

Influence of Age on Idiolects in e-Communication

Kos, Nikoleta

Undergraduate thesis / Završni rad

2024

Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj: **University of Rijeka, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences / Sveučilište u Rijeci, Filozofski fakultet**

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: <https://um.nsk.hr/um:nbn:hr:186:588330>

Rights / Prava: [Attribution 4.0 International](#)/[Imenovanje 4.0 međunarodna](#)

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2025-01-24**



Repository / Repozitorij:

[Repository of the University of Rijeka, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences - FHSSRI Repository](#)



UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Nikoleta Kos

**Influence of Age on Idiolects in
e-Communication**

Bachelor thesis

Rijeka, 2024

UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Nikoleta Kos

0009089180

Influence of Age on Idiolects in e-Communication

Bachelor thesis

University undergraduate study programme of English Language and
Literature

Supervisor:

dr. sc. Marija Brala Vukanović

Rijeka, 2024

IZJAVA

Kojom izjavljujem da sam završni rad naslova *The Influence of Age on Idiolects in e-Communication* izradila samostalno pod mentorstvom dr. sc. Marije Brale Vukanović.

U radu sam primijenila metodologiju znanstvenoistraživačkog rada i koristila literaturu koja je navedena na kraju završnog rada. Tuđe spoznaje, stavove, zaključke, teorije i zakonitosti koje sam izravno ili parafrazirajući navela u završnom radu na uobičajen način citirala sam i povezala s korištenim bibliografskim jedinicama.

Studentica: Nikoleta Kos

Vlastoručni potpis:

Nikoleta Kos

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. IDIOLECTS	3
2.1. IDIOLECTS.....	3
2.2. ETYMOLOGY OF THE TERM.....	4
2.3. IDIOLECTS AND AGE.....	4
3. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION	7
3.1. INTERNET.....	7
3.2. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF THE INTERNET...8	8
3.3. WIRELESS/ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION.....8	8
3.4. CONCEPT OF MOBILITY.....12	12
3.5. INTERNET SLANG.....13	13
3.6. INFLUENCE OF THE INTERNET ON LANGUAGE.....14	14
4. THE STUDY	16
4.1. INTRODUCTION.....16	16
4.2. HYPHOTHESIS.....16	16
4.3. STRUCTURE.....17	17
4.4. METHODOLOGY.....17	17
4.5. SURVEY ANALYSIS – QUESTION BY QUESTION.....18	18
4.6. DISCUSSION.....21	21
4.7. CONCLUSION.....22	22
5. CONCLUSION	23
6. BIBLIOGRAPHY	24
7. ABSTRACT	26
8. LIST OF FIGURES	30

1. INTRODUCTION

Humans are social beings and communication is the main part of their daily activities, but is it possible to imagine a world without electronic communication? A world where it is impossible to text your thoughts instantly but must wait to meet someone in person? A world where it is not that simple to text someone “on the other side of the world”? Nowadays, it is very hard to imagine such world. Sending messages via WhatsApp, discussions in the comments of Facebook posts, communicating with the professor at any time via e-mail. Electronic communication has become such an essential part of our daily interactions. With the advent of mobile technologies and the internet, many things have changed. From the way people communicate to the speed and reach of those communications. Not only did these things change drastically, but also did the electronic communication influence the language. People have changed (and are still changing) their way of writing a message. Moreover, they have changed the perception of the importance of correctly written message. It is not rare to send or receive a message full of errors and typos.

Nowadays, it can be heard that children are “born with cell phones in their hands” and that technology is “natural” to them, that they understand how it works from very young age. It is known that teenagers and young adults accept and adopt easily to the developments that the technology brings every day, while older adults are not so accepting to such novelties, but rather stick to the traditional use of language. The question arises as to how adults manage in the world of electronic communication and whether it is as easy for them as for young people.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, *idiolect* is the form of a language that a particular person speaks. Since every person has its own way of speaking, so does every person has its own way of messaging. Things such as the way in which a message is written, the choice of words, the way in which those words are written, attention to the grammatical characteristics of the message, all differ from person to person, but similarities can be found within the same age groups.

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to examine what linguistic features do different age groups choose to use. The primary objective is to determine age-related patterns that can be seen in electronic communication. With the help of existing literature, in order to try to find these patterns I conducted an age-related survey based on questions regarding different situations in which a person sends a message (private or formal) and the way how these messages differ. Furthermore, the survey is also focused on finding out how do different age groups write

messages. Do they pay attention to grammar, do they use abbreviations, and do they use foreign words. Lastly, it examines the communication between different groups and how well do they understand each other's messages. Firstly, I will provide the theoretical part about idiolects, the etymology of the term, and idiolects in relation to age. Moreover, I will present the theoretical part Internet, its history and developments of electronic communication. Following, I will also present the studies on the Internet slang and the influence of the Internet on language. Later, I will analyse the survey, its structure, methodology and questions, providing also the discussion and conclusion. Lastly, I will provide a conclusion based on my findings. By examining the relationship between idiolects and age in electronic communication, I aim to deliver an understanding of how technology and digital media shape one's language.

2. IDIOLECTS

2.1. IDIOLECTS

The term “idiolect” is well-known in linguistics and is distinguished by the fact that there is probably no other linguistic term in which there is such a large gap between the familiarity of the concept and lack of empirical data on the phenomenon. (Barlow, 2010)

Initially, the concept of idiolect, although widely acknowledged in the field of linguistics, has not received much attention among scholars and researchers. Nevertheless, the idea of linguistic distinctiveness and the individual language has been the subject of discussion in various linguistics disciplines since it was introduced to the field in the late nineteenth century.

Idiolect represents unique speech patterns of an individual. These patterns, the way someone speaks and the way in which they use words, are connected to only one person and therefore are more personal than dialects and tongues which refer to larger groups. Moreover, language does not just vary in the way an individual uses daily it or by the words they choose to use. It can also vary depending on the social group they are communicating with or the context of the situation they are in. One might choose more colloquial words when speaking to friends or siblings, but when speaking with elders or even older family members, they might speak more formally. The age of the people someone communicates with can also impact their way of communicating, and therefore, their texting as well.

The definition of the term could also be explained through the etymology of the word. The term consists of two morphemes *idio-* and *-lect*. The prefix *idio-* is of Greek origin and means own, personal, private, peculiar, separate, and distinct. The suffix *-lect*, abstracted from the term *dialect*, has its origins in Greek “*légō*” meaning “I speak” and refers to the “social variety of language” (Wright, 2018).

A person’s idiolect is all-encompassing in that it includes linguistic features related to dialect and sociolect, for example, while also being influenced by a wide range of other sources of variation, such as their life experiences; language encounters; what they have read and listened to; where they have been schooled; jobs they have had; their favourite hobbies and pastimes; and their parents, friends, and teachers. An idiolect, therefore, is not stable in its entirety (Wright, 2018).

2.2. ETYMOLOGY OF THE TERM

The idea of individuality in linguistics dates to the discussions about language. Herman Paul's study in his work *Principles of the history of language* (1888) stands out among these early studies because it suggests that since language originates in the mind of the individual, that person should be the primary subject of examination. With his difference between *langue* and *parole*, Saussure (1916) also emphasizes the importance of the individual. He claims that the language system itself is social, and refers to it as *langue*, while the production of language is individual which he calls *parole*. These claims highlight the fact that there is a distinction between something that is social and general and something that is individual. In addition to this, in 1927, in his work *Speech as a personality trait*, Sapir connects an individual's linguistic choices and personality traits, that is, he claims that linguistic choices could help in analysing one's personality traits. Moreover, he tries to separate elements of speech that represent one's expression and those that are in relation to society and social norms. Later throughout history, there were many authors that distinguished speech community, something that is collective, and individual, something that is isolated. The term "idiolect" appears for the first time in Bloch's *A set of postulates for phonemic analysis* (1948) and it refers to "the totality of the possible utterances of one speaker at one time in using language to interact with one other speaker" (Bloch, 1948 as cited in Wright, 2018). According to the work, an idiolect is all the possibilities a person can utter in a particular language at a specific moment, and not just what they say at that one time. Since Bloch's work, there has not been one definite definition established since authors have divided opinions. For example, Hockett is similar to Bloch as he defines idiolect as "the totality of speech habits of a single person at a given time" (Bloch, 1958 as cited in Wright, 2018). On the other hand, Martinet defines idiolect as "the language *as spoken* by a single individual" (Hockett, 1958 as cited in Wright, 2018).

2.3. IDIOLECTS AND AGE

There are many factors, such as gender, ethnicity, profession, or interests, that influence one's personal linguistic style and choices. One of these factors is also age which is the focus of this work.

The influence of age on idiolects and how they change over the years is one of the most important factors in sociolinguistics and is of great interest to sociolinguists. In the 1960s, sociolinguists started to dig deeper into the subject of examining the connection between idiolects and age. One of the methods researchers use to examine changes in idiolects is the so-called apparent time method, which compares the spoken language of people from different age

groups (Palander, 2007). Later, they started to combine the apparent time method with the real time method, which focuses on the impact of time on the language of a particular speech community or individuals. When samples are gathered using the same principles and represent the same community at various points in time, the study can be referred to as a trend study. Another method, but more demanding and less common is a longitudinal follow-up study of individual informants, known as a panel survey, which is typically conducted as part of a broader trend survey (Palander, 2007). There are two main reasons why language changes throughout life are of interest. First of all, lifespan studies have allowed for a new viewpoint on the language variation which has been in the focus of sociolinguistics' attention for the previous 50 years. If sizable minority of older speakers are unable to maintain their early-acquired grammars in the face of a language change led by younger individuals, the change may be occurring either more rapidly or more slowly than what would be predicted from a sample differentiated by age at any one time (Sankoff, 2018). Second, in the twenty-first century, there has been a significant increase in the possibility to carry out such research because speech data from other sources is now easily available on the Internet and because previous speech community surveys have been restudied (Sankoff, 2018).

The influence of age on language can be divided into several aspects. First, it involves the idea that people of various age groups will learn and use language differently. Then there is the idea of the connection between age and one's language and how it changes as one ages.

The most common example when speaking of different language uses among various age groups is adolescents. It is well known that teenagers are the ones to frequently use slang, taboo, or dialect words and they often use non-standard forms of their mother tongues. They are the ones to constantly expand their language features and accept new ways of language use. It is as if they are playing with language. As a result, teenagers seem to have more freedom when expressing themselves than those who choose standard patterns. On the other hand, young children are also an interesting age group regarding the relationship between language and age. Children also present us with their unique ways of language use. It is interesting to note that they will acquire the same standard patterns of their mother languages, but later they will use those patterns in their own different ways. It is not uncommon for children to invent their own words. Even their pronunciation could differ from the standard one. Lastly, the language of adults can also be immediately recognizable. Since adults have accumulated more life experiences, they use language with greater intention and independence compared to teenagers or young children. They tend to be more autonomous in their word choices and they do not fall

so easily under the pressure of new words appearing every day. They are not so keen on using slang words or words that do not straight away convey meaning. In addition to this, S. Kemper in 2003 published the results of a study she conducted in *Age Differences in Sentence Production* which showed the difficulties that elders face when producing sentences. In two experiments that Kemper conducted, the results showed that older people tend to make more errors and that their responses were simpler and shorter when faced with more difficult tasks than those of adolescents. On top of that, elders tend to struggle to remember certain words which leads to problems with fluency.

What is important to keep in mind is that while most of the patterns, characteristics, and preferences may change depending on a person's age, there are also some features that remain persistent throughout one's life.

3. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

3.1. INTERNET

In the Cambridge Dictionary, the term “Internet” is defined as the large system of connected computers around the world that allows people to share information and communicate with each other. The success of the Internet depends on how many users can reach each other at the lowest cost possible.

Tim Berners-Lee (1999), the inventor of the World Wide Web, in *Weaving the Web*, states that:

The Web is more social creation than a technical one.

Later he explains:

the dream of people-to-people communication through shared knowledge must be possible for groups of all sizes, interacting electronically with as much ease as they do now in person.

Today, it represents the fastest way of communicating and exchanging information. Most importantly, it has changed human’s everyday life and the way they live it. Vin Cerf, one of the founders of the Internet, as cited in Hart (2023) once said the following about the success of the Internet:

The remarkable social impact and economic success of the Internet is in many ways directly attributable to the architectural characteristics that were part of its design. The Internet was designed with no gatekeepers over new content or services.

Moreover, Cerf as cited in Hart (2023) also states that the Internet gives all people the possibility to be innovative without any central control, the Internet is made as a decentralized platform for innovation.

Lastly, John Naughton as cited in Crystal (2004), in his book *A brief history of the future: the origins of the Internet*, states that:

The Internet is one of the most remarkable things human beings have ever made. In terms of its impact on society, it ranks with print, the railways, the telegraph, the automobile, electric power and television. Some would equate it with print and television, the two earlier technologies which most transformed the communications environment in which people live. Yet it is potentially more powerful than both because

it harnesses the intellectual leverage which print gave to mankind without being hobbled by the one-to-many nature of broadcast television.

3.2. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF THE INTERNET

The Internet developed in the 1960s in the USA and firstly, its purpose was sharing information among government researchers. Initially, it was just an experimental network that later expanded its number of users to federal, military, business, university, and even personal users.

The backbones of the Internet were the ARPANET and the NSFNET. It all traces back to 1961 and two visionaries with an idea of interactive computing, J.C.R. Licklider and Robert Taylor. Later, the work of the two at the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA) contributed to the faster development of computer networks and time-sharing (simultaneous use of a computing resource by multiple tasks or users) computers. Even before Licklider's and Taylor's idea of networks and time-sharing computers, Paul Baran was developing a digital voice network. First computers were immobile and to access data stored on any computer, one either had to go to where the computer was housed or send magnetic tapes through the regular mail. In the 1980s, the NSFNET took the place of the ARPANET. This is marked as the beginning of the Internet.

Today, it has become one of the most important aspects of human life. Not only does it connect people from different parts of the world, but it also provides information on any topic. Furthermore, the Internet gives access to different types of entertainment, such as movies and short videos, and it even provides creative works, such as literacy or art.

3.3. WIRELESS/ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Technology has presented a new way of exchanging information through fast and effortless wireless communication. Wireless communication technology is diffusing around the planet faster than any other communication technology to date (Castells, Fernandez-Ardevol, Linchuan Qui, & Sey, 2004). According to a database by Laricchia F. (2024), by the end of 2023, almost 70 percent of the world's population were smartphone users. By the ITU (2021) database, in 2019, 47.1 percent of households owned a computer. With this information in mind, it is no wonder that virtual communities, full of citizens of the Internet called *netizens*, are being formed every day. Following paragraph is Shawn Wilbur's description of virtual communities and what they mean to him as cited in Crystal (2004):

For me it is the work of a few hours a day, carved up into minutes and carried on from before dawn until long after dark. I venture out onto the Net when I wake in the night, while coffee water boils, or bath water runs, between manuscript sections or student appointments. Or I keep a network connection open in the background while I do other work. Once or twice a day, I log on for longer periods of time, mostly to engage in more demanding realtime communication, but I find that is not enough. My friends and colleagues express similar needs for frequent connection, either in conversation or through the covetous looks they cast at occupied terminals in the office. Virtual community is this work, this immersion, and also the connections it represents. Sometimes it is realtime communication. More often it is asynchronous and mostly solitary, a sort of textual flirtation that only occasionally aims at any direct confrontation of voices or bodies.

It is interesting to note how Wilbur, in 1996, describes the frequent, everyday use of electronic communication. Although the Net and wireless communication have become an essential part of his daily life, he also states that the time he spends online is insufficient.

Along with the development and expansion of the Internet, a new kind of discourse called computer-mediated discourse (CMD), started to develop. Herring (2004), in her *Computer-Mediated Discourse*, states following:

The study of computer-mediated discourse (henceforth CMD) is a specialization within the broader interdisciplinary study of computer-mediated communication (CMC), distinguished by its focus on language and language use in computer networked environments, and by its use of methods of discourse analysis to address that focus.

As a result of this kind of discourse, discourse communities started to appear. These discourse communities are a part of the virtual communities mentioned before.

In whatever directions the Internet culture is developing, it is still based on texting, i.e., written forms of language. The Internet only provides a limited presence of spoken language through video or sound communication. It is safe to assume that these limitations will decrease over time. Even though text messaging started with computers, nowadays, when referring to text messaging, the first thing that comes to mind is cell phones. That is because, globally, cell phones are the ones that have experienced an explosion among users. Since they are, most of the time, within hand's reach, they provide an even easier way to communicate than computers do. Because of that, they have become an increasingly important part of human life. One can

send a message at any given moment under, almost, any circumstances. Cell phones give a quick and easy way to convey thoughts, arrange meetings, or simply chat with persons from all over the world. Text messaging is an application rather than a technology, but it bears some special attention because it has become a critical aspect of the mobile communication system (Castells et al, 2004). Subsequently, this kind of communication brings many effects on one's language.

Like other communities, virtual community also has its own language and with all these new devices and new ways of communicating, a new language has been formed. This "type" of language is called Netspeak, also known as the Internet language. The definition of a netspeak by Cambridge Dictionary is the following: "the words, abbreviations, etc. that people use when communicating on the internet". The name itself provides a concise meaning of the *Netspeak*, speaking on the Internet. It is important to remember that "speak" does not only refer to talking, but also to writing, and that it involves also the "listening and reading" aspect. Netspeak is based on the English language and therefore, it consists mostly of already existing English vocabulary and characteristics specific to the English language. Universally known abbreviations and acronyms or emoticons and other graphic tools helped in the shaping of the Netspeak. These features have international meaning and are easily recognizable to those who frequently use the Internet for any purpose or communicate via Internet platforms. The question is: did the product of the Internet, the Netspeak present only one variety of language that all users understand and use in the same way? Like spoken or other written languages, Netspeak has its own different characteristics among users, every user of the Internet language chooses their own idiolect. Moreover, Netspeak consists of various Internet situations and a particular language for every situation. David Crystal (2004), in his book *Language and the Internet*, observed that, even though the term "Internet language" consists of the word "language" that gives a universal and unified meaning, it involves different registers and situations. It does not refer to only one specific language. Crystal listed five of these Internet situations as follows: electronic mail (e-mail), synchronous and asynchronous chat groups, virtual worlds, and the World Wide Web. The situations listed above are not mutually exclusive. Elements from different situations can be found together or there are examples when one situation is placed within the other. For example, e-mails can contain Web attachments, and many Web sites contain discussion groups (Crystal, 2004). As in other languages, Netspeak has its own recognizable features. These are lexical features that provide the Internet language with its own vocabulary. Grammatical features give the possibility of various word orders and sentence

structures. The Internet language provides graphical features also such as the structure of a text message or emoticons used. Lastly, it contains discourse features such as synchronous and asynchronous conversations. Netspeak also obtained phonetic and phonological features that are associated with speech. For example, Internet communication includes also online video chat where one can note different voice qualities or registers. Moreover, such communication exhibits peculiar intonation and pronunciation. (Crystal, 2004)

It is known that Netspeak does exist. It is a type of language that has its unique features that are used in various situations and are recognizable even outside the Internet. What defines it even more as a language is the fact that Netspeak started to appear in everyday use of other types of languages. People became conscious of this new variety of language and started to use it in other linguistic situations outside the computer-mediated communication. David Crystal (2004) in his book *Language and the Internet* provides few examples of the use of Netspeak in everyday life:

It's my turn to download now. (i.e. I've heard all your gossip, now hear mine)

She's multitasking. (said of someone doing two things at once)

Let's go offline for a few minutes (i.e. let's talk in private)

He's 404 (i.e. he's not around)

E you later (said as a farewell)

Furthermore, computer programmers had to design a special vocabulary that would serve them in naming different codes. Nowadays, this vocabulary has also found its way into everyday situations. For example, *dot com* is frequently used in almost every linguistic situation, both in speech and in writing. Another example is the symbol @ that represents the connection between recipient and address. Computer engineer, Ray Tomlinson, needed a character on a typewriter keyboard that was not already used and that would be unique to its purpose. Therefore, he chose the @, but little did he know that the symbol's meaning, and purpose would broaden. Today, many companies and organizations find the symbol's meaning, of someone being "at" somewhere, very useful. They replaced the letter *a* or *at* in their name with an @ (Crystal, 2004). In addition to the examples listed before, there is also the *e*-prefix. Now, this prefix forms words such as: e-text, e-money, e-books, e-management, and alike.

Initially, wireless technologies and communication systems were marketed for adults in the business world, but the reality is different. Adolescents are the ones who have adapted the most

to the wireless communication system and all the opportunities it brings. Young people are found to have a greater interest in non-voice uses of wireless communication technology such as SMS and the wireless Internet (TNS, 2002, as cited in Castells et al, 2004). Moreover, differences in terms of age are not only in the access to a mobile telephone but also in the everyday usage that each person, according to her/his age, makes of the device (Castells et al, 2004).

Another interesting thing to note is the difference in the number of people a person is texting. Younger people tend to have a wider range of people they are texting from family, friends, acquaintances, and even people they do not know. On the other hand, elders focus more on just their family members and close friends. They are not as interested in communicating with a large number of people as younger people are. Generally, elderly people are not keen on communicating via SMS.

The development of wireless communication has brought another positive aspect and that is the concept of mobility.

3.4. CONCEPT OF MOBILITY

Portability, or mobility as it is often called, is a new paradigm that outlines the vision of communication media today (Ishii, 2006). What is important to note is that the term “mobility” in the communication media context does not only refer to physical mobility, but it has a broader meaning. It also includes three interrelated dimensions of human interactions: *spatial*, *temporal*, and *contextual mobility* (Kakihara & Sorensen, 2002 as cited in Ishii, 2006). The most known aspect of mobility is the spatial aspect which refers to the concept of physical movement. Furthermore, as a consequence of spatial mobility, there is temporal mobility which refers to the saving of time. As mentioned before, text messaging via electronic communication is quick and effortless. Spatial and temporal mobility are what define the efficiency of mobility of communication media. These two dimensions make one’s everyday life: flexibility to go wherever and be able to communicate using text messaging, and flexibility to do it quickly at any given moment. The third aspect is contextual mobility which helps understand the effects of cell phones on an individual and society. In face-to-face interactions, communicators need to conform to the contextual aspects that continuously reframe their interaction (Goffman, 1973 as cited in Ishii, 2006). On the other hand, cell phones allow for relatively unrestricted communication from a particular context. They allow people to communicate more easily and with fewer restrictions rather than direct interactions.

3.5. INTERNET SLANG

Another thing that is important to mention when speaking about language on the Internet is the Internet slang and jargon. According to Liu, Zhang, and Li (2023):

Slang refers to words or phrases that reflect the social and cultural aspects of a specific time period and the psychological state of individuals and are widely accepted and frequently used due to their novelty or specific expressive function.

On the other hand, jargon refers to a type of language that is used among a specific group of people, for example, among people of the same profession or activities. Contrary to this, when speaking about a language that is particular to the Internet, these two terms have the same meaning, and the two are used as synonyms. Within the academic community, there has been disagreement over the very definition of the term “Internet slang”. Nowadays, scholars define the term from the viewpoints of linguistics and news communication. As cited in Liu et al (2023), Li Yuewei suggests that Internet slang refers to a social language phenomenon that emerged alongside the presence of netizens, representing an emerging social dialect. Internet language, and Internet slang in particular, is a topic that many scholars are interested in and every day more and more research is being done on various aspects of this topic providing it a background and a deeper meaning.

The term “Internet slang” refers to a wide range of linguistic expressions that are used by netizens in various Internet communities. Some of the examples of the slang are abbreviations and acronyms such as:

CYA (see you, “Got to go, CYA later.”)

MSG (message, “He didn’t answer my MSG.”)

G2G (got to go, “G2G, CYA later.”)

DM (direct message, “You should slide in her DMs.” (send her a message))

FTW (for the win, “Do you want to order a pizza?”, “Yes, pizza FTW!”)

Another interesting form of Internet slang is *leetspeak*, also known as leet or 1337, defined by Cambridge Dictionary as a way of writing used on the internet, in which the usual letter that are used to spell a word are deliberately replaced by numbers or by different characters. Some examples of leetspeak are “8391NN32” (“beginner”) or even “/-|3\$0|_/'][‘€” (“absolute”). Another example of how people make the most out of Internet slang is the fact that newly coined

words appear almost daily. These words are mostly invented by young gamers who are trying to express themselves in a fastest way possible and with the fewest possible keystrokes while still being understandable to others. Words such as “noob” from “newbie” (a person who has just started playing a computer game) and even phrases such as “epic fail” (when a person does something embarrassing and is given an exaggerated importance) are instances that have a gaming background. These are not the only examples of the use of Internet slang and there are many more ways how people “play” with words and characters online. There are many online dictionaries that provide the lists of all the newly coined Internet slang words and phrases. Elise Moreau (2020) claims that the best Internet slang dictionary is the Urban Dictionary with over 10.5 million Internet slang words, phrases and their definitions

Typing a message usually takes longer than saying it verbally, which is why Internet slang, and short-form words are used to get the message in writing as quickly as possible (Moreau, 2020). Moreover, Internet slang serves not only for communication to be as fast as possible, but also to be as easy as possible. In addition to this, it gives people the freedom to communicate more innovatively and not in usual ways. Initially, Internet slang spread throughout online platforms, but then slowly started to find its way in real-life communication. Nowadays, there can be found examples of Internet slang used even in spoken language and therefore it is not rare to hear someone say “OMG” (“oh my God”) when interacting face-to-face.

Not only is Internet slang influenced by diverse geographical and cultural aspects but can also be influenced by various artistic characteristics. It is clear that various forms of cultural interaction, influenced by globalization and the Internet’s cross-temporal nature, give rise to new network languages, constantly enriching and changing the forms of Internet language (Yuan & Wang (2010) as cited in Liu et al (2023)).

3.6. INFLUENCE OF THE INTERNET ON LANGUAGE

The Internet changed the way people interact with each other, the way they work and do business, the way they think and present themselves to others, but what about the influence of the Internet on (spoken) languages?

Does the Internet present a huge risk for spoken languages? How does it influence the way people use their native languages in real life? Will other languages disappear when people use English on the Internet? How do the relaxed standards for text messaging influence correct spelling? What will happen to literacy and linguistic creativity? These, and many more, are the concerns society has when it comes to the influence of the Internet and text messaging on

language. It is obvious that the use of Internet slang and Netspeak in face-to-face interactions enriches the vocabulary of a certain language. Still, it also raises the question of whether this is a good thing. The fact that the Netspeak influences other languages is supported by the examples of Internet slang that were added to the Oxford dictionary and thus became official. In addition to this, there is little formal evidence needed to support the fact that Internet slang is infiltrating into spoken language since every day more and more young people choose to use it in their real-life conversations. As already mentioned, Internet slang uses the fewest keystrokes possible to save time, so it seems as if people in real life are trying to “save breath” by saying these abbreviations.

Some people choose to accept the Internet language, while others insist on texting in their mother tongue, the same way they would use it when speaking.

4. THE STUDY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this survey is to explore how age affects the unique linguistic choices, i.e., idiolects, that individuals make when communicating online. The survey serves to analyse the similarities and differences that are present within the different age groups and their use of language in electronic communication. The research focuses on understanding how age affects the way individuals shape their language when text messaging. This includes examining whether different age groups show distinct patterns in vocabulary, syntax, grammar correction, and in use of foreign words. In addition to this, the survey wants to examine the communication between different age groups, that is whether they understand each other's messages or there are still some difficulties in understanding. My goal is to understand how different age groups express themselves in online environments and possibly determine some characteristics that belong to certain groups.

4.2. HYPHOTHESIS

This survey begins with the observation that both common and distinct linguistic features exist among different age groups in text messaging. It is hypothesized that age significantly influences idiolects and language patterns in electronic communication, resulting in notable variations in communication styles across generations. Younger age groups, particularly those who have grown up in the digital era, are expected to use more innovative, contemporary and informal language forms, such as non-standard grammar structures, abbreviations, slang, and foreign words. This groups may prioritize speed and compactness in their communication, often using creative or playful language to convey tone and emotion. In contrast, older age groups might demonstrate a more formal or conventional approach to text messaging, showing language habits formed before the widespread use of digital communication. They may use more complete sentences, standard punctuation, fewer abbreviations and fewer foreign words and slang. They also maintain clarity and formality in their online interactions. However, as digital communication becomes more common, I also expect to see convergence in certain linguistic features across age groups.

Despite these differences, I also expect to find common linguistic patterns that do not depend on age, particularly those influenced by the digital culture itself. By analysing these factors, this study aims to discover how age shapes the way individuals express themselves in online text communication. I want to analyse how different age groups adapt their language use in digital

contexts. By examining these differences, I seek to understand the broader influence of age on linguistic choices in e-communication, while also identifying potential generational shifts in language norms.

4.3. STRUCTURE

The survey is structured to explore how different age groups adapt their texting habits in digital communication. There were three surveys in total, each for different age group, but all three consisted of the same questions. The surveys were conducted anonymously online through the platform *Google Forms* and were distributed to participants via digital media, i.e., via text messaging platforms. The survey itself is divided into 16 questions, with a mix of yes-no, and open-ended formats. It begins by categorizing respondents into one of the three age groups: 18-25, 26-33, and 34 and older. The survey first gathers information on the amount of time respondents spend on electronic communication and whether it is primarily for private or formal purposes. It then probes into specific aspects of text messaging, such as the use of the punctuation, abbreviations, and foreign words. Respondents are also asked to provide examples of abbreviations and foreign words they use, as well as how they spell these foreign words (correctly or phonetically). Then the survey examines intergenerational communication, asking whether respondents adapt their texting style when communicating with different age groups, if they often need to clarify their messages, and how well they understand texts from other age groups. The focus is solely on textual content, excluding the use of emojis, to analyse the nuances of language in e-communication across ages.

4.4. METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted online over a two-week period. Participants were randomly selected, and there were no restrictions except for their age. The minimum age for participation was set at 18 years old and the upper age limit was not set. In total, 63 participants took part in the survey, evenly distributed across age groups (each age group consisted of 21 participants). The participants had different backgrounds. They had different levels of education, some of them were students, some had college degrees, while others not, and they had different professions and different interests in life. Since the survey was anonymous, no formal consent process was required. The data collected will be analysed both statistically and thematically. Quantitative data from close-ended questions will be analysed using statistical methods to identify trends and correlations, while qualitative responses to open-ended questions will undergo thematic analysis to explore patterns in language use across different age groups. The survey exhibits

both quantitative and qualitative data. Not only does it examine “how many percent of the participants” share the answers, but also the specific examples the participants have listed.

4.5. SURVEY ANALYSIS – QUESTION BY QUESTION

As mentioned before, the survey begins with the question regarding the age group a participant belongs to. After the initial question, it presents the questions regarding the time spent communicating electronically and the reasons for using electronic communication.

We can see similarities in the daily usage of electronic communication. To the question of how often they use electronic communication, the respondents of all three groups overwhelmingly answered, “A couple of times a day” and “Often during the day” (Fig.1, Fig. 2, and Fig 3.). Only a few respondents in the age group 26-33 years old (exactly 4,8% i.e., one respondent per answer) answered, “Rarely” and “Once a day”. Moreover, 9,5% of the respondents of the oldest age group answered, “Once a day”.

Koliko često komunicirate elektroničkim putem?
21 odgovor

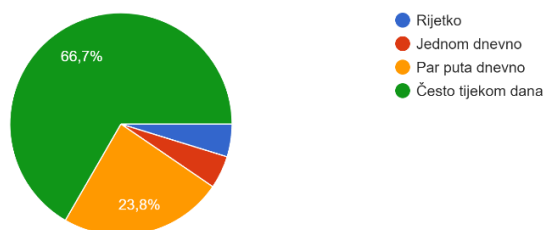


Fig 2. Graphic representation of the answers regarding the daily use of electronic communication, age group 26-33

Koliko često komunicirate elektroničkim putem?
21 odgovor

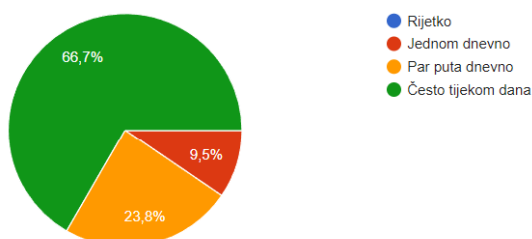


Fig. 3 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the daily use of electronic communication, age group 34+

Once again, we can observe similarities in answers. When asked whether they use e-communication for private or formal reasons, the most common answer of all three age groups is “Both for private and formal reasons”. In the first group, 19% of participants answered, “For private reasons”, while only 4,8% answered “For formal reasons” (Fig. 4). In the second group,

4,8% answered, “For private reasons” and 14,3% of participants answered, “For formal reasons” (Fig. 5). In the third group, the situation is similar. “For private reasons” answered 14,3% and another 14,3% put “For formal reasons” (Fig. 6). In this instance, we can observe the similarities between the older two age groups that contain participants who use e-communication only for formal reasons. In contrast, the younger participants do not use e-communication exclusively for formal reasons.

When asked the question of whether they use e-communication more often for private or formal reasons once again the youngest age group “stands out” with the most common answer (85,7%) being “I use it more often for private reasons”. Only a few participants, 9,5%, answered, “I use it more often for formal reasons” and 4,8% answered “I use it equally for both reasons” (Fig. 7). On the other hand, answers in the other two age groups vary. In both groups prevails the answer that they use it more often for private reasons (47,6% in the second age group and 52,4% in the third age group), but not as much as in the youngest group. In the 26-33 age group, the second most common answer (38,1%) is that e-communication is used more often for formal reasons, while only 14,3% answered that they use e-communication equally for both reasons (Fig. 8). Regarding the last age group, there are equal number of answers regarding the answers that they use e-communication equally for both reasons and that they use it more often for formal reasons, 23,8% of participants put each answer (Fig. 9).

When examining the question regarding whether the style of messages differs between private or formal messages, the situation in all three groups is relatively similar. The most frequent answer is that the style of messages differs depending on whether the message is written for a private or formal reason. Only a few percent of participants in each group answered that their style of messages is the same in both cases (Fig. 10, Fig. 11, and Fig. 12). In order to examine more closely those differences, participants are then asked to list some of the examples of such differences. The differences listed in all three groups are similar. Some of the examples of the formal way of writing listed are using letters with ticks (č, ć, š, ž), proper grammar, formal vocabulary, addressing out of respect, avoiding the use of foreign words and abbreviations, and overall attention to the structure of the text.

Furthermore, participants are presented with questions regarding the use of e-communication for private reasons. Firstly, they are asked if they use punctuation marks and upper- and lower-case letters. Again, we observe younger participants mostly answered “No” while only 38,1% of participants answered affirmatively (Fig. 13). Contrary to this, the most frequent answer in the other two groups (71,4% in both age group (Fig. 14 and Fig. 15)) is “Yes”, i.e., older

participants mainly pay attention to punctuation marks and upper- and lower-case letters while only a few do not.

Kada se dopisujete privatno koristite li interpunkcijske znakove te velika i mala slova?
21 odgovor

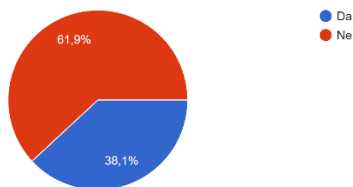


Fig. 13 Graphic representation of answers regarding the use of punctuation marks and proper capitalization, age group 18-25

Kada se dopisujete privatno koristite li interpunkcijske znakove te velika i mala slova?
21 odgovor

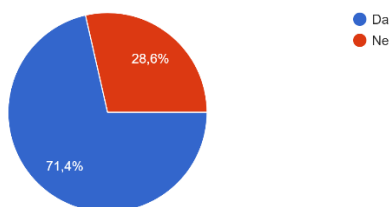


Fig. 14 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the use of punctuation marks and proper capitalization, age group 26-33

Kada se dopisujete privatno koristite li interpunkcijske znakove te velika i mala slova?
21 odgovor

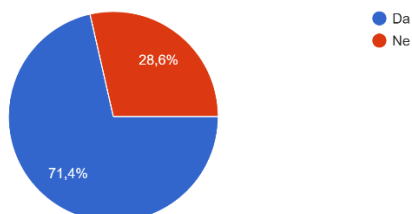


Fig. 15 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the use of punctuation marks and proper capitalization, age group 34+

Later they are asked about abbreviations, whether they use them, and if yes, they are asked to list a few examples of the ones they use the most. Answers of the respondents of the first group were undivided and all the respondents answered affirmatively about the use of abbreviations (Fig. 16). The most common examples of abbreviations they use are *vjv* (*vjerojatno*) or *najvjv* (*najvjerojatnije*), *nez* or *nezz* (*ne znam*), *nmg* (*ne mogu*), *zas* or *zć* (*zašto*), *itd* (*i tako dalje*), *msm* (*mislím*)... Participants in the other two groups did not respond so agreeably. In the 26-33 age group the ratio of affirmative and negative answers is 66,7% to 33,3% (Fig. 17). The examples they listed are the same as those in the first group and here are examples that are not the same: *npr* (*na primjer*), *dns* (*danás*), *bzvz* (*bezveze*), *lkn* (*laku noć*), *tnx* (*thanx*), *ugl* (*uglavnom*), *omg*

(oh my God)... Lastly, the third group also mostly answered affirmatively (exactly 57,1% of participants answered in such a way (Fig. 18)) and some of the different examples listed are: *ln* (*laku noć*), *vcrs* (*večeras*), *temp* (*temperature*)... What is interesting to note is the answer of one participant who listed the question mark “?” as an abbreviation. In this instance, we observe the use of only one symbol for a whole word or sentence. Moreover, one participant also listed *bdw* (*by the way*). Here we can examine the use of English vocabulary, i.e., English abbreviations in such a way that a person spells the word (abbreviation) as they would pronounce it. We cannot be sure if this is a known mistake (replacing the letter *t* with the letter *d*) or not.

In addition to this, participants are asked whether they pay attention to the correct spelling of words when text messaging such as the correct spelling of *ije-je* or *č-ć*. Here, the situation is interesting because participants of the youngest mostly answered negatively (71,4% of negative answers in the first group (Fig. 19). On the other hand, 76,2% of the participants of the second age group (Fig. 20) and 52,4% of the participants of the third age group (Fig. 21) answered affirmatively stating that they do pay attention to correct spelling.

Next question asked regards the use of foreign words when text messaging. Unsurprisingly, almost all participants in the first age group (95,2%) answered affirmatively (Fig. 22) while the answers in the other two groups vary. Answers of the second group are somewhat equal, 52,4% answered “Yes” while 47,6% answered “No” (Fig. 23). Participants of the third group also have almost equal answers with 52,4% of answers being affirmative and 47,6% negative (Fig. 24).

Koristite li strane riječi/izraze tijekom dopisivanja? (anglizme, germanizme, talijanizme...)
21 odgovor

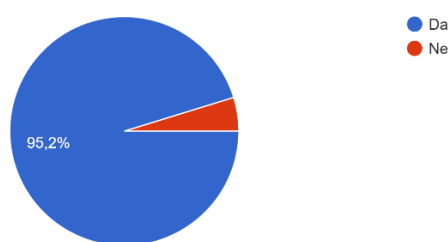


Fig. 22 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the use of foreign words, age group 18-25

Koristite li strane riječi/izraze tijekom dopisivanja? (anglizme, germanizme, talijanizme...)

21 odgovor

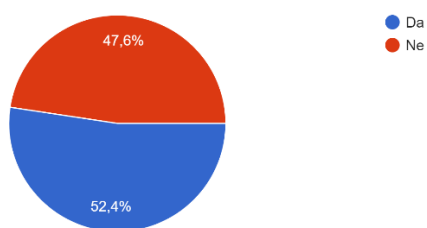


Fig. 23 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the use of foreign words, age group 26-33

Koristite li strane riječi/izraze tijekom dopisivanja? (anglizme, germanizme, talijanizme...)

21 odgovor

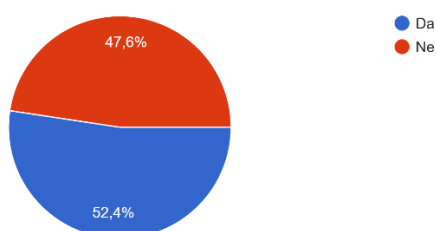


Fig. 24 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the use of foreign words, age group 34+

In addition to this question, participants are asked to list some of the examples of the foreign words they use. We can observe that almost all of the examples that the participants 18-25 listed are English words such as *sure, maybe, tbh, ngl, why, sorry, nevermind, obviously, actually*, except for three Italian words: *ciao, grazie, va bene*. In the other two groups, there are listed more diverse vocabularies. In the second group, some of the examples listed belong to vocabularies such as German (*natürlich*), Spanish (*claro que si, chicita*), Italian (*ciao, grazie*), and lastly English (*show, wow, thanks, bye...*). The last group presented examples such as Italian (*buongiorno, ci vediamo*) and English (*please, ok, shopping, by*). Interestingly, we can also observe some spelling errors in the words *shopping* (shopping) and *by* (bye).

Participants are also asked about how they spell these foreign words, whether they write them correctly, or how they would pronounce them. The majority of the first group answered that they spell them correctly (exactly, 76,2%, Fig. 25). The case stays the same in the second group with 85% of answers regarding the correct spelling (Fig. 26), and in the third group where 90% of participants answered the same (Fig. 27).

Finally, participants are asked questions regarding the relationship with other age groups when text messaging. The first question the survey asks them is whether they pay attention to how they write messages and whether they adapt it to that person. The majority of all three groups

answered affirmatively (85,7% in the first group (Fig. 28), 71,4% in the second group (Fig. 29), and 71,4% in the third group (Fig. 30)). Moreover, they are asked whether they have to further explain the meaning of their message when texting someone from the other age group. Answers of the first age group are somewhat equal (52,4% of affirmative answers and 47,6% of negative answers, as seen in Fig. 31). Answers of the other two groups are mostly negative with 76,2% in the second group (Fig. 32) and 76,2% in the third group (Fig. 33). Lastly, participants are asked whether, when texting someone from another age group, they do not immediately understand the meaning of a message. The great majority of the first group answered negatively (81%) as seen in Fig. 34. As age increases, the number of negative answers decreases. Therefore, 71,4% of the participants in the second age group answered “No” (Fig. 35) and 61,9% of participants in the third age group also answered negatively (Fig. 36).

Događa li vam se da, kada se dopisujete s osobom druge dobne skupine, ne razumijete odmah značenje poruke?
21 odgovor

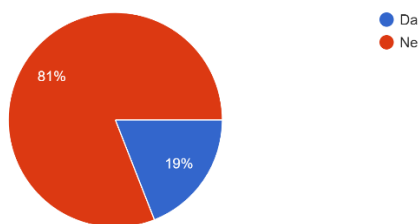


Fig. 34 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the immediate understanding of a message, age group 18-25

Događa li vam se da, kada se dopisujete s osobom druge dobne skupine, ne razumijete odmah značenje poruke?
21 odgovor

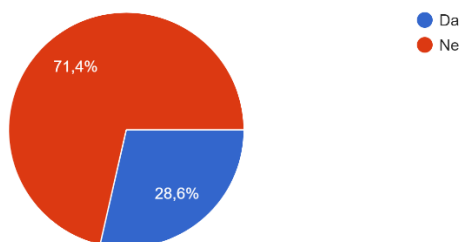


Fig. 35 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the immediate understanding of a message, age group 26-33

Događa li vam se da, kada se dopisujete s osobom druge dobne skupine, ne razumijete odmah značenje poruke?
21 odgovor

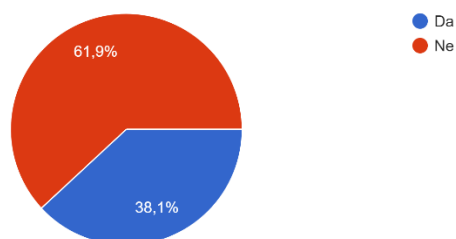


Fig. 36 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the immediate understanding of a message, age group 34+

4.6. DISCUSSION

The survey results reveal significant similarities and differences in idiolects across different age groups in their usage of electronic communication. Across all age groups, a high percentage of electronic communication use is presented, with most participants reporting using it several times a day. This suggests that electronic communication is a vital part of daily life regardless of age. However, younger respondents (18-25) stand out for their predominant use of e-communication for private reasons, whereas older age groups (26-33 and 34+) exhibit a more balanced approach, utilizing e-communication for both private and formal reasons. These answers may reflect the younger group's integration of digital communication into their social lives, while older groups possibly use it more for work or formal interactions.

Moreover, the results indicate a generational difference in communication style and attention to linguistic characteristics. Younger participants are less likely to use punctuation and proper capitalization, showing a more informal style. In contrast, older respondents tend to stay loyal to more traditional and formal writing styles. This division likely reflects the informal, fast communication among younger users who prioritize speed and simplicity. Additionally, the use of abbreviations is widespread among all age groups, even though younger participants prefer the use of English vocabulary.

The use of foreign words in text messaging further highlights generational differences. Younger participants predominantly incorporate English words and abbreviations, indicating a strong influence of global digital culture. In contrast, older groups demonstrate a more diverse use of foreign vocabulary. This could possibly reflect broader life experiences or exposure to different languages. Despite these differences, most participants across all three groups report paying attention to the correct spelling of foreign words.

Finally, the survey results suggest that while participants across all age groups generally adapt their messaging style when communicating with different age groups, younger participants are more likely to require clarification when texting older individuals. This finding highlights potential generational gaps in communication preferences and understanding. Moreover, it emphasizes the need for greater awareness and adaptability when interacting across age groups.

4.7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the survey results provide valuable insights into the electronic communication habits of different age groups. While there are similarities in the frequency and general use of electronic communication, there are also notable differences in the purpose of communication, attention to linguistic features, and use of abbreviations and foreign words. Younger participants tend to use a more informal and private communication style with a lot of abbreviations, showing the influence of social media and digital culture. In contrast to this, older participants exhibit a more formal approach typical to traditional communication culture. Additionally, the survey highlights the importance of adaptability in cross-generational communications, as differences in style can lead to misunderstandings. Overall, these findings emphasize the dynamic and always evolving nature of electronic communication and the ways in which different generations use it.

5. CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I wanted to explore the complex relationship between age and electronic communication. In particular, I focused on how idiolects, individual language styles and patterns, are influenced by age in the context of digital interaction i.e., text messaging.

As people age, their idiolects are shaped by various factors such as social experiences, technological advancements, and shifts in communication mediums. The rise of the Internet and electronic communication has introduced new ways of language use which led to the development of unique linguistic features, such as internet slang, that are prevalent in digital interactions. The Internet presented the rapid evolution of communication technologies that are still evolving and are every day presenting new developments. This technological progression has not only transformed the way people interact, but also significantly impacted language use, particularly among different age groups. The influence of the Internet on language is evident in the widespread adoption of new terms, abbreviations, and syntactic structures that are characteristic to electronic communication.

The survey conducted as part of this thesis provided empirical insights into the influence of age on idiolects in electronic communication. The results showed the generational differences in language use. Younger individuals are more likely to incorporate internet slang and new linguistic structures into their communication, while older individuals tend to retain more traditional language patterns. These findings support the idea that age plays a significant role in shaping idiolects within the world of electronic communication.

In conclusion, this thesis has demonstrated that the connection of age and electronic communication is a rich area for linguistic exploration. The relationship between individual language patterns and technological advancements continues to evolve, suggesting that future research could further explore the consequences of electronic communication on language development across different generations. Further studies could also explore how emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality, might influence idiolects in digital communication. Additionally, investigating the role of cultural and geographical factors in shaping online language use across various age groups could provide deeper insights into the global impact of the Internet on language. As electronic communication continues to evolve, research in this area will be essential to fully understand its relationship with linguistic diversity and change.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

ITU. (2021, November). *Share of Households with a Computer at Home Worldwide from 2005 to 2019*. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/748551/worldwide-households-with-computer/>

Barlow, M. (2010). Individual Usage: A Corpus-Based Study of Idiolects. *Draft for LAUD Conference*. Landau, Germany. Retrieved from [Individual_usage_a_corpus_based_study_of.pdf](#)

Berners-Lee, T., Fischetti, M. (1999). *Weaving the Web: The Original Design and Ultimate Destiny of the World Wide Web by Its Inventor*. New York, USA: HarperCollins Publishers

Cambridge University Press. (n.d.). Idiolect. In *Cambridge Dictionary*. Retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/idiolect>

Cambridge University Press. (n.d.). Internet. In *Cambridge Dictionary*. Retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/internet?q=Internet>

Cambridge University Press. (n.d.). Leet. In *Cambridge Dictionary*. Retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/leet?q=leetspeak>

Cambridge University Press. (n.d.). Netspeak. In *Cambridge Dictionary*. Retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/netspeak>

Castells, M., Fernandez-Ardevol, M., Linchuan Qiu, J., & Sey, A. (2004). *The Mobile Communication Society: A Cross-cultural Analysis of Available Evidence on the Social Uses of Wireless Communication Technology*. Los Angeles, USA: University of Southern California, Annenberg School for Communication

Crystal, D. (2004). *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press

Herring, S. C. (2001). Computer-Mediated Discourse. In D. Tannen, D. Schiffrin & H. Hamilton (Ed.). *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (pp. 612-634) Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers

Ishii, K. (2006). Implications of Mobility: The Uses of Personal Communication Media in Everyday Life. *Journal of Communication*, 56, 346-365. Retrieved from [Implications_of_Mobility_The_Uses_of_Per.pdf](#)

Kemper, S., Herman, R., & Lian, C. (2003). Age differences in Sentence production. *Journals of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*, 5, 260-269. Retrieved from

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/5859778_Age_Differences_in_Sentence_Production#fullTextFileContent

Laricchia, F. (2024, June 12). *Smartphones- Statistics & Facts*. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/topics/840/smartphones/#topicOverview>

Liu, J.Y., Zhang, X.Y., & Li, H.X. (2023). Analysis of Language Phenomena in Internet Slang: A Case Study of Internet Dirty Language. *Open Access Library Journal*, 10, 1-12. Retrieved from https://www.scirp.org/pdf/oalibj_2023082115521963.pdf

Moreau, E. (2020, November 10). *Urban Slang Dictionary: Online Acronyms, Phrases and Idioms*. Retrieved from [Internet Slang Dictionary: Acronyms, Phrases, Idioms \(liveabout.com\)](#)

Palander, M. (2007). Changes in an Idiolect from Childhood to Middle Age. *Linguistica Atlantica*, 27, 81–85. Retrieved from <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/la/article/view/22625>

Sankoff, G. (2018). Language Change Across the Lifespan. *Annual Review of Linguistics*, 4. Retrieved from <https://www.annualreviews.org/content/journals/10.1146/annurev-linguistics-011817-045438>

Wright, D. (2018). Idiolect. *Oxford Bibliographies*. Retrieved from <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780199772810/obo-9780199772810-0225.xml>

7. ABSTRACT

The Internet has greatly influenced the daily lives of a large number of people. From the way people think, the way they present themselves, to the use of free time, the Internet has reshaped reality. It has also opened some new viewpoints when it comes to human interaction and communication. The aim of this thesis is to explore the influence of age on idiolects within the context of electronic communication. By examining the relationship between individual language use (idiolects) and age, the study shows how generational differences manifest in digital communication. In order to present the subject, the research is divided into three main sections. The first part focuses on the concept of idiolects, covering its etymology, and also the impact of age on personal language variations. The second section provides a comprehensive overview of electronic communication, including the history of the Internet, the rise of wireless communication, and the emergence of Internet language called Netspeak. The final section presents a survey analysing text messaging behaviours across different age groups, highlighting significant differences and similarities in language use and communication styles. The results suggest that age does influence idiolects in electronic communication, with younger and older generations showing different linguistic patterns. This research contributes to the understanding of how digital communication continues to evolve and reflects broader sociolinguistic trends.

Key words: e-communication, idiolects, age, Internet, Netspeak, Internet slang

8. LIST OF FIGURES

Koliko često komunicirate elektroničkim putem?
21 odgovor

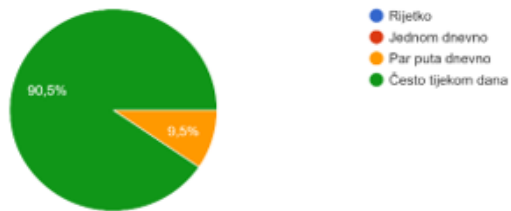


Fig. 1 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the daily use of electronic communication, age group 18-

Koristite li e-komunikaciju iz privatnih ili formalnih razloga?
21 odgovor

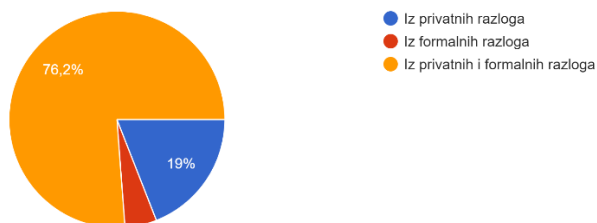


Fig. 4 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the reasons for the e-communication usage, age group 18-25

Koristite li e-komunikaciju iz privatnih ili formalnih razloga?
21 odgovor

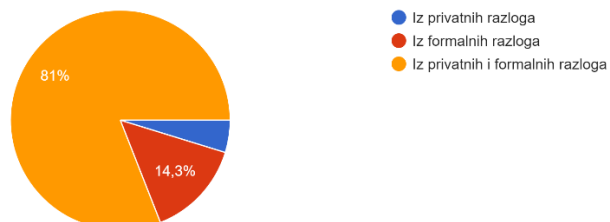


Fig. 5 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the reasons for the e-communication usage, age group 26-33

Koristite li e-komunikaciju iz privatnih ili formalnih razloga?

21 odgovor

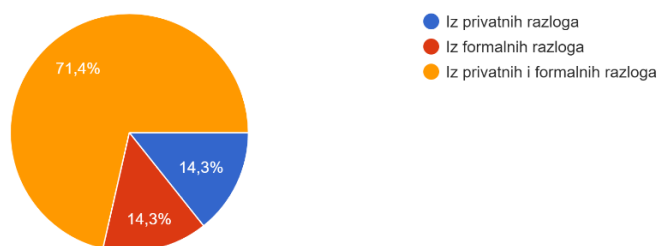


Fig. 6 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the reasons for the e-communication usage, age group 34+

Koristite li e-komunikaciju češće iz privatnih ili formalnih razloga?

21 odgovor

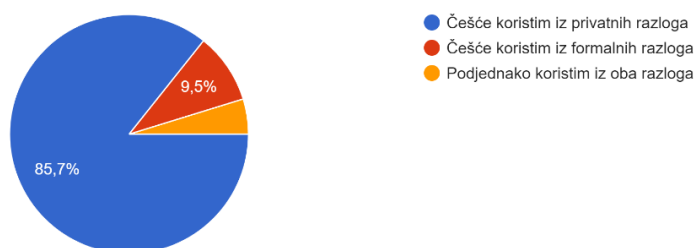


Fig. 7 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the reason for which they use e-communication more, age group 18-25

Koristite li e-komunikaciju češće iz privatnih ili formalnih razloga?

21 odgovor

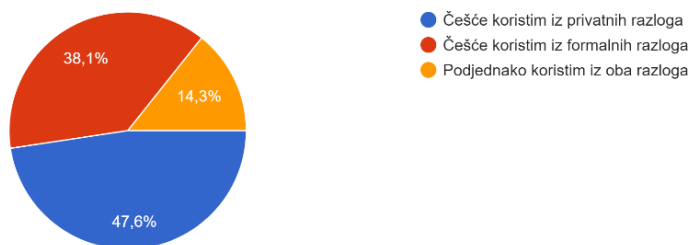


Fig. 8 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the reason for which they use e-communication, age group 26-33

Koristite li e-komunikaciju češće iz privatnih ili formalnih razloga?

21 odgovor

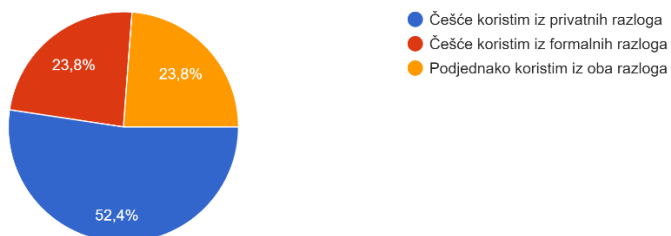


Fig. 9 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the reason for which they use e-communication more, age group 34+

Razlikuje li se vaš način pisanja poruka iz privatnih razloga od onog kada pišete iz formalnih razloga?

21 odgovor

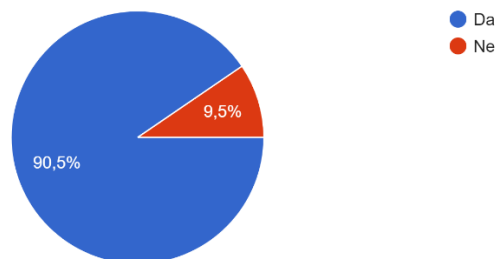


Fig. 10 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the differences in styles of messages, age group 18-25

Razlikuje li se vaš način pisanja poruka iz privatnih razloga od onog kada pišete iz formalnih razloga?

21 odgovor

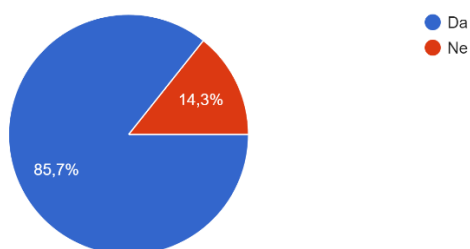


Fig. 11 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the differences in styles of messages, age group 26-33

Razlikuje li se vaš način pisanja poruka iz privatnih razloga od onog kada pišete iz formalnih razloga?

21 odgovor

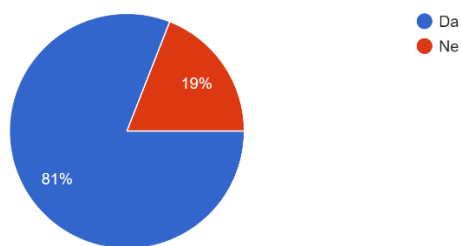


Fig. 12 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the differences of styles in messages, age group 34+

Skraćujete li ponekad riječi? (vjv, nmg, lkn...)

21 odgovor

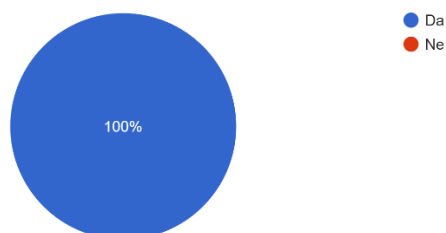


Fig. 16 Graphic description of the answers regarding the use of abbreviations, age group 18-25

Skraćujete li ponekad riječi? (vjv, nmg, lkn...)
21 odgovor

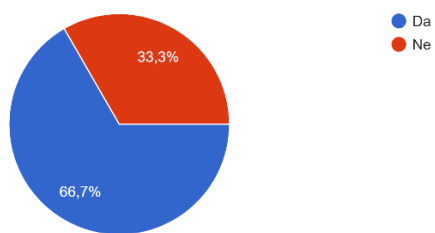


Fig. 17 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the use of abbreviations, age group 26-33

Skraćujete li ponekad riječi? (vjv, nmg, lkn...)
21 odgovor

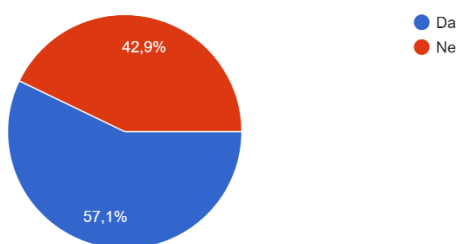


Fig. 18 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the use of abbreviations, age group 34+

Pazite li na pravilno pisanje riječi tijekom dopisivanja? (pravilno pisanje ije-je, č-ć...)
21 odgovor

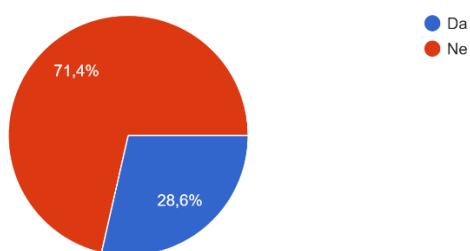


Fig. 19 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the correct spelling, age group 18-25

Pazite li na pravilno pisanje riječi tijekom dopisivanja? (pravilno pisanje ije-je, č-ć...)
21 odgovor

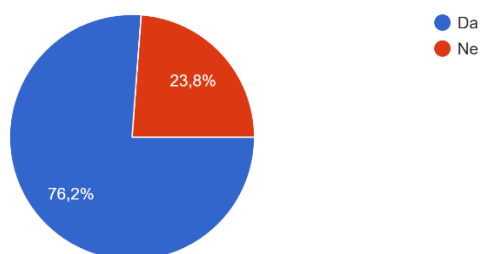


Fig. 20 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the correct spelling, age group 26-33

Pazite li na pravilno pisanje riječi tijekom dopisivanja? (pravilno pisanje ije-je, č-ć...)

21 odgovor

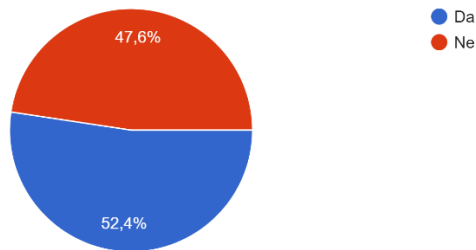


Fig. 21 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the correct spelling, age group 34+

Kada koristite strane riječi/izraze pišete li ih pravilno ili kako ih izgovarate? (maybe-mejbi...)

21 odgovor

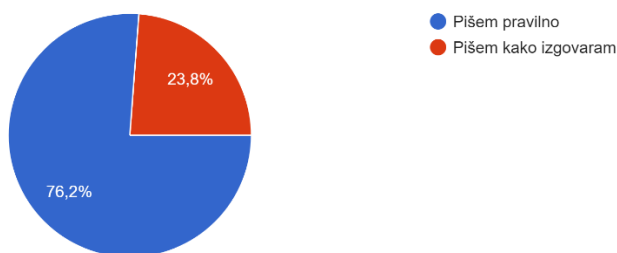


Fig. 25 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the spelling of foreign words, age group 18-25

Kada koristite strane riječi/izraze pišete li ih pravilno ili kako ih izgovarate? (maybe-mejbi...)

20 odgovora

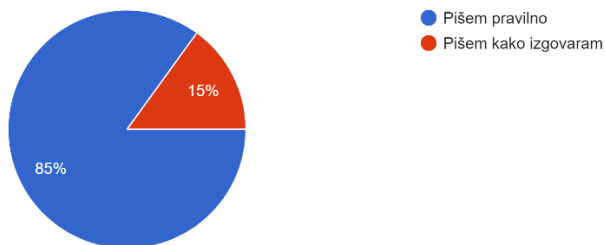


Fig. 26 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the spelling of foreign words, age group 26-33

Kada koristite strane riječi/izraze pišete li ih pravilno ili kako ih izgovarate? (maybe-mejbi...)

20 odgovora

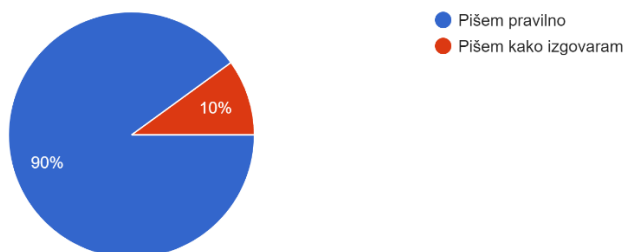


Fig. 27 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the spelling of foreign words, age group 34+

Kada se dopisujete s osobom druge dobne skupine pazite li na način dopisivanja i prilagođavate li ga toj osobi?

21 odgovor

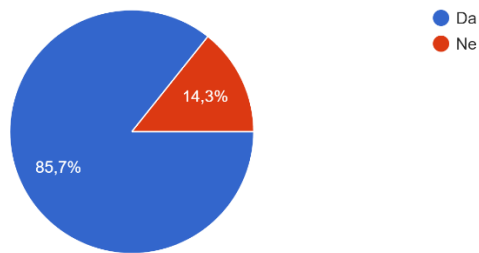


Fig. 28 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the adaptation of messages, age group 18-25

Kada se dopisujete s osobom druge dobne skupine pazite li na način dopisivanja i prilagođavate li ga toj osobi?

21 odgovor

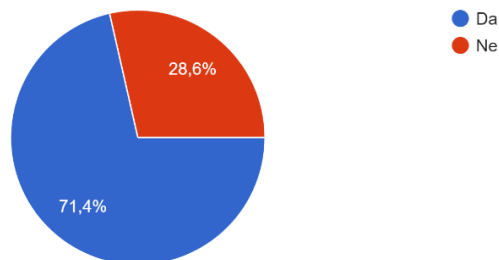


Fig. 29 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the adaptation of messages, age group 26-33

Kada se dopisujete s osobom druge dobne skupine pazite li na način dopisivanja i prilagođavate li ga toj osobi?

21 odgovor

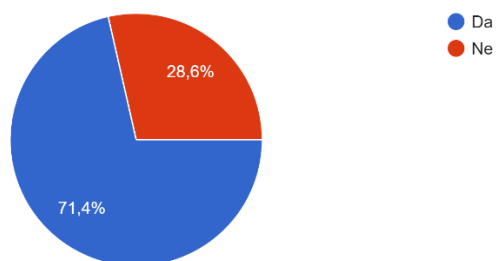


Fig. 30 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the adaptation of messages, age group 34+

Događa li vam se da, kada se dopisujete s osobom druge dobne skupine, morate dodatno objasniti značenje vaše poruke?

21 odgovor

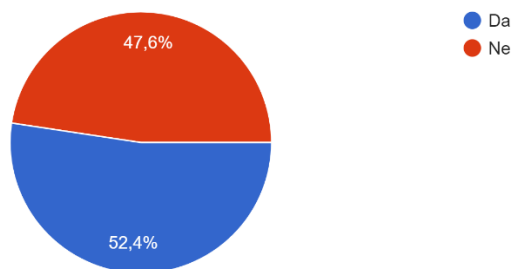


Fig. 31 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the further explanation of messages, age group 18,25

Događa li vam se da, kada se dopisujete s osobom druge dobne skupine, morate dodatno objasniti značenje vaše poruke?

21 odgovor

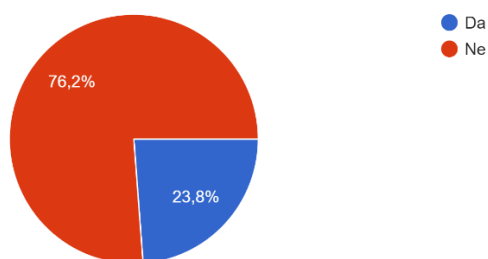


Fig. 32 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the further explanation of messages, age group 26-33

Događa li vam se da, kada se dopisujete s osobom druge dobne skupine, morate dodatno objasniti značenje vaše poruke?

21 odgovor

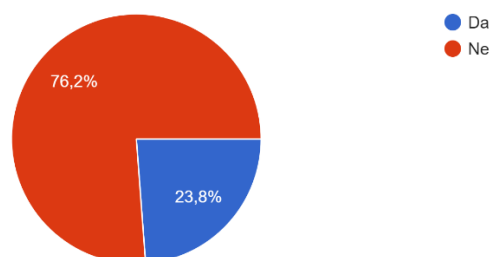


Fig. 33 Graphic representation of the answers regarding the further explanation of messages, age group 34+