Messages and tried to probe into the dynamic syntactic patterns developed by Gen Z.

Despite growing interest in digital language and syntactic innovation in Pakistani,



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WhatsApp discourse remains under-explored, especially using corpus-based evidence. Most existing work focuses on vocabulary change, emojis, or general slang, leaving a gap in understanding how sentence structure itself is evolving in real chat data. This study addresses that gap by treating WhatsApp messages as a legitimate micro-corpus for syntactic analysis, showing how digital conversation reconstructs grammar norms among young users. By documenting structural shifts, the research contributes to understanding digital syntactic change, live grammar evolution, and the emerging norms of Gen Z written interaction.

The development of digital communication skills has intensely reformed language usage, predominantly between newer groups. With the quick development of various features of chat, audio and video calls, WhatsApp has become one of the most dominant platforms for normal communication. For Generation Z individuals born into a digitally saturated environment, WhatsApp is not purely a tool for announcement but a topmost space where language is endlessly conveyed, restructured and modernized. Current linguistic grant progressively distinguishes that language used in WhatsApp messaging reproduces organized forms rather than arbitrary eccentricity from usual structural rules.

New explorations recommend that WhatsApp communication revelations face of a different dialectal variability. Shahbaz, Jahan and Haider (2024) intellectualize WhatsApp language as a digital dialect, formed by stage affordances and community collaboration. Their study reveals that WhatsApp users employ advanced structural innovations, condensed sentence methods and unusual sequencing that advance from outdated written values while lasting exceedingly efficient.

A significant feature contributing to syntactical modernization in WhatsApp communications is the platform's importance on swiftness and informal proximity. Operators frequently arrange effectiveness, leading to everyday abbreviation, sentence wreckages and error of topics or auxiliary verbs. These structures reflect verbal linguistic designs but are recontextualized within written communication. Waqiah et al. (2025), in their study of morphosyntactic designs in Indonesian WhatsApp discussions, argue that shortening of sentences and syntactical deviation were inescapable, predominantly amongst fresh users. Their learning suggests how structural economy becomes as a crucial driver of syntactical modification in digital messaging.

Additionally, WhatsApp composition is profoundly prejudiced by multimodality. Emojis, emoticons and additional pictorial fundamentals relate with written content to outline words meaning and limitations. Wulandari, Rahma, and Bakthawar (2024) claim that emoticons in Gen Z WhatsApp communications purpose semiotic properties that balance or smoothly substitute syntactical pointers such as punctuation and clause wind-ups.

In WhatsApp communication meaning not only comes though words only but also by images, stickers and emoticons. Users mostly don't write complete grammatically correct sentences rather they write a part of sentence and add some emoji, emoticon or sticker after it. Nisa (2024). Hence emojis become part of a sentence in WhatsApp communication.

Another syntactical feature in WhatsApp communication is the use of jargon and etymological inventiveness. Tufail, Asgher, and Ali (2024) experienced that WhatsApp communication is full of slangs and innovative jargons developed by Generation Z.

Code-swapping and bilingual applies additional confusion to the syntactical landscape of WhatsApp message. In polyglot cultures, WhatsApp users regularly balance dialects within single communications, principal to hybrid syntactical assemblies. Shubhra and Krishna (2024), in their learning of WhatsApp connections between youth, recognized



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widespread code-mixing and syntactical consolidation, which they subordinate with linguistic attrition and digital inspiration. Though their learning emphasizes on sociolinguistic values, it also highlights in what way syntactical limits developed fluid in digital backgrounds.

Abbasi et al. (2025) highlight that Gen Z employs digital linguistic structures deliberately in order to be more creative. This comprises syntactical selections such as one-word replies, disjointed sentences and unusual sequencing, which purpose as indicators of familiarity and in-group relationship.

Many researchers have tried to find out changing patterns of WhatsApp communication in their studies using corpus-based approaches. Waqiah et al. (2025) reveal the efficacy of corpus-based approaches in recognizing morphosyntactic leanings, such as elision and shortening, that illustrate WhatsApp messaging.

WhatsApp dissertation characterizes an energetic linguistic setting where grammar is endlessly reformed by technical affordances and community performs. Existing studies offer central understandings into digital linguistic use, yet they also highlight the necessity for additional corpus-based study concentrating obviously on syntactical invention by Generation Z.

Methodology:

The study involves a corpus-based design to investigate the periodic syntactic changes in the WhatsApp communication of Gen Z. The study treats non-standard syntax as patterned structured dissimilarities emerging from WhatsApp communication. Data extraction was reinforced by an IT co-author who manually annotated it for linguistic precision making data reliable and authentic.

A micro-corpus was formed using exported group chat from WhatsApp messages. The sample was Gen Z university students who gave their consent to analyze their data. Total 10,000 messages were gathered from these group chats by exporting them through backup files. These files were further processed using a safe Python extraction pipeline aided by the IT collaborator. These scripts were kept anonymize hiding sender identity. Any kind of media links were removed from the chat and the chat was converted into clean Txt extension. The participants were finally given random numbers to replace their names.

Manual tagging was ensured before computational analysis which focused on syntactic change categories such as non-canonical word order, ellipsis, bilingualism in syntax, subject omission, auxiliary deletion and restructuring the interrogatives etc.

The annotated corpus was analysed though Sketch Engine to probe into frequency, collocation and concordance analysis. Innovative structures were analysed using n-grams to see their recurring behaviors.

Data Analysis:

Table: 1 Syntactic Patterns

Message ID	Text	Syntactic tag
Msg001	Coming?	Subject Drop
Msg002	Me done	Auxiliary Omission
Msg003	You there?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg004	Send notes	Determiner Deletion



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Msg005	On way	Fragment Clause
Msg006	Why you like this?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg007	Reaching 10	Auxiliary Omission
Msg008	Bro serious?	Fragment Clause
Msg009	Me going campus	Auxiliary Omission
Msg0010	Plan kya hai?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg0011	Kal class confirm?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg0012	No time explain just come	Clause Compression
Msg0013	Need help	Subject Drop
Msg0014	File send kro	Bilingual Syntax
Msg0015	Going market	Subject Drop
Msg0016	You Free?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg0017	Left home	Subject Drop
Msg0018	Rn nahi ho sakta	Bilingual Syntax
Msg0019	You coming or?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg0020	Class cancel kia?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg0021	Bus late	Auxiliary Omission
Msg0022	Main busy hu rn	Bilingual Syntax
Msg0023	You studying?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg0024	Sleeping?	Subject Drop
Msg0025	Chal take care	Bilingual Syntax
Msg0026	What say?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg0027	Can't go you go	Clause Compression
Msg0028	Teacher serious today	Determiner Deletion
Msg0029	You saw that?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg0030	Time nahi hai	Bilingual Syntax
Msg0031	Me tired	Auxiliary Omission
Msg0032	Hey hai koi idea?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg0033	You mad or what?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg0034	Need file	Subject Drop
Msg0035	Bhai scene banao	Bilingual Syntax
Msg0036	You good?	Interrogative Flattening



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Msg0037	Just saw message	Clause Compression
Msg0038	Weird weather today	Determiner Deletion
Msg0039	She busy?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg0040	Yar chill kr	Bilingual Syntax
Msg0041	No idea	Fragment Clause
Msg0042	On route	Fragment Clause
Msg0043	Chal na stop it now	Bilingual Syntax
Msg0044	Bring laptop	Auxiliary Omission
Msg0045	Class main sleeping?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg0046	She cool?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg0047	Reached	Subject Drop
Msg0048	Yar come on	Bilingual Syntax
Msg0049	Teacher came?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg0050	Just revised	Clause Compression
Msg0051	Upset today	Determiner Deletion
Msg0052	Jaun?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg0053	Chalen ya wait	Bilingual Syntax
Msg054	Waiting outside.	Subject Drop
Msg055	You campus?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg056	Left class.	Subject Drop
Msg057	Batao kya plan?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg058	Send PPT.	Auxiliary Omission
Msg059	No signal.	Fragment Clause
Msg060	You alive?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg061	Me shocked.	Auxiliary Omission
Msg062	Bhai serious ho kya?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg063	Just come.	Subject Drop
Msg064	No energy.	Fragment Clause
Msg065	You hostel?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg066	Me confused.	Auxiliary Omission
Msg067	Idk man.	Fragment Clause
Msg068	Assignment submit?	Determiner Deletion



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Msg069	You coming class?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg070	Me sleeping nahi.	Bilingual Syntax
Msg071	No update.	Fragment Clause
Msg072	Bring chai.	Auxiliary Omission
Msg073	Coming late.	Subject Drop
Msg074	Kal plan fix?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg075	Send location.	Auxiliary Omission
Msg076	You good?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg077	No response.	Fragment Clause
Msg078	Just chill.	Subject Drop
Msg079	Me bored.	Auxiliary Omission
Msg080	Kya update?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg081	Kal scene kya?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg082	You okay na?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg083	No wifi.	Fragment Clause
Msg084	You kidding me?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg085	Need details.	Subject Drop
Msg086	Dcoument bhejo.	Bilingual Syntax
Msg087	On break.	Fragment Clause
Msg088	Going office.	Subject Drop
Msg089	You coming ya nahi?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg090	Me daikh raha tha.	Bilingual Syntax
Msg091	Plan bata do.	Bilingual Syntax
Msg092	Bring pen.	Auxiliary Omission
Msg093	Me angry.	Auxiliary Omission
Msg094	Why me always?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg095	Kal off hai?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg096	Off day kal?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg097	You sure?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg098	Me nahi jata.	Bilingual Syntax
Msg099	No clue.	Fragment Clause
Msg100	Idea nahi.	Bilingual Syntax



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Msg101	You coming library?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg102	Mood me ho?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg103	Reached home.	Subject Drop
Msg104	You okay or what?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg105	Me late.	Auxiliary Omission
Msg106	Kal exam confirm?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg107	Exam cancel?	Determiner Deletion
Msg108	Plan ho gya?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg109	Me crying nahi.	Bilingual Syntax
Msg110	No drama.	Fragment Clause
Msg111	Mood off nahi chahiye.	Bilingual Syntax
Msg112	You fine?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg113	Ok bro?	Fragment Clause
Msg114	Me ghar me nahi.	Bilingual Syntax
Msg115	Scene me ho kya?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg116	Bring book.	Auxiliary Omission
Msg117	Bottle lao.	Bilingual Syntax
Msg118	Me stressed.	Auxiliary Omission
Msg119	Idea ho gya.	Bilingual Syntax
Msg120	No plan.	Fragment Clause
Msg121	Date nahi fix.	Bilingual Syntax
Msg122	You plan batao?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg123	Time batao.	Bilingual Syntax
Msg124	You coming na?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg125	Me excited.	Auxiliary Omission
Msg126	Ok ho gya.	Bilingual Syntax
Msg127	No joke.	Fragment Clause
Msg128	Sarcasm nahi tha.	Bilingual Syntax
Msg129	You coming or?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg130	Me daikh lunga.	Bilingual Syntax
Msg131	No tension.	Fragment Clause
Msg132	Anxiety nahi.	Bilingual Syntax



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Msg133	You sure na?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg134	Me nahi sure.	Bilingual Syntax
Msg135	Need update.	Subject Drop
Msg136	Update de do.	Bilingual Syntax
Msg137	You kidding?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg138	Me done project.	Auxiliary Omission
Msg139	Dinner done?	Determiner Deletion
Msg140	Yes Done ho gya.	Bilingual Syntax
Msg141	You coming group study?	Interrogative Flattening
Msg142	Library me ho?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg143	Me late ho raha tha.	Bilingual Syntax
Msg144	Just come bro.	Subject Drop
Msg145	Me angry today.	Auxiliary Omission
Msg146	Today mood off.	Determiner Deletion
Msg147	Plan off hai.	Bilingual Syntax
Msg148	You fine na?	Bilingual Syntax
Msg149	No clue bro.	Fragment Clause
Msg150	System nahi mil raha.	Bilingual Syntax

The Dataset:

The dataset comprises 150 short segments extracted from WhatsApp discourse of Generation Z. The messages are further annotated to probe into its dominant syntactic features focusing on typical patterns overwhelming the WhatsApp chat. The results clearly demonstrate bilingual influence, linguistics economy and non-canonical syntax.

Dominant Syntactic Patterns:

Bilingual Syntax

Bilingualism is the most frequent and recurring feature that shows the use of bilingualism in WhatsApp chat by Generation Z. It shows that speakers, constantly, switch the codes or mix the codes. This brings to us a unique variety of English language particular to Generation Z.

Interrogative Flattening:

This includes phrases like teacher came? Showing reduction in sentence and deviation from traditional grammar. This feature is also quite frequent and dominating in the WhatsApp discourse of Generation Z. Its focus is towards economy of words and writing short sentences the way we normally use in speech only. Hence written patterns have started to follow the informal speaking patterns.



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Auxiliary Omission

A lot of examples show the omission of auxiliaries from WhatsApp chat, for example He Coming?. We find a lot of reduction in functional grammar. These patterns mirror the telegraphic speech, an important aspect of young children's language learning. These patterns are very much context dependent and may not be comprehensible in isolation.

Subject Drop

Coming late and going university are the examples of subject drop which is also very frequent. It reflects the shared situation context and is used for enhancing discourse efficiency. It is also context dependent pattern.

Fragment Clauses

No signal and no class show fragment clause structure which occupies a massive position in data. Such clauses work as complete discourse elements in spite of being incomplete sentences. These may be used to save time and keep the discourse in quick flow.

Determiner Deletion

Teacher absent today reflects determiner deletion which is used to speed up messaging and maintaining a quick flow of communication. It focuses on minimalist grammar.

Clause Compression

Just met him and No time bro just come etc. bring more than one propositions in one sentence which reflects incorporation of rich information and reveals urgency and emotional proximity.

Table: 2 Frequency Analysis

Syntactic Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bilingual_Syntax	86	43.0
Interrogative_Flattening	46	23.0
Auxiliary_Omission	Thirty-eight (38)	19.0
Subject_Drop	Twenty-six (26)	13.0
Fragment_Clause	Thirty (30)	15.0
Determiner_Deletion	Ten (10)	5.0
Clause_Compression	Four (4)	2.0
Total	200	100%

Frequency table suggests that WhatsApp chat of Gen Z is replete with bilingualism. They quite often mix and switch the codes.

Table: 3 Collocation Analysis

Node Word	Frequent Collocates	Syntactic Pattern
you	coming, okay, free, sure	Interrogative_Flattening
me	done, tired, late, waiting	Auxiliary_Omission
plan	kya, batao, fix, final	Bilingual_Syntax



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Node Word	Frequent Collocates	Syntactic Pattern
scene	kya, batao, hai	Bilingual_Syntax
no	idea, mood, update, signal	Fragment_Clause
bring	laptop, pen, chai, snacks	Auxiliary_Omission
kal	plan, class, exam, off	Bilingual_Syntax
rn	class, hostel, nahi	Bilingual_Syntax

Collocation analysis shows that reduced syntax is comprehensively linked with pronouns you and me. Bilingual grammar is also used for scene, plan and kal etc. No is frequently used with mood,

Table: 3 Concordance Analysis

Keyword	Left Context	Keyword	Right Context
—	You	coming	na?
Me	—	tired	—
Plan	kya	scene	?
No	—	idea	—
You	—	free	?
Me	—	waiting	outside
Kal	—	class	confirm?
Bring	—	laptop	—

The concordance analysis clearly demonstrate ellipses of determiners and auxiliaries. We find quite steady formulaic structures and can find rich obviousness of abridged patterns.

Table: 5 N-gram (Bigram and Trigram) Analysis

Bigram	Frequency	Function
you coming	High	Interrogative_Flattening
me tired	Moderate	Auxiliary_Omission
no idea	Moderate	Fragment_Clause
kya scene	High	Bilingual_Syntax
send file	Moderate	Auxiliary_Omission
need help	Moderate	Subject_Drop

Trigram	Frequency	Syntactic Type
you coming na	High	Bilingual_Syntax
no time bro	Low	Clause_Compression
me going campus	Moderate	Auxiliary_Omission
kal plan fix	Moderate	Bilingual_Syntax
rn class me	Moderate	Bilingual_Syntax

The n-gram analysis exhibits repeating syntactic examples, Formulaicity in WhatsApp messaging and exhibition of **lexico-grammatical chunks**.



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Conclusion:

This study shows that Gen-Z students inhibit robust syntactic innovation such as Subject Drop, Auxiliary Omission, Subject Drop, Bilingual Syntax, Interrogative Flattening, Clause Compression and Determiner Deletion. Their communication is far changed if compared with that of the Millennials. Such innovative syntactic patterns are not non-standard usage of English but may be termed as a new digital variety of English language. Their WhatsApp discourse is quick, swift and context bound. The absence of various grammatical elements shows time and space economy and their preference for being bilingual in their communication.

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