

Affordances and Constraints of Gen Z Slang in ELT Classrooms: Students' and Teachers' Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

In today's rapidly evolving linguistic landscape, Gen Z slang has become increasingly prevalent in classrooms, reflecting the unique identity and communication styles of contemporary students. This transcendental phenomenological study investigated the affordances and limitations of incorporating Gen Z slang into English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms in Infanta, Quezon. Utilizing purposive sampling, data were gathered from ten English teachers and ten Gen Z students through semi-structured questionnaires and interviews, then analyzed using Colaizzi's phenomenological method. The findings reveal that Gen Z slang functions as a double-edged sword. On the positive side, it serves as a linguistic bridge that enhances teacher-student connections, fosters an inclusive, learner-centered

environment, and boosts classroom engagement, confidence, and social identity. Conversely, its integration introduces notable limitations, including semantic confusion, friction between formal and informal registers, assessment challenges, interference with academic language development, and inclusion gaps among peers with unequal familiarity. To navigate these challenges without eliminating the slang entirely, educators implemented several proactive strategies, such as scaffolding, controlled slang integration, and context-focused discussions on register. Crucially, teachers utilized translanguaging techniques—permitting fluid language and style shifts—while acting as linguistic mediators to guide students in recognizing situational appropriateness. Ultimately, this study demonstrates that the objective in modern ELT classrooms should not be the eradication of Gen Z slang, but rather empowering students to navigate both informal vernacular and formal English responsibly and contextually.

Keywords: *Gen Z Slang, Affordances, Constraints, ELT Classrooms*

INTRODUCTION

One of the many characteristics of language is dynamic. It reflects speakers' identities and cultures through a system that is always changing. This dynamism is demonstrated by the younger generations, particularly Generation Z, who utilize slang frequently to change academic and digital communication. Gen Z refers to those born between 1997 and 2012, whereas millennials are people born between 1981 and 1996 (Manheim, 2026). According to Salas et al., (2023) terms like "rizz," "bet," "slay," "ghosting," "no cap," "BTW" OTW, "" forda, ferson and many others are examples of Gen Z slang, which has quickly proliferated through social media and online communication to become a distinctive linguistic aspect of adolescent culture. Exposure to various digital platforms and communication resulted to the expansion of English slang usage, but in a variety of context, its impact in EFL classroom interaction is still not well mapped. There is still dispersed, uneven, and inconsistent results in research implications for

education, despite the fact that studies have looked at specific elements like usage patterns or motivational impacts (Rohman, 2026).

Slang, which is one of the most commonly used languages among Gen Z, has always been an essential component of language use and cannot be disregarded when analyzing people's regular conversational language use (Kostic & Burai, 2023). As digital media grows, slang usage patterns have also changed dramatically. If people want to understand more about the role of slang in this medium and the personal viewpoints associated with it, they must look at these changes. The use of Gen Z slang in English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms raises questions about their appropriateness, pedagogical value, and impact on language acquisition, despite their role in helping students develop their identities and form connections with their classmates. The language attitudes of students in educational interactions is a great help in fostering better learning and communication. So with the help of educators, students' language attitudes must be developed to use the language properly and effectively, including the ability to use language in a range of interaction situations like conversing with teachers and classmates, giving presentations, and in different real-life situations (Suyitno & others, 2025).

One study found that implementing an English-only policy in the classroom has a positive effect on students' language development. Because they are compelled to communicate and express themselves solely in English, they can improve their grammar, pronunciation, social relationships, fluency, and self-confidence. It is recommended to implement and enforce an English-only policy in the classroom to support students' language acquisition. However, while some studies continue to advocate for English-only policies (EOP), others disagree. Popovics (2023) argued that in English-language classrooms where English is not the students' native language, it is important to use current, real-world words and expressions that students can easily understand.

One aspect of genuine language that is often overlooked in conventional English-language training is slang. Slang is a language that is frequently used in daily conversations and is crucial to learning English. In general, slang does not create or exacerbate a language barrier between generations; rather, slang terms and terminology bring two generations together. The saying "Slang is for Young People" is not totally true. Slimani's (2025) research revealed that social media affected EFL students, who struggled to learn vocabulary, and that it is critical to understand the meanings of terms used on social media. Teachers agreed that social media language significantly affected classroom communication by exposing students to real-world language and giving them a false picture of it. Generation Z needs more exposure to real-world interactions away from technology, and the platform should be designed with education in mind.

According to Jabeen and Nawaz (2025), educators and language policymakers should see digital language as a reflection of modern communication norms and include new forms into teaching and evaluation practices. These trends are fundamentally an evolution of language driven by a linked, digital world, despite some opinions that they represent a decline in long-standing linguistic norms. Within the scope of ELT, teachers strive to promote the use of standard language and communicative abilities. Since Gen Z slang is frequently in class, teachers must strike a balance between acknowledging linguistic innovation and maintaining academic language standards. Although slang can make lessons more relatable and engaging because the language feels natural to them, some educators are still concerned that it is a barrier that weakens students' ability to use formal English language skills. Given these differing viewpoints, the study argues that there is a need to examine both the affordances and constraints of Gen Z slang in English-learning environments.

Generally speaking, the study emphasized that a balance must be maintained. Gen Z slang should not be totally banned nor fully accepted without limits. It is also important that teachers understand the advantages and disadvantages to help students communicate naturally while mastering formal English.

According to Gomez and Gomez (2021), numerous local studies demonstrate that Filipinos speak English fluently. The Education First Index even factored this evidence in. Education is central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development because it is one of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and

Cultural Organization's goals (UNESCO, 2017). The Philippines is one of the largest English-speaking countries in the world. In fact, English is one of the official languages of the Philippines. However, according to the EF English Competency Index, the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), and the average IELTS scores of Filipino test takers, there has been a steady decline in English language competency among Filipinos over time (Santos et al, 2022). They added that, based on the information provided, it is impossible to dispute that Filipino English proficiency has been declining for years due to several specific factors, including age, socioeconomic status, motivation, parental participation, learning environments, teaching methods, and comprehensive input. The authors draw the following conclusions: (a) ongoing English language practice and usage could help us further solidify our economy; (b) grammar still has a lot of room for improvement, which could also help learners feel less anxious; and (c) we still need to find a balance between honing English language instruction and fostering our local and cultural languages.

This study has two objectives: first, to learn more about the use and perception of slang by ESL students and teachers; and second, to determine the affordances and constraints of Gen Z slang in ELT classrooms. This study, therefore, seeks to examine the perspectives of both students and teachers on the use of Gen Z slang in ELT classrooms.

By understanding how slang influences communication, motivation, and classroom interaction, the research aims to provide insights that may help educators balance linguistic authenticity with pedagogical effectiveness.

Furthermore, the findings of this study may contribute to the development of better teaching methods that teachers can integrate into formal English instruction without compromising academic standards.

Research Questions

Given that language is constantly changing, Generation Z has introduced many slang terms that influence how young people communicate in and out of the classroom. Since many use Gen Z slang terms and expressions in their everyday conversations, offline or online, lessons became more interesting and relatable in English language teaching (ELT) classrooms. However, it can also lead to issues such as miscommunication.

Some students may become too comfortable using these casual expressions and may have ignored the standard grammar rules. Despite the fact that Gen Z slang is becoming very common, little is known about how it impacts communication, language acquisition, and teacher-student interaction in ELT classrooms, which means that more studies are needed to better understand the phenomenon.

The purpose of this study is to investigate educators' and learners' perspectives on the advantages, disadvantages, and implications of using Gen Z slang in English classes. This study specifically seeks to address the following questions:

1. How do educators and students perceive the affordances of Gen Z slang in ELT classes?
2. What constraints must teachers and students overcome in order to use or comprehend Gen Z slang when learning a language?
3. What effects do this slang terms have on language competence development, engagement, and communication in the classroom?
4. What strategies do educators apply to deal with the difficulties posed by Gen Z slang usage in ELT settings?

METHODS

Research Design

The researcher used a qualitative-phenomenological design in this study. Phenomenology is a qualitative research methodology that aims to investigate and comprehend human experiences as they are experienced by individuals. It is an effective study technique for revealing the core of human experiences. It offers distinctive insights that are priceless across disciplines by concentrating on lived reality and subjective perspectives. Hassan (2024) explained that phenomenology can be used by researchers to deeply understand complex phenomena by focusing on people's real experiences. Instead of just measuring data, it looks at how individuals personally see and interpret situations or events. In this study, it is used to understand how Gen Z slang is becoming more common in English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms.

Edmund Husserl, the father of phenomenology, asserts that phenomenology is the cornerstone of all philosophy. As the subjective prerequisite for the possibility of any kind of thinking, particularly science, it is a reflexive act that breaks through the regular flow of consciousness to reveal and outline its eidetic or essential structures, i.e., its deliberate nature. The basic tenet of (Kantian) transcendental philosophy—that all objects are accessible to consciousness—is inextricably linked to the phenomenological approach. Every consciousness is consciousness-of-something, and every conscious awareness is deliberate awareness (Marinay, nd.).

The researcher used transcendental phenomenology to minimize bias and ensure that the participants' lived experiences were represented as accurately as possible. This approach was deemed appropriate because the personal beliefs and perspectives regarding the use of Gen Z slang in language learning could potentially influence the interpretation of data. Specifically, the researcher's strong preference for formal English and support for an English-Only Policy in English language teaching (ELT) classes may affect the objectivity during the analysis process. By utilizing transcendental phenomenology, the researcher incorporated bracketing, which sets aside personal assumptions and preconceived notions to focus on understanding the authentic experiences shared by the participants.

In qualitative research, the main research designs are interviews and observations. Phenomenology uses interview protocols to gather data and some form of thematic analysis to reveal the experiences being studied (2020, Gill).

Research Locale

The research was conducted in Infanta, Quezon, a first-class municipality in the northern region of the province and part of the first congressional district with 76,186 residents across its 36 barangays. The total land area of Infanta is about 130.1 square kilometers, which is about 1.5% of Quezon's total area. Infanta has nineteen (19) public elementary schools and four (4) public secondary schools. These schools serve a wide range of students from different socio-economic and language backgrounds.

This setting is pertinent to the study entitled as it encompasses both rural and semi-urban educational contexts where English language teaching (ELT) methodologies converge with modern youth linguistic practices. Infanta is a good place to study how Gen Z slang affects classroom communication, engagement, and teaching methods because there are multilingual learners, students are exposed to digital culture, and teachers are at different levels of readiness to teach language.

Sampling Technique

This qualitative study used purposive sampling in identifying participants who offered substantial, pertinent, and experiential insights into the application of Gen Z slang in English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms. The participants in this study consisted of two (2) groups, particularly the English language teachers who have been in service for already 10 years or more, and the Gen Z students from certain schools in Infanta, Quezon. The teacher-participants were selected based on their professional experience because it is a reliable source of information regarding the use of Gen Z slang in ELT classes.

On the other hand, the students who took part were categorized as Gen Z who were born between 1997 and 2012. They are suitable participants for the study because of their firsthand experiences and habitual use of Gen Z slang and its influence on communication and learning. The study selected these participants to make sure that the collected data would be relevant and helpful in understanding the affordances and constraints of Gen Z slang in ELT classrooms.

Table 1. *Participants' Profile*

STUDENT PARTICIPANTS	
Student 1	Student 1 is an incoming Grade 12 male student in one of the public high schools in Infanta, Quezon. He was born on January 2009 and is now 17 years old.
Student 2	Student 2 is a female Grade 11 student from HUMSS class in a public secondary school in Infanta, Quezon. She was born in the year 2009 and is now 17 years old.
Student 3	Student 3 is an eighteen (18) year-old male student who recently finished high school. He was born in the year 2007 and is now preparing for his college life.
Student 4	Student 4 is a seventeen (17) year old student from Infanta National High School who was born in the year 2009. He is a dancer and an officer in a student government.
Student 5	Student 5 is a female who was born on 2008. She graduated from a public secondary school in Infanta Quezon and is now an incoming college student.
Student 6	Student 6 is a Grade 9 student from a national high school in the town of Infanta, province of Quezon. He was born on January 2011 and is now 15 years of age.
Student 7	Student 7 is a Grade 10 student from a public secondary school in Infanta, Quezon. Born in the year 2010, she is now 16 years old.
Student 8	Student 8 was born on November 2009 and currently a Grade 12 student enrolled in a public secondary school in Infanta, Quezon.
Student 9	Student 9 is a female ABM student who was born on June 2008. She is now an incoming 1 st year college student.
Student 10	Student 10 recently finished Grade 9 and now an incoming Grade 10 student in a public secondary school in Infanta, Quezon. She was born in the year 2011
TEACHER PARTICIPANTS	
Teacher 1	Teacher 1 is a 35 year-old English and Filipino Teacher teaching Junior High School in one of the public secondary schools in Infanta, Quezon. She taught in a private school for a year and 1 year private and has been teaching in public for 11 years.
Teacher 2	Teacher 2 is currently teaching in a public school as a Grade 10 English teacher. She taught in a private school for almost year. In 2016, she began teaching in public school rendering 10 years of public service in the current year.
Teacher 3	Teacher 3 is a female teacher who is now 38 years of age. She taught in a private school for 4 years. Currently, she is teaching as a senior high school teacher in a public school in Infanta, Quezon for 17 years.
Teacher 4	Teacher 4 is a forty (40) year-old female teacher from a public secondary school in Infanta Quezon with 20 years of teaching experience. She spent seven (7) years on online teaching and thirteen (13) years in public service as of the year. She is handling English classes among Grade 10 learners.
Teacher 5	Teacher 5 is a female seasoned teacher from one of the schools in Infanta, Quezon with thirty (30) long years of teaching experience. She is now a retireable teacher who handles English 7.
Teacher 6	Teacher 6 is a male teacher, 45 years of age, and is currently teaching English classes to Junior High School and Senior High School learners in one of the schools in the province of Quezon.
Teacher 7	Teacher 7 is a 56 year-old female public secondary school teacher in Infanta, Quezon. She has been teaching for 32 years as an English teacher in both junior high school and senior high school students.

Teacher 8	Teacher 8 is a 31 year-old female teacher. She was a substitute teacher in n integrated school for 6 months. Currently, she is Grade 7 teacher in a public secondary school in Infanta, Quezon with already 10 years of teaching experience as an English teacher.
Teacher 9	Teacher 9 is a 31 year-old female teacher with 11 years of teaching. She has two (2) years teaching experience in a private school in Infanta. As of the moment, she teaches English in a public secondary school.
Teacher 10	Teacher 10 was born on 1992 and is now 34 years old. She taught in one of the schools in Pollilio for 6 years. She is now teaching at another public secondary school in Infanta Quezon for 7 years as an English teacher in Grade 9.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' And Teachers' Perception On The Affordances Of Gen z Slang In ELT Classes

Table 2. *Thematic Analysis on the Pervasive Use of Gen Z Slang*

Participants' Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Theme Cluster	Emergent Theme	Theme
Student 1	"I always use it... I'm with friends, cousins, family."	There is a frequent use of slang in social interaction	Social Interaction		
Student 9	"Almost every day... keeping up with trends."	Slang use is driven by trends and social adaptation	Social Trend	Influence of Social Circles	Pervasive Use of Gen Z Slang
Student 3	"Almost always... common in society."	Slang is widely used and socially accepted	Societal Norms		
Student 6	"It's normalized... I feel like I belong more..."	Slang fosters belongingness and group identity	Influence of Peers		
Student 2	"Every time... it feels like I can't live without it."	Slang is habitual and deeply internalized	Gen Z Slang as a Routine	Habitual Usage	
Student 5	"Everyday... it's already a default setting."	Slang is automatic and part of identity	Identity Formation		
Student 4	"Used... especially in chats, TikTok..."	Slang is commonly used in digital communication	Digital Communication	Online Expression	

The findings showed that Gen Z slang had a significant impact on the students' daily communication. The use of Gen Z slang "everyday" and "every time" in both online and offline conversations was consistently mentioned by the student participants. This indicates that Gen Z slang is used regularly and not just occasionally.

This finding supported the idea of sociolinguistics in which language changes as a result of social group and shared identities. It also supported the study of Gonzaga (2023) which highlighted the dynamic characteristic of language as effect of modernization. One example of how language evolves to suit the demands of a particular generation is the frequent use of slang. Another finding revealed in the study is the effect of peer interaction and social membership on the learners. Most of the student participants stated that they are more inclined to use slang in social media, with friends and relatives. This means that they change their language and behavior in order to blend in with their social circles. Therefore, utilizing Gen Z slang indicates that you are a member of a group and that you relate to that generation. As mentioned by

Gonzaga (2023) students used slang to feel they belong. They thought they were influenced when everyone was using Gen Z language.

*“Ang sagot ko po ay everytime, everyday, every week sapagkat sa bawat sentimo ng oras ay nagagamit ko ang Gen Z slang sapagkat nasa aking utak at parang hindi po ako mabubuhay kapag wala ito.” (“My answer is every time, everyday, every week it's in my brain and it's like I can't live without it.”) - **Student 2***

*“Everyday po akong gumagamit ng slang words online offline. Since isa po akong Gen Z ay ang paggamit po ng slang words ay lagi ko na pong nagagamit talaga or kusa pong lumalabas ito sa bibig ko na nagsisilbing default settings na po.” (“I use slang words every day, online and offline. Since I am a Gen Z, I have always used slang words or they just come out of my mouth, serving as my default settings.”) - **Student 5***

*“Ginagamit ko po ang slang ng bongga lalo na sa chats, pag magcocomment ako sa tiktok at ibang social media platforms.” (“I use the slang very much, especially in chats, when I comment on TikTok and other social media platforms.”) - **Student 4***

*“Syempre po, Gen Z ako, lagi ko pong nagagamit lalo po at kasama ko ang mga friends, mga kaibigan ko, mga pinsan ko, kahit nga po pamilya ko’y.” (“Of course, I'm Gen Z, I always use it, especially when I'm with friends, my friends, my cousins, even my family.”) - **Student 1***

*“Halos araw-araw po, bilang Gen Z po ay parang nakikisabay na lang din po ako sa mga nauusong salita.” (“Almost every day, because in our time, as Gen Z, it's like I'm just keeping up with the trendy words.”) - **Student 9***

Table 3. Thematic Analysis on Psychological Empowerment through Gen Z Slang

Participant's Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Theme Cluster	Emergent Theme	Theme
Student 2	Slang helps avoid embarrassment and boosts confidence	Familiar language reduces fear and builds confidence	Confidence Building	Increased Student Confidence	Psychological Empowerment through Gen Z Slang
Student 3	Slang increases confidence and sense of belonging	Use of shared language fosters belongingness	Belongingness		
Teacher 3	Students express better using slang	Slang facilitates full expression	Communication Support		
Teacher 8	Slang enhances confidence and natural expression	Natural communication improves participation	Expression		
Student 9	Slang enables natural and confident expression	Slang supports authentic self-expression	Expression		
Student 10	Slang improves expression and confidence	Language familiarity enhances communication ability	Expression		

Student 4	Slang reduces nervousness in speaking	Slang lowers speaking anxiety	Anxiety Reduction	
Student 5	Slang serves as comfort language and reduces nervousness	Slang creates emotional ease in communication	Emotional Comfort	Reduced Communication Anxiety
Teacher 1	Slang reduces anxiety in an English-only environment	Flexible language policy lowers student fear	Anxiety Reduction	
Teacher 2	Slang removes emotional barriers	Validation of identity increases participation	Emotional Safety	
Teacher 10	Students speak more when speech isn't judged	Acceptance increases willingness to participate	Psychological Safety	

Both students' and teachers' verbatim consistently exhibited the first theme, which is empowerment facilitated by a safe environment for dialogue, greater self-assurance, and reduced anxiety. Based on the statements given by students and teacher participants, it supported the viewpoint that they take control of communication and become more engaged in class by utilizing Gen Z slang. As shared by student 3, "slang boosts confidence and a sense of belonging," implying that "using shared language helps people feel like they belong."

Student 9 claimed that "slang allows for natural and confident expression," which is another way of saying that "slang supports authentic self-expression." Their confidence comes not just from their abilities but also from how they feel with others. This simply means that students become more confident when they can speak in ways that come easily to them. As claimed by teacher 8, Gen Z slang "enhances confidence and natural expression," which suggests that "natural communication improves participation." These quotations showed how self-assurance among students increases by being sincere and knowledgeable about the use of Gen Z slang. Students are more likely to participate, communicate, and share ideas when they are not forced to follow strict language norms. Thus, positive classroom experiences encourage confidence, which is a collective and individual outcome. This supported the idea in the study of Gonzaga (2023) that students express more effectively when using the language they are comfortable with.

The second new topic showed how language can remove barriers. Student 4 stated that "slang reduces nervousness in speaking," which is equivalent to "slang lowers speaking anxiety." Slang "serves as comfort language and reduces nervousness," added Student 5, who suggested that "slang makes it easier to talk about feelings. Also, Teacher 1 claimed that slang "reduces anxiety in an English-only environment," which suggests that "a flexible language policy lowers student fear." These quotations showed that students and teachers have had similar experiences: students may get more anxious in formal language learning, especially if they are afraid of making mistakes.

Because slang is relaxed and low-pressure, it helps people deal with this fear. The proposed interpretations highlighted that anxiety among students is reduced with emotional ease and the ability to use language in various circumstances. When their anxiety levels are lower, students can better participate in discussions as part of the broader process of making them feel empowered.

The third pattern that appeared is the classroom setting that promotes involvement by raising students' self-esteem and lowering their anxiety. Teacher 10 mentioned that "students talk more when speech isn't judged," which suggests that "acceptance makes them more willing to participate." Teacher 2

stated that slang "removes emotional barriers". It implies that student participation increases when there is validation of their identity. These identical quotations demonstrated that psychological safety is rooted on acceptance and the absence of judgment.

This finding is congruent to the study of Lutviana & Mafulah (2021), which states that the use of Gen Z slang created a lively and laid-back environment.

In other words, psychological safety affects people's internal feelings; for example, the more confidence they have, the less nervous they become, which consequently affects their behavior inside the classroom like talking, engaging, and exchanging ideas.

Based on participant remarks and their interpretations, the study showed that Gen Z slang greatly affects students' feelings and social interactions.

Psychological empowerment is met by lowering anxiety, boosting confidence, and creating a safe mental environment. This implies that practicing linguistic flexibility inside the classroom is not just a preference of Generation Z but on a broader side, it is important in promoting and improving student participation and engagement.

*“Nakatutulong po ang Gen Z slang para mas makapag-express ako at para mas maging confident ako sa sarili ko. Baka isipin nila na hindi nila ako ka vibes pag hindi ako nagamit ng slang.” (“Gen Z slang helps me express myself more and makes me more confident in myself. They might think that we don’t have the same vibes if I didn’t use slang.”) - **Student 10***

*“Tinutulungan ako ng Gen Z slang na mag-express confidently dahil nafti-feel ko na ako ay mas natural when I use Gen Z slang sa pakikipag-usap sa ibang tao lalo kapag ka-humor ko. It makes me less nervous to speak in public because I can use slang more confidently.” (“Gen Z slang helps me express myself confidently because I feel more natural when I use Gen Z slang in talking to other people, especially when I am joking. It makes me less nervous to speak in public because I can use slang more confidently.”)- **Student 4***

*“Ang paggamit po ng slang words ay nagsisilbing comfort language po sa akin. Kapag po gumagamit ako ng slang words ay unti-unti pong nawawala ‘yong kaba po sa sarili ko at parang mas nagkakaroon po ako ng confidence na maipahayag po kung ano po yong gusto kong sabihin.” (“Using slang words serves as a comfort language for me. When I use slang words, the nervousness in myself gradually disappears, and I seem to gain more confidence in expressing what I want to say.”) - **Student 5***

*“Slang acts as a powerful tool to destroy emotional barrier. When I acknowledge a student’s natural dialect, it signals that I value their cultural identity, which reduces anxiety and increases their willingness to participate.” - **Teacher 2***

*“Students feel more comfortable speaking honestly and participating more in class because they know that their natural speech pattern won't be viewed as "wrong” - **Teacher 10***

Table 4. *Thematic Analysis on Gen Z Slang as Linguistic and Pedagogical Resource*

Participant’s Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Theme Cluster	Emergent Theme	Theme
Student 1	Slang makes class more engaging and aligned with Gen Z	Cultural alignment increases engagement	Engagement	Enhanced Classroom Engagement	Gen Z Slang as Linguistic and Pedagogical Resource
Student 2	Slang makes class enjoyable	Fun learning environment improves motivation	Engagement		

Student 5	Less formal discussion is more engaging	Reduced rigidity enhances attention	Engagement	
Student 10	Slang makes lessons exciting and relatable	Familiarity enhances interest	Engagement	
Teacher 7	Slang increases participation and lowers anxiety	Validation increases engagement	Participation	
Teacher 8	Slang creates fun, relaxed environment	Relaxed setting encourages interaction	Classroom Climate	Supportive Learning Environment
Student 4	Slang makes discussion relatable and less formal	Informality promotes interaction	Relatability	
Student 7	Slang makes discussion relatable and easier to understand	Familiarity improves comprehension and comfort	Comprehension & Comfort	
Teacher 6	Slang can be used as springboard/icebreaker	Slang initiates discussion and creativity	Teaching Strategy	Instructional Facilitation
Teacher 9	Slang motivates and acts as icebreaker	Slang stimulates participation	Teaching Strategy	
Teacher 1	Slang is a tool for code-switching	Slang supports linguistic competence	Language Learning	Slang as Pedagogical Tool
Teacher 2	Slang is a linguistic asset	Language evolution can be observed and taught	Language Awareness	
Teacher 3	Slang captures attention	Slang is effective engagement medium	Engagement Tool	
Teacher 7	Slang bridges informal and formal English	Slang connects real-life and academic language	Bridging Function	
Teacher 8	Slang improves relatability and interest	Slang strengthens teacher-student connection	Relatability	
Teacher 10	Slang improves engagement in public schools	Slang addresses participation issues	Practical Tool	

It is evident that Gen Z slang has obvious advantages in the classroom, specifically in motivation, interaction with other classmates and engagement during the discussion.

As reported by the students and teachers, lessons become more "exciting," "alive," and "engaging" when Gen Z slang was utilized in conversations. This implies that students are far more engaged in learning when language used in the classroom is appropriate for their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They elaborated that Gen Z slang makes classes less formal, thus, making them connect and comprehend better. Students appreciate and are more likely to engage when the teachers match their vibe and make the classroom more dynamic and engaging.

On the other hand, teachers believe that it is effective to use slang in teaching. It can be used to introduce lessons, spark discussions, or maintain students' interest. They also believed that using Gen Z slang results to continuous interactions among students. Furthermore, it aids students in actively constructing meaning and not just simply absorbing information. It is also noted by the teachers that slang promotes open communication by making the classroom less formal and more laid back. Teachers have observed that with the use of Gen Z slang, students can easily and confidently ask questions, raise their hands and share their ideas because they are used to the language. To put it briefly, Gen Z slang improves instruction by creating a more engaging, student-centered, and dynamic learning environment in the classroom.

This finding supports the idea that Gen Z slang expressions improve the ESL learning process and provide additional benefits as mentioned by Kostic & Burai (2023).

*“Mas nakaka-engage or mas exciting or engaging 'yong klase kapag gumagamit 'yong teacher ng slang at nakakasabay siya sa daloy, sa vibes ng mga Gen Z.” (“The class is more engaging or more exciting when the teacher uses slang and can keep up with the flow, with the vibes of Gen Z.”) - **Student 1***

*“Opo, mas nakakaexcite o nakaka-enjoy po na gumamit ng mga Gen Z slang para po magkaroon ng saya ang isang klase.” (“Yes, it is more exciting or enjoyable to use Gen Z slang to make a class more fun.”) - **Student 2***

*“Mas buhay po ang discussion kapag hindi po masyadong formal yong way ng pag-di-discuss. Mas nakaka-engage and nakaka hook ng atensyon 'yong paggamit po ng slang words.” (“The discussion feels more alive when the way of discussing is not too formal. Using slang words is more engaging and hooks attention.”) - **Student 5***

*“Ang pros po ng paggamit ng Gen Z slang sa English classes is mas nakaka- excite 'yong lesson, parang nabubuhayan 'yong klase kasi maraming nakaka-relate na kabataan.” (“The advantage of using Gen Z slang in English classes is that it makes the lesson more exciting, it feels like the class comes alive because many young people can relate.”) - **Student 10***

Another significant discovery is that Gen Z slang is not just merely an informal language but also a helpful linguistic tool for English language teaching (ELT) classes. Instructors considered slang as a tool that can improve language learning, particularly in developing students' conversational skills and linguistic awareness particularly in knowing when to transition from informal to formal English.

In other words, slang plays an important role in code switching. With its application, students can be aware of what language to use depending on the context and its appropriateness, tone and audience. Simply put, their language flexibility and proficiency is demonstrated with their ability to shift between formal and informal language. Additionally, slang can be used in teaching morphology, semantics, and the evolution of language. According to teachers, students are aware of the changes in a language which helps them understand the functions of language, specifically in everyday context. In this manner, teachers gain their students' motivation and interest. This also indicates that it is not a hindrance but rather a significant help in language acquisition when used appropriately.

It enabled educators to use Gen Z slang in contextualization of lessons, making complicated concepts easier to understand and apply in real life. In this way, Gen Z slang proved to be meaningful in language teaching and fostering stronger relationships through shared language.

*“I feel more comfortable and engaged when Gen Z slang is occasionally used in English classes dahil it makes the discussion more relatable and mas madali po syang intindihin.” (“I feel more comfortable and engaged when Gen Z slang is occasionally used in English classes because it makes the discussion more relatable and easier to understand.”) - **Student 7***

*“Ang slang na mga salita ay maaaring maging spring board sa umpisa ng pag tatalakay o kaya ay malikot na laro, imahinasyon upang sumigla nag talakayan.” (“Slang words can serve as a springboard at the beginning of a discussion or as a playful game, imagination to enliven the discussion.”) - **Teacher 6***

*“I think this be a good opportunity for engagement if these slang words are used as motivation in our lesson since we have a topic for style and tone when writing. Or in some times, if the student, unexpectedly use the slang that serves as an ice breaker.” - **Teacher 9***

“I view Gen Z slang as a functional bridge to communicate competence and of course a corruption of formal English and Filipino. I see it as a pedagogical tool to teach code switching. - Teacher 1

“I view Gen Z slang as a dynamic linguistic asset rather than a deficit. In a classroom, we can observe language evolution in real-time. It is a resource for teaching morphology and semantics.” - Teacher 2

“Gen Z slang is unique, special, and can hook young people. It is a linguistic resource for ELT classrooms that can capture students' attention.” - Teacher 3

“I see Gen Z slang as a legitimate linguistic resource, not just ‘informal talk.’ It reflects how language evolves in real contexts. In the ELT classroom, I use it as a bridge—connecting students’ everyday language to standard English.” - Teacher 7

“I see Gen Z slang as a useful tool in the classroom. It helps me connect with my students because it is part of their everyday language. When I use it sometimes, it makes lessons feel more relatable and less formal. It also helps students become more interested in learning English.” - Teacher 8

“I view Gen Z slang as a means of communication rather than a barrier. Since student engagement is frequently our largest challenge in a public-school setting, utilizing their language is an ideal teaching tool.” - Teacher 10

Table 5. Thematic Analysis on Gen Z Slang as Identity Formation and Authentic Expression

Participant's Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Theme Cluster	Emergent Theme	Theme
Student 3	Slang enhances creativity in writing	Slang fosters creative thinking	Creativity		
Student 6	Slang improves answering ability	Familiar language aids academic performance	Academic Support		
Teacher 1	Slang supports authentic communication and flexibility	Slang enables emotional and expressive depth	Authenticity	Identity Development	Identity Formation and Authentic Expression
Teacher 2	Slang reflects identity and belonging	Slang builds student voice	Social Identity		
Teacher 7	Slang develops voice and audience awareness	Slang enhances communication competence	Communication Skills		
Teacher 9	Slang creates belongingness	Shared language strengthens relationships	Social Connection		

Gen Z language is a huge part of who the students are, and using it makes the students feel natural and genuine. This study showed that Gen Z slang is very important for students to express their thoughts, feelings and personalities comfortably in class.

Some students also said that slang makes them freer and more creative in what they want to say. This is especially clear in writing and class discussions, as reported by Student 3 and Student 6. They stated that they feel more comfortable trying out new words. Using slang makes people more creative and expressive, which is a sign that they are more comfortable and skilled with Gen Z slang.

*“Naeengganyo ako kapag ginagamit ko ang Gen Z slang sa loob ng klase dahil tumutulong ito para mas maging malikhain ako lalo na kapag sumusulat ng mga teksto.” (“I am encouraged when I use Gen Z slang in class because it helps me be more creative, especially when writing texts.”)- **Student 3***

*“Isa rin po ito sa nakakatulong upang maging perfect 'yong aking pagsagot sa bawat kasagutan.” (“This is also one of the things that helps me to be perfect in my answering of each question.”) - **Student 6***

Teachers also stressed that slang helps students find their "real voice." Students can share their personality and point of view more clearly and honestly. As highlighted by Teacher 1, using Gen Z slang “supports authentic communication”. Not only this but slang also helps students have a feeling of belonging. It serves as a social marker that links students with their peers, strengthening relationships between students in the classroom. This feeling of belonging is important for making a learning environment where students feel valued and understood. It helps in strengthening the bond between the teachers and students and fostering a stronger connection.

In general, this is very important for learning how to communicate well because it lets students feel their individuality and identity. Gen Z slang use encourages students to become true to themselves and use the language as a tool for making personal and social meaning.

*“Slang can support authentic communication by providing the emotional tools. Students need to speak their truth. And it can also support identity expression by allowing them to project a personality that feels contemporary and theirs rather a person navigated by a textbook. Slang allows students to communicate their feelings with a level of precision and sincerity that formal English sometimes sanitizes. When students experiment with new terms, they are practicing linguistic flexibility. - **Teacher 1***

*“For high school students, slang is a way to show their social identity and belonging. Allowing its use in our class discussions encourages them to develop an authentic "voice" in our subject (English).” - **Teacher 2***

*“Slang allows students to express their identity more naturally. It supports authentic communication because students are not forced into overly formal language all the time. When they can switch between slang and standard English, they develop a stronger sense of voice and audience awareness.” - **Teacher 7***

*“Slang serves as a sense of belongingness. This means it creates a group and lets students adapt in a group that somehow implies a good relationship among learners.” - **Teacher 9***

Constraints That Teachers and Students Must Overcome to Use or Comprehend Gen Z Slang When Learning A Language

Table 6. Thematic Analysis on Linguistic Interference and Register Confusion

Participant’s Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Theme Cluster	Emergent Theme	Theme
Teacher 1	“Slang...creates register interference and redefines formality as a skill.”	Slang disrupts students’ ability to distinguish between formal and informal registers	Register Confusion	Breakdown of Language Boundaries	Linguistic Interference and Register Confusion

Teacher 7	“Slang can blur grammatical rules...”	Slang distorts grammatical understanding	Grammar Distortion	
Teacher 3	“They cannot compose a good sentence... minds are anchored in Gen Z words.”	Overreliance on slang weakens formal writing skills	Writing Difficulties	Reduced Academic Writing Competence
Teacher 8	“Students use slang in formal writing...”	Students fail to shift language based on context	Contextual Misuse	
Teacher 9	“Misspelled words... considered correct in slang.”	Exposure to slang alters spelling conventions	Orthographic Confusion	Disruption of Standard Language Norms
Student 2	“Confused... ‘ferson’ and ‘person’.”	Slang confuses spelling and correctness	Spelling Confusion	
Student 3	“Confused with abbreviations...”	Slang abbreviations hinder comprehension	Abbreviation Misunderstanding	

This study revealed that correct utilization in formal English is one of the main issues with Gen Z slang. Teachers have consistently stated that students struggle to distinguish between formal and casual language. The frequent use of Gen Z slang, according to Teacher 1, results in "register interference," which means that students mix casual conversation with formal communication. This implies that students use slang casually and they also become less aware of when to use formal language, such as in academic, professional, or serious situations. Teacher 3 agreed with this concern as well. According to her, students "cannot compose a good or correct sentence or paragraph" because their minds are already "anchored in using Gen Z words." This anchoring effect demonstrated how students treat Gen Z slang as a normal language, which makes it hard for them to use it in proper academic vocabulary. Teacher 7 added that slang "blurs grammatical rules." Teacher 8 also concurred in this worry, stating that "students frequently use slang in formal writing" even when it's inappropriate.

Regarding this, students themselves admitted that sometimes they are also confused by Gen Z slang. According to Student 2, he didn't know the difference between "ferson" and "person," and Student 3 didn't know how to properly use acronyms. These examples showed that frequent use of slang can negatively affect students' understanding of word correctness, spelling conventions, and grammar. Teacher 9 also supported this by saying that because students oftentimes encounter misspelled slang terms, they may eventually believe that they are correct.

The quotes demonstrate how students find it difficult to code-switch—or adjust their informal language to a formal communication because they are used to using Gen Z slang. This weakens their writing abilities, grammatical skills, and even use inappropriate or offensive language in the classroom. This study was supported by Slimani's (2025) wherein the effects of the use of Gen Z slang is evident in terms of the students' vocabulary. Therefore, it is important that students learn the terms they acquire from social media.

As agreed upon by the teachers in the said study, classroom communication is negatively by the real-world language being used especially by the Gen Z.

“We teachers know that slang, or Gen Z slang is inherently a non-standard. However, the main challenge is not slang itself but the interference it causes. Gen Z slang can create register interference and it can redefine formality as a skill.” - Teacher 1

“One major challenge is that slang can blur grammatical rules or introduce non-standard structures. Students may overgeneralize slang usage, applying it in formal writing where it is not appropriate. It also evolves quickly, making it difficult for teachers to keep up.” - Teacher 7

“They cannot compose a good or correct sentence or paragraph because they are used to Gen Z slang. Some of them, even if they are in senior high school, grade eleven or grade twelve, when it comes to writing, they really struggle. That is the biggest challenge. They forget the right term to use because their minds are already anchored in using Gen Z words.” - Teacher 3

“One challenge is that students might rely too much on slang and forget proper grammar or formal English. Slang can make it harder for students to understand when to use formal or academic English. Sometimes they use slang in formal writing or school tasks, which is not appropriate.” - Teacher 8

“Perhaps it’s the misspelled words that are considered correct in slang but not in a formal English. Because there are cases of contraction of the words that learners think is the correct ones since it is acceptable and commonly used spelling.” - Teacher 9

“Nacoconfuse ako kung acronym po ang ilalagay ko o yung pinakang full meaning po nung acronym. Ako po ay naka-encounter din ng nacoconfuse po siya about sa spelling niya kung tama po ba yung sinulat niya. Tulad na lang po ng “ferson” na salitang Gen Z slang at “person.” (I get confused whether I should put the acronym or the full meaning of the acronym. I also encountered someone who got confused about the spelling, whether what they wrote was correct. Just like the word “ferson,” a Gen Z slang word, and “person.”) - Student 2

“Siguro medyo nagkaroon lang ako ng pagkalito pagdating sa mga abbreviation dulot ng mga Gen Z slang kaya hindi ko minsan matukoy kung ano ang salitang iyon tsaka kung paano siya gagamitin.” (“I just got confused when it came to abbreviations caused by Gen Z slang, so sometimes I couldn't identify what that word was and how to use it.”) - Student 3

Table 7. Thematic Analysis on Semantic Ambiguity and Vocabulary Confusion

Participant's Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Theme Cluster	Emergent Theme	Theme
Student 1	“L can mean love or loser...”	Words have multiple interpretations in slang	Polysemy Confusion	Instability of Meaning	Semantic Ambiguity and Vocabulary Confusion
Student 6	“Meaning drifts away...”	Slang complicates understanding rather than clarifies	Meaning Distortion		

Teacher 2	“Semantic change...creates ambiguity.”	Rapid evolution of slang leads to multiple meanings	Semantic Ambiguity	
Teacher 4	“Slang creates another meaning...confuse students.”	Slang alters word meanings, causing misunderstanding	Meaning Shift	Misinterpretation of Words
Teacher 10	“Slang could cause misunderstanding ...”	Lack of shared understanding disrupts communication	Communication Breakdown	
Student 4	“Tea means drink...or gossip.”	Slang redefines existing vocabulary	Dual Meaning Conflict	Conceptual Confusion
Student 5	“BET...different in academic and slang.”	Academic and slang meanings clash	Terminology Conflict	

Another major issue found out in this study is that slang words can have different meanings depending on the situation. According to both students and teachers, Gen Z slang easily creates confusion since the meaning of words is not the same or consistent. Because of this, it makes communication harder and less accurate.

As discussed by Teacher 2, the idea of "semantic change," which means that slang words can easily change over time and may differ from one person to another. Slang "creates another meaning for another word,".

According to Teacher 4, which oftentimes causes misunderstandings. Teacher 10 also explained that this can cause miscommunications between students and teachers during class because of the differences in interpretations. Students also said that Gen Z slang can be confusing in real-life situations. According to Student 1, terms like "L" might mean "love" or "loser," making it difficult to understand what they imply. Meanwhile, Student 4 stated that "tea" is a drink in formal English, its colloquial meaning is "gossip."

Student 5 also discussed that the term "bet" can have different meanings depending on the context. Other students emphasized how communication is affected by these changing meanings. According to Student 6, slang changes the word's "real meaning," making it more difficult to understand. Several interpretations of the same slang term also perplexed Student 7, while Student 10 stated that meanings of slang usually differ from "real grammar." These exact quotes demonstrated how Gen Z slang destabilizes vocabulary knowledge, making it challenging for students to understand word meanings and proper usage. Slang frequently confuses and makes things more difficult to understand, particularly in educational contexts. This is similar to the findings of Gonzaga (2023) that as time goes on, word meanings shift leaving teachers perplexed.

“Minsan ay mayro'n akong mga terms na hindi ko gets kaya hindi ako nakaka-relate tapos minsan naman 'di ba mayro'n pong mga acronyms like TBH to be honest. Minsan nga'y mayro'n pang mga uhm 'yong W, 'yong L mean sa nahahirapan din ako ngayon mag-isip ng meaning dahil masyado ng madaming meaning, for example 'yong L puwedeng love 'yong L puwedeng loser.” (“Sometimes there are terms that I don't get, so I can't relate, and then sometimes, you know, there are acronyms like TBH, to be honest. Sometimes there are even, um, the W, the L, which I also find difficult to think of the meaning now because there are too many meanings. For example, L can mean love, L can mean loser.”) - Student 1

“Minsan po 'yong slang words ay parang yong tunay na meaning ay lumalayo na po doon sa word na ginagamit so instead po na mas maiintindihan mo 'yong isang word, ang tendency po no'n is mas lalo kang malilito mas pinapa-complicated pa po.” (‘Sometimes, slang words sometimes are like the real meaning drifts away from the word being used, so instead of you understanding a word better, the tendency is that you get more confused, it makes things even more complicated.’) - **Student 6**

“The biggest challenge is semantic change—slang changes so fast that it can create ambiguity to students. For example, the word "cap" if used in a group or peer discussion activity, can have different meanings/interpretation if not properly used in a sentence.” - **Teacher 2**

“Though slang makes it easier for the class to become engaging, somehow it blurs the students' mind when it comes to the proper usage of words. Slang usually creates another meaning for another word which oftentimes confuse students and teachers.” - **Teacher 4**

“Additionally, because slang is always changing, it could cause students and teachers to get confused or misunderstand one another in class.” - **Teacher 10**

“During English classes po is yong isa pong word ay mayro'ng double meaning. Medyo naguguluhan po ako, halimbawa po no'n is yong tea sa english po 'di ba "yong T parang yong tsaa or yong iniinom na liquid pero pag po kasi sa Gen Z ay parang 'yong tea is tsismis.” (During English classes is that some words have double meanings. I get a bit confused. For example, 'tea' in English, right, is like 't' similar to tea, the drink you consume, but for Gen Z, it's like 'tea' means gossip.) - **Student 4**

“Mayro'n po akong na-encounter na word na BET o yong bet sa business finance ang ibig sabihin po nito is yong pag-i-invest mo ng pera. Tapos ang ibig sabihin naman po ng BET sa slang words is pagsang-ayon mo. Mayro'n po talagang pagkakaiba.” (“I encountered a word BET or the word bet in business finance which means investing money. Then, the meaning of BET in slang words is your agreement. There is really a difference.”) - **Student 5**

Table 8. Thematic Analysis on Assessment and Academic Performance Constraints

Participant's Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Theme Cluster	Emergent Theme	Theme
Teacher 3	“They use slang in essays...wrong construction.”	Slang negatively affects formal writing in exams	Writing Errors in Assessment	Reduced Academic Achievement	Assessment and Academic Performance Constraints
Teacher 8	“Slang affects scores...”	Use of slang lowers academic performance	Grading Impact	Reduced Academic Achievement	Assessment and Academic Performance Constraints
Teacher 1	“Slang creates a grading fog...”	Difficulty distinguishing competence due to slang	Evaluation Difficulty	Blurred Academic Standards	Assessment and Academic Performance Constraints
Teacher 2	“Standardization...cannot use slang in assessments.”	Slang conflicts with academic standards	Assessment Constraints	Blurred Academic Standards	Assessment and Academic Performance Constraints
Teacher 10	“Teacher could misinterpret slang...”	Slang introduces bias and misinterpretation in grading	Assessment Ambiguity	Blurred Academic Standards	Assessment and Academic Performance Constraints

The findings showed that Gen Z slang also affects teachers in administering assessments and assigning grades. They have repeatedly stated that the frequent use of slang among students negatively impacts their academic performance, particularly in written tasks.

Teacher 2 emphasized that slang cannot be used on official exams, demonstrating a conflicting issue with the students' casual language and academic standards. Teacher 3 also stated that students use Gen Z slang in composing essays using slang thus resulting to poor syntax and sentence structure. According to Teacher 8, students' scores are directly impacted by the use of slang and result in poor academic performance.

The difficulty of grading and comprehending is another issue that was noted by this study.

Slang can cause misunderstandings between teachers and students, especially when teachers cannot clearly understand what the students are trying to express using Gen Z slang, according to Teacher 10. Teacher 1 referred to this as a "grading fog," which means that it is difficult to determine whether the student is just communicating unclearly or already struggling with the academic concepts. Due to this, teachers encounter difficulty in assessing the true abilities of students in writing and communication.

In other terms, slang not only affects student performance but also compromises the validity and comprehensibility of tests. Slang-using students might not be able to demonstrate their knowledge of formal English in their work, and professors might find it difficult to accurately evaluate their responses.

Because Gen Z slang influences the way students express and communicate, it can also be more difficult for them to meet academic standards and perform well on exams. Generally, frequent usage of Gen Z slang affects the grammar, vocabulary, and language abilities of students which are important skills in academic writing and assessments.

*“Naku! marami, lalo sa pagsusulit. Sobra na sila sa paggamit ng mga slang words pati yung sa pagsusulit though dapat correct English o correct grammar tayo, hindi siya umaakma o mali ang construction.” (“Oh no! A lot, especially during exams. They overuse slang words, even in exams, though we’re supposed to use correct English or correct grammar, it doesn’t fit or the construction is wrong.”) - **Teacher 3***

*“In assessments, students sometimes include slang in essays or written tasks where formal English is required. This affects their scores because they are not following the expected language standards.” - **Teacher 8***

*“There is always conflict between fluency and accuracy. The primary concern is the standardization of success. Slang creates a grading fog where the line between communicative brilliance, academic, and academic deficiency becomes blurred.” - **Teacher 1***

*“My main concern is standardization. Since we don't actually use slang in our assessments and lessons, they cannot use it on academic context. This is why I always include the tone and word choice in my rubric for evaluating their tasks.” - **Teacher 2***

*“Slang may make grading less accurate. Another problem with clarity is that a teacher could misinterpret a slang term and provide a lower grade than the student deserves. Slang could get in the way of the assessment's main objective, which is to gauge formal communication.” - **Teacher 10***

Table 9. *Thematic Analysis on Communication Barriers and Classroom Exclusion*

Participant's Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Theme Cluster	Emergent Theme	Theme
Participant's Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Theme Cluster	Emergent Theme	Theme
Teacher 3	“Sometimes I don't understand them...”	Teachers struggle to interpret slang	Teacher Comprehension Gap	Instructional Barriers	
Teacher 5	“Not everyone understands ‘delulu’...”	Unequal familiarity with slang among students	Unequal Language Exposure	Exclusion in Participation	Communication Barriers

Teacher 5	“Not everyone understands ‘delulu’...”	Unequal familiarity with slang among students	Unequal Language Exposure	Exclusion in Participation
Teacher 7	“It can exclude students...”	Slang creates social and academic gaps	Inclusivity Issues	
Student 1	“I get confused whether to use slang or formal...”	Students experience uncertainty in communication choice	Code-Switching Difficulty	Communication Anxiety
Student 10	“Different meaning in real grammar...”	Disconnection between slang and formal language	Conceptual Conflict	

As revealed by this study, slang can make class discussions fun and exciting, but this research also indicated that it could lead to communication issues and feelings of exclusion. Teachers shared that sometimes they encounter difficulty in understanding the slang terms used by the students. It makes communication harder for them. Teacher 3 quoted that sometimes they "end up guessing" since they cannot fully understand what the students are saying. This communication gap also makes some students less willing to participate because of the confusion and misunderstanding it can cause.

According to Teacher 5, not every student is familiar with some slang terms, such as "delulu" or "pakak." Also, they mentioned that some students found it difficult to understand what was happening in class. The students themselves reported that they shared the same experiences. Student 1 expressed confusion over whether to use formal language or slang when speaking to teachers who may not understand informal expressions used by Generation Z. According to Student 10, "real grammar" sometimes gives meanings that are different from Gen Z slang usage.

Teachers also reported that it can create inclusivity issues among students. Teacher 7 said that slang can spice up conversations, but it can also exclude students who are not familiar with the Gen Z slang terms. When slang is used, students frequently need to ask for clarification or translation, according to Teacher 9. This only means that while slang strengthen social interaction among students, it can also create communication barriers in class.

These comments clearly showed how slang can make it difficult for the teachers and students as well to comprehend and participate equally in ELT classes. In this case, it can reduce the overall classroom participation and make it more difficult for some students to communicate with one another and for the entire class to engage, particularly for those students with different backgrounds and levels of understanding of the Gen Z slang terms.

This finding was supported by Salas et al., (2023) where linguistic difference was identified for the cause of misunderstandings and communication gaps among teachers and students, between Millennials and Gen Z. The information gathered indicates that Millennials have trouble comprehending recently coined terms.

*“Sometimes ako na teacher ay nanghuhula. Talagang minsan ay hindi ko sila nauunawaan. It brings confusion din so some of them kahit gustong sumagot pero hindi naman nila alam o confused sila do'n sa words kaya hindi na lang sila sasagot.” (“Sometimes I, as a teacher, end up guessing. There are times when I really don't understand them. It also brings confusion, so some of them, even if they want to answer, don't know how or are confused by the words, so they just don't answer.”) - **Teacher 3***

*“Some students might be familiar using a specific term. However, some might not. Like for example, in my class, not everyone can understand the words Delulu or Pakak. And sometimes they play it as if they knew the meaning of but actually, they don't.” - **Teacher 5***

“Discussions become livelier and more relatable. However, it can also exclude students who are unfamiliar with certain slang terms, especially in diverse classrooms. Even I myself, sometimes, I can no longer relate to them.” - **Teacher 7**

“Kapag ako’y nagsalita ng unfamiliar words sa kaniya ay biglang mapapatigil si ma’am. Tapos ‘yong mga ‘yong mga kaklase ko naman eh tatahimik din at siyempre nagtanong bigla sila ng kung anong tinutukoy ko. So ayun, nalilito ako kung gagamitan ko baga ng slang na sagot o formal na pananalita.” (“Whenever I speak unfamiliar words to her, ma’am suddenly stops. Then my classmates would also be quiet and, of course, they would suddenly ask what I was referring to. So there, I get confused whether I should use slang responses or formal speech.”) - **Student 1**

“Pag ginagamit po yung slang words sa lesson is hindi ko po masyadong naiintindihan gawa po ng iba po yong pagkaslang. Minsan ay may ibang meaning sila para sa amin at may ibang meaning din po sila sa totoong buhay or sa totoong grammar.” (“When slang words are used in the lesson, I don't really understand them because some of the slang comes from others. Sometimes they have one meaning for us and a different meaning in real life or in proper grammar.”) - **Student 10**

Table 10. *Thematic Analysis on Fluency and Accuracy Dilemma*

Participant’s Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Theme Cluster	Emergent Theme	Theme
Teacher 2	“Slang facilitates fluency but hinders precision.”	Slang improves speaking but reduces accuracy	Fluency vs Accuracy Conflict		
Teacher 7	“Enhances vocabulary but may slow mastery...”	Slang has both benefits and drawbacks	Dual Effect on Competence	Incomplete Language Competence	
Teacher 8	“Students cannot switch to formal English...”	Lack of code-switching ability limits proficiency	Code-Switching Deficiency		Fluency and Accuracy Dilemma
Teacher 10	“Reliance prevents formal learning...”	Overdependence on slang hinders development	Dependency on Informal Language	Reduced Academic Readiness	
Student 8	“Weakens vocabulary...”	Slang limits academic vocabulary growth	Vocabulary Limitation	Reduced Lexical Development	

The final theme discussed that while utilization of Gen Z slang increased fluency and confidence among students, it can also reduce the accuracy of formal language usage.

Most teachers have observed that slang makes students feel more comfortable and natural in expressing themselves, but it can be a problem when students are asked to utilize formal English in academic settings. This was attested by Teacher 2, slang "helps with social fluency but can hurt precision." Teacher 8 also expressed the same thought on this issue. Similarly, Teacher 10 warned that the excessive use of Gen Z slang may impede the students the development of formal language skills. The students also recognized this issue. Student 8 admitted that slang "weakens vocabulary" because there are many slang terminologies that cannot be employed in official academic duties, making it more difficult to compose quality texts. This means that Gen Z slang use limits pupils' academic vocabulary. At the same time, Teacher 7 argued that slang can be both beneficial and detrimental.

According to her, it can increase students' engagement and help them learn new vocabulary, but when overused, it can also hinder their learning of formal structures.

In this case, the problem lies not with use of Gen Z slang itself but with its excessive use, and with the limited practice of formal language. As revealed by the study, Gen Z slang strengthened communication and participation in the classroom but it also weakens the development of grammar and vocabulary among students.

*“Pinapahina nito ang ating vocabulary dahil hindi naman natin maaaring isama ang Gen Z slang sa isang pormal na aralin kaya talagang nahihirapan ang iba na bumuo ng mga teksto dahil nga hindi na ganoon kalawak ang kanilang vocabulary pagdating sa academic English na dulot ng Gen Z slang.” (“This weakens our vocabulary because we cannot include Gen Z slang in a formal lesson, so some really struggle to create texts since their vocabulary in academic English is no longer as extensive due to Gen Z slang.”) - **Student 8***

*“It facilitates social fluency but can hinder precision.” - **Teacher 2***

*“Slang can both support and hinder competence. It enhances vocabulary range and pragmatic awareness, but it may slow mastery of formal structures if not balanced properly. The key is guided exposure.” - **Teacher 7***

*“Slang helps in building confidence and fluency, especially in speaking. But it can also be a problem if students cannot switch to formal English when needed.” - **Teacher 8***

*Slang is a helpful shortcut that gives students the self-assurance to talk if they are concerned about making mistakes in their English. Their anxiety is reduced since they concentrate on interacting with others rather than strict grammar rules. Even if it gives them the self-assurance to start talking, relying too much on it may prevent students from picking up the formal language they will eventually require.” - **Teacher 10***

Effects of Slang Terms on Language Competence Development, Engagement, and Communication in Classroom

Table 11. *Thematic Analysis on Facilitative Role of Slang in Communication and Learning*

Participant's Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Theme Cluster	Emergent Theme	Theme
Student 5	“Makikita mo 'yong vibe... less intimidating... less boring discussion.”	Slang creates a relaxed, engaging, and less intimidating environment that improves understanding	Classroom Climate	Slang as Facilitative Tool	Facilitative Role of Slang in Communication and Learning
Student 9	“More relaxed and friendly... makes communications faster.”	Slang promotes friendliness and efficient communication	Classroom Climate		
Student 3	“Guro na sabay sa amin... nagkakaintindihan... comfortable at confident.”	Shared language strengthens rapport and confidence	Social Interaction	Slang in Expression	

Student 4	“Mas relatable... same humor... enlighten ang klase.”	Slang enhances relatability, humor, and engagement	Engagement	
Student 5	“New ways to express opinions and emotions.”	Slang expands expressive communication strategies	Expressive Competence	
Student 1	“Sa writing... engaging... expressive... appealing.”	Slang improves creativity and expressiveness in writing	Writing Skills	Slang as Learning Resource
Student 3	“May pagkalito pero... improves vocabulary.”	Slang exposure improves vocabulary and language awareness	Vocabulary Development	
Teacher 6	“Napapanahon... influences language development.”	Slang reflects evolving and relevant language use	Language Evolution	
Student 4	“Improves confidence... speaking...”	Slang enhances speaking confidence	Confidence Development	Slang and Confidence
Student 9	“Improves confidence... communication natural.”	Slang supports natural communication and confidence	Confidence Development	
Teacher 2	“Boosts sociolinguistic competence... broader range.”	Slang enhances adaptability across communication contexts	Sociolinguistic Skills	Slang and Flexibility
Teacher 10	“Flexible communicators... social and professional settings.”	Slang develops communicative flexibility	Communicative Competence	

The data repeatedly showed that Gen Z slang functions as a communicative tool that influences engagement and participation in the classroom. The participants elaborated that slang is more than just a way of communication.

One major benefit of Gen Z slang usage is the way it makes the learning environment more enjoyable and comfortable. According to Students 5 and 9, Gen Z slang makes the atmosphere "chill," "less scary," and "friendly."

Oftentimes, students feel nervous, hesitant, or find it difficult to communicate in a formal classroom atmosphere, but with Gen Z slang, this tension has somehow shifted. With a less formal setup, students are more inclined to engage, ask questions, and share ideas to others. Discussions become more engaging and dynamic when students feel comfortable speaking up. Moreover, the fact that slang makes classes "less boring" demonstrates how it keeps students focused and interested during discussions.

Slang also strengthens interpersonal relationships between the students and teachers. Student 3 mentioned that students and teachers were "in sync" because of this shared language. Communication becomes mutual and interactive rather than too formal when teachers adapt or understand their language.

Additionally, Student 4 discussed how slang can improve relationships because it allows them to easily relate to one another. They can laugh at their jokes and exchange humorous conversations, which is a powerful component. Students feel heard, understood and appreciated when they connect through this understanding.

The study also highlighted that Gen Z slang helps students to express better. Student 5 mentioned that slang gives them "new ways to express opinions and emotions". With this informal language, they can interact more personally and can relate to each other well, without strictly sticking to only formal structures of language. They can also change or shift to a tone needed in a specific situation.

"Makikita mo 'yong vibe sa isang komunikasyon tapos ginagawa po nitong mas chill at saka less intimidating po 'yong paligid, mas napapabilis po nito yong pagkakaintindihan ng dalawang tao. Tapos gaya po ng sabi ko kanina pag po gumagamit minsan ng slang words ay na le-less po yong pagka-boring ng discussion." ("You can see the vibe in a communication, and it makes the environment more chill and less intimidating, which speeds up the understanding between two people. And as I said earlier, sometimes when using slang words, it makes the discussion less boring.") - **Student 5**

"Slang po is great, more relaxed and friendly ang environment at mas pinapa dali po nito yung communications." "Slang is great, the environment is more relaxed and friendly, and it makes communications faster." - **Student 9**

"Pero mayroon din namang ibang guro na sabay na sabay talaga sa amin, 'yong tipong pwede na kaming magtawanan maghapon nang dahil sa mga pinag-uusapan namin dahil pareho naming na-gegets ang isa't-isa, the way kung paano kami mag-salita at mag-bigay ng opinyon at wala naman silang problema doon as long as na-eexpress namin kung ano ang nasa loob namin nang komportable at may confidence." (But there are also other teachers who are really in sync with us, the type where we can laugh all day because of what we talk about because we both understand each other, the way we speak and give our opinions, and they have no problem with it as long as we can express what's inside us comfortably and with confidence.) - **Student 3**

"It makes communication more comfortable at mas nagiging relatable siya among other students kasi siyempre magka-generation kayo, magka-humor kayo. Kanina nga sabi ko natutulungan niyang i-enlighten yong klase kasi yung ibang classmate magtatawanan sila." ("It makes communication more comfortable and he becomes more relatable among other students because, of course, you are of the same generation, you have the same humor. Earlier, I even said that he helps to enlighten the class because some classmates might just laugh.") - **Student 4**

In terms of writing and creativity, Gen Z slang assisted students to produce relatable outputs. Student 1 said that Gen Z slang can make writing more "interesting," "expressive," and "appealing."

This suggests that slang encourages students to explore different language styles and creative ways of expressing ideas. By experimenting with informal expressions and modern language trends, students may develop greater creativity and confidence in writing. It can make writing feel more lively, relatable, and engaging for readers.

Gen Z slang also helps students effectively tell story and express emotions during class so that they can connect more effectively with their target audience. In this way, slang can serve as a useful tool for creativity and self-expression. Learning new vocabulary and developing language awareness are also important aspects of using slang. Student 3 shared that although slang was confusing at first, the confusion was eventually resolved and even helped them learn new words and expressions. This means that exposure to slang does not always make language more difficult to understand. Instead, it can encourage students to

think more carefully about the differences between formal and informal language. Students become more aware of how language changes depending on the situation or context. These comparisons help them understand which words and expressions are appropriate in certain settings, such as casual conversations, classrooms, or formal writing.

The findings also demonstrated how slang can boost self-esteem and facilitate more organic communication. Students like Student 4 and Student 9 consistently reported feeling more confident when they used slang, particularly when speaking. Because they are familiar with the language, students feel more comfortable utilizing it. As a result, communication becomes less constrained and more unrestricted, allowing students to concentrate on communicating their ideas rather than worrying about being correct. This notion is further supported by the notion that communication is "natural," which implies that slang is consistent with students' actual speech patterns. From a broader perspective, Teachers 2, 6, and 10's responses demonstrate that slang also makes people more flexible and adaptive when they communicate with one another. In this way, Gen Z slang enhances rather than restricts kids' language abilities. It provides them with the means to adapt their language to the context, the target audience, and the objective. Slang's legitimacy as a dynamic and important component of contemporary communication is further shown by seeing it as a component of language evolution (Teacher 6).

Overall, the findings indicated that slang facilitates learning and communication in a variety of ways. It improves the classroom's atmosphere by making it more inviting and engaging. Additionally, it fosters connections by fostering empathy and humor, and it aids with language development by facilitating communication and self-expression. Slang is a helpful tool that, when utilized properly, improves both the social and intellectual sides of learning rather than being a distraction.

*“Pagdating sa writing skills, kung ako ay gagawa ng kuwento or mga persuasive text so siyempre magagamit ko 'yong mga slang words para mas maging engaging mas nakakakuha ng atensyon tsaka mas mae-express ko 'yong sarili ko at mas nagiging kaakit-akit 'yong isusulat ko.” (When it comes to writing skills, if I am going to make a story or persuasive texts, of course I can use slang words to make it more engaging, to capture attention more, to express myself better, and to make what I write more appealing.) - **Student 1***

*“Minsan po ay may pagkalito pero nauunawaan din naman po agad, tsaka mas napapaimprove po nito ang aking vocabulary kasi nalalaman ko po yung mga pagkakaiba ng Gen Z slang at english subject.” (“Sometimes there is confusion, but it is understood right away, and this also improves my vocabulary because I get to know the differences between Gen Z slang and English subject.”) - **Student 3***

*“Nakaka impluwensya ang Gen z slang sa development ng language dahil ito ay napapanahon.” (“Gen Z slang influences the development of language because it is timely.”) - **Teacher 6***

*“Yung slang kasi may nai-improve naman siya somehow, yung confidence natin sa pagsasalita sa harap ng madaming tao na makaka-gets ng humor natin lalo na pag students.” (“Because the slang somehow improves something, our confidence in speaking in front of a lot of people who will get our humor, especially when it comes to students.”)- **Student 4***

Table 12. *Thematic Analysis on Constraining Effects of Slang on Formal Language Competence*

Participant's Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Theme Cluster	Emergent Theme	Theme
Student 9	“Negatively affect grammar... if overused.”	Excessive slang weakens grammar and writing	Language Accuracy	Overuse of Slang	

Teacher 7	“Enhances vocabulary... may slow formal mastery.”	Slang has benefits but requires balance	Balanced Language Use	
Teacher 8	“Boosts confidence... but may limit vocabulary if overused.”	Overdependence on slang may limit language growth	Language Limitation	Constraining Effects of Slang on Formal Language Competence
Student 4	“Limits grammar... problem in formal tasks.”	Slang interferes with proper language use in formal settings	Language Interference	Grammar and Pronunciation Issues
Student 5	“Pronunciation affected... ‘ferson’.”	Slang negatively affects pronunciation	Pronunciation Issues	
Teacher 1	“Positive and negative... grammatical competence.”	Slang affects grammar development	Linguistic Accuracy	
Teacher 3	“Mismatch in writing... lack of correct meaning.”	Slang causes misunderstanding in formal language use	Academic Writing Issues	Slang Misuse
Student 1	“Limits writing in essays.”	Slang limits formal writing development	Writing Limitations	
Student 6	“Mahirap gamitin... reduces points.”	Slang leads to lower academic performance when misused	Academic Performance	

According to the findings, Gen Z slang can improve communication, but it can also make it more difficult to acquire formal language skills, particularly when it is misused or overused. The difficulties, according to participants from both the student and instructor groups, are not inherent in slang per se, but rather result from over-reliance and inadequate contextual control in its use. Slang's impact on grammar and writing accuracy has been identified as one of the primary issues. Slang can "negatively affect grammar... if overused," according to Student 9, demonstrating how utilizing informal structures too frequently might make it more difficult to adhere to normal grammatical standards.

This concern is heightened by Teacher 1's statement that slang has both positive and negative consequences, particularly on grammar abilities. When students become accustomed to utilizing informal language, they may unintentionally repeat the same patterns in official writing, which might result in improperly organized sentences or inappropriate vocabulary.

Interference in formal language contexts is another problem that closely resembles this one. According to Student 4, language "limits grammar" and can cause issues with formal assignments. This implies that pupils may struggle to distinguish between academic and informal language. Slang can be misused in contexts requiring precision and consistency, such as essays, reports, and exams, when it is confused with formal language.

By discussing a "mismatch in writing," which occurs when pupils don't comprehend or apply the correct meanings of words because they are accustomed to slang, Teacher 3 further clarified this issue. This is in line with the findings of Wiriyachitra (2002) majority of students find it difficult for students to be proficient in English because of such interference.

In addition to making things less obvious, this discrepancy undermines the credibility of pupils' written work. The impact of slang on the accuracy and pronunciation of words is another major concern. Student 5's example of saying "ferson" rather than "person" illustrates how repeated exposure to stylized or altered word forms can alter a person's speech patterns. These kinds of errors might not seem like a huge concern in casual conversation, but they can cause issues in professional speaking settings when accuracy and clarity are crucial. This demonstrates how pupils' writing and speech patterns can be altered by slang.

This supported the idea of Tura et al. (2025) that Gen Z slang has effects on writing abilities and vocabulary and that there is a need for students to strengthen them.

The findings also demonstrated that using slang excessively can be dangerous since it can impede language development in general. Slang can help kids feel better about themselves, but if they use it excessively, it can also prevent them from picking up new vocabulary, according to Teacher 8. Students may stick to slang they already know rather than learning more formal ways to state things, which reduces their opportunities to pick up new vocabulary. While slang can benefit in the acquisition of new vocabulary, it can also "slow formal mastery" if used improperly, according to Teacher 7.

According to Student 6, using slang improperly can "reduce points," indicating that teachers frequently view this type of usage as improper or inappropriate in formal writing. Similarly, Student 1 stated that slang "limits writing in essays," which lends credence to the notion that academic assignments call for a degree of formality that slang may not always offer. If pupils fall short of these standards, their writing might not be as good, not because they lack ideas, but rather because they choose incorrect words.

Overall, the findings indicated that excessive or inappropriate use of slang is the primary cause of its limiting effects. Slang is problematic when it makes it difficult for students to adhere to official writing, grammar, and pronunciation requirements. It can impair academic achievement, make it more difficult to learn new vocabulary, and make it difficult to distinguish between informal and formal communication. However, it's crucial to keep in mind that these restrictions do not exclude students from using slang in their daily speech.

Rather, they demonstrate the need for greater awareness and control over language use. Pupils must learn to distinguish between when formal language is required and when slang is acceptable. If you're unaware, the benefits of slang may be obscured by the fact that it might make learning critical academic language skills more difficult. As mentioned by Peerzada et al. (2025), although Gen Z understand the academic writing requirements, they still struggled in avoiding the use of Gen Z slang, especially those influenced by peer culture and social media. They were reported to have difficulty in transitioning between the formal language needed in academic papers. It is concluded that Gen Z slang can be considered a helpful tool but also harmful when used excessively. Therefore, it is important to make sure that it is used in a balanced and appropriate manner.

"Gen Z slang can influence students language competence development both positively and negatively, especially when we talk about grammatical competence." - Teacher 1

"When it comes to writing in English, there really is a mismatch. I think this is what needs to be addressed in the students. They do not know the real meaning or the correct meaning of those terms, although not all. Some do know, but the sad thing is not all are that good in English, yet they are too hooked on the language they use." - Teacher 3

"Ay naku! hindi naman mai-improve kung paano tayo magsasalita tapos magsusulat, halimbawa sa essay, gagamitan mo 'yan ng mga slang words. Lalo siyang nalilimitahan dahil nasasanay ka do'n sa pananalita mo kaya pwede mo siyang gamitin." ("Oh my! You can't really improve how we speak and then write, for example in an essay, you use those slang words. It limits him even more because you get used to it in your speech so you can use him.") - Student 1

*“Sa pagsulat po, medyo mahirap kapag gumagamit na po tayo ng Gen Z slang sa ating mga gramatika, pangungusap at talata dahil mahirap po talaga mag-add or maglagay po ng Gen Z slang sa pangungusap. Sa pronunciation po and writing skills ay mahirap dahil nakakapagbawas po ito ng puntos or parang yong mga guro masasabi ay hindi maganda 'to.” (“In writing, it is somewhat difficult when we start using Gen Z slang in our grammar, sentences, and paragraphs because it is really hard to add or put Gen Z slang into sentences. In pronunciation and writing skills, it is difficult because it can reduce points or the teachers might say that this is not good.”) - **Student 6***

*“Slang can both support and hinder competence. It enhances vocabulary range and pragmatic awareness, but it may slow mastery of formal structures if not balanced properly. The key is guided exposure.” - **Teacher 7***

*“Slang helps students become more confident in speaking, but it can also limit their vocabulary if they depend on it too much. It’s helpful for communication, but they still need to learn standard English for academic purposes.” - **Teacher 8***

*“Nalilimit niya yong grammar, pronunciation at saka writing skills kasi hindi na tayo nasunod sa tamang patakaran when it comes to writing. Nagiging problema siya pag bigla mong nagamit 'yong slang in a formal activity or task.” (“It limits grammar, pronunciation, and writing skills because we are no longer following the proper rules when it comes to writing. It becomes a problem when you suddenly use slang in a formal activity or task.”) - **Student 4***

*“Nagkakaroon naman po ng limitations gaya na lang po no'ng nakaraan ay about po do'n sa person and ferson. Minsan po yong pag- pronounce ko ay naapektuhan so imbes po na person last time na nabanggit ko po ay ferson so nakakaapekto po doon 'yong slang words.” (“There are limitations, like before, it was about the person and ferson. Sometimes my pronunciation is affected, so instead of saying person last time, I said ferson, which affects the slang words.”) - **Student 5***

*“Pero it may negatively affect my grammar and writing skills po if I become overused or I become too used to informal structures and apply and academic work rather.” (“But it may negatively affect my grammar and writing skills if I become overused or I become too used to informal structures and apply them in academic work instead.”)- **Student 9***

Table 13. *Thematic Analysis on Enhancement of Classroom Interaction through Slang*

Participant’s Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Theme Cluster	Emergent Theme	Theme
Teacher 1	“Students are more likely to engage...”	Slang increases peer collaboration and participation	Peer Interaction	Student-Centered Classroom Interaction	Enhancement of Classroom Interaction
Teacher 2	“Interaction more smooth flowing...”	Slang improves communication flow	Communication Flow		Interaction through Slang
Teacher 7	“More dynamic and student-centered...”	Slang creates interactive and student-centered learning discussion	Classroom Dynamics		
Teacher 3	“Lively active conversation...”	Slang promotes active discussions	Classroom Engagement	Motivated Classroom	

Teacher 10	“Relatable and livelier...”	Slang encourages a discussion students can relate and connect with	Participation	Participation
Teacher 6	“Effective... appealing...”	Slang increases engagement and interest	Motivation	

The findings demonstrated that Gen Z slang improves classroom interaction by making communication more engaging, lively, and student-centered. Instructors have often observed that when students are able to use language that comes naturally to them, they are more likely to participate in conversations.

Students are less hesitant when speaking to one another in class when they use slang since it is a language that they use in everyday communication. Participants emphasized that utilizing slang promotes collaboration and interpersonal communication. Students are urged to participate more in group discussions and other collaborative tasks when they are not obliged to use only formal language. This allows them to openly exchange ideas and brainstorm during class discussions. Additionally, teachers said that when students speak up more frequently and enthusiastically, class discussions become livelier.

Another significant finding in this study is the contribution of Gen Z slang to the development of a student-centered learning environment. Slang allows students to connect lessons to their own culture and life, which enhances the significance of talks. Because concepts are presented using familiar language and expressions, students can easily comprehend the lesson. Additionally, the evidence indicated that Gen Z slang can be challenging for the teachers particularly those who are unfamiliar with the terms and expressions used by the students. In these situations, conversations become less smooth and effective because people spend more time clarifying or explaining what they mean instead of continuing the discussion.

As a result, communication may slow down, and it can become harder for everyone to fully participate and understand one another. Nevertheless, many educators make an effort to bridge this gap by becoming familiar with and adjusting to their students' speech patterns. Overall, the findings demonstrated that slang enhances communication, particularly by promoting involvement, teamwork, and engagement. Its effectiveness comes from its ability to connect classroom discussions with the language students use in their everyday lives. Because the lessons relate more closely to students' real-world experiences, learning becomes more meaningful, engaging, and interactive.

*“Students are more likely to engage in peer-to-peer debates or collaborative work when they can use their natural language.” - **Teacher 1***

*“It makes interaction more smooth flowing and peer-led.” - **Teacher 2***

*“It often makes classroom interaction more dynamic and student-centered. Discussions become livelier and more relatable.” - **Teacher 7***

*“It’s like putting your feet in the shoes of others. As a teacher, I also study what these Gen Z slangs are so that we can have a very lively, active conversation/discussion where they can express their opinion and experience using the slang.”) - **Teacher 3***

“Gen Z slang frequently makes the classroom feel more relatable and livelier, inspiring students who might otherwise remain silent to participate in the discussion. In the end, our classroom becomes a lively place where we respect the students' own cultures while still working hard to meet our school goals.” - Teacher 10

“Naaapektuhan ng Gen z slang ang interaksyon ng mga kamag aaral sapagkat bukod sa napapanahon ito ay ito din ang mas effective sa kanila sapagkat kaakit-akit sa kanila ang pag gamit ng Gen z slang.” (“Gen Z slang affects the interactions of students because, aside from being timely, it is also more effective for them since using Gen Z slang is appealing to them.”) - Teacher 6

Table 14. Thematic Analysis on Development of Fluency through Slang Use

Participant's Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Theme Cluster	Emergent Theme	Theme
Teacher 1	“Facilitates fluency and confidence.”	Slang improves speaking ability	Speaking Skills		
Teacher 2	“Makes them fluent... issues in formal language.”	Slang improves fluency but affects formal accuracy	Fluency Development		
Teacher 7	“Sound natural and fluent...”	Slang enhances natural communication	Natural Communication	Communicative Confidence and Fluency	
Teacher 8	“Builds confidence and fluency...”	Slang supports speaking confidence	Confidence Development		
Teacher 3	“Boost confidence in answering...”	Slang encourages expression	Participation		
Teacher 5	“Builds confidence and fluency...”	Slang strengthens communication skills	Speaking Skills		
Teacher 7	“Communicative competence... socially aware.”	Slang enhances contextual communication	Communicative Competence		Development of Fluency through Slang Use
Teacher 9	“Promotes belongingness...”	Slang builds confidence in communication	Social Confidence	Contextual and Social Language Adaptation	
Teacher 8	“Promotes belongingness... vocabulary...”	Slang supports language growth and confidence	Vocabulary Development		
Teacher 10	“Reduces anxiety...”	Slang lowers communication anxiety	Anxiety Reduction		

Most participants concurred that students may speak more comfortably and spontaneously when they use Gen Z slang. When students utilize language that they are familiar with, they can communicate their ideas more quickly and without hesitation, which helps them become more fluent in general. Teachers have observed that when students are allowed to use slang, they participate more because they feel less restricted to the norms. It allows them to concentrate on making their point rather than worrying about being correct. As a result, pupils develop into more self-assured communicators who are eager to express their opinions.

The findings also demonstrated that Gen Z slang facilitates natural communication. When students employ language that represents how they converse with each other on a daily basis, they sound more authentic and conscious of their surroundings. They find it easier to engage in meaningful conversations both inside and outside of the classroom because of this naturalness.

Additionally, students feel more connected to their peers when they use the same language, which is another way that slang helps them feel like they belong. They are even more eager to communicate and participate because they feel like they belong. Additionally, slang improves communication skills, particularly in terms of situational comprehension. By understanding when to use slang and when to use more formal language, students can learn how to manage various communication situations. They can acquire a greater variety of language skills thanks to this flexibility, which enables them to succeed in a variety of social and academic contexts.

Despite its benefits, participants acknowledged that developing fluency through slang requires a balanced approach. Slang can make students feel more confident and talk more effectively, but it can be problematic if they use it without learning how to use formal language. Because of this, students need to develop the ability to switch between formal and informal language styles. This skill allows them to communicate fluently and appropriately in different situations, including academic, social, and professional settings.

In summary, the findings demonstrated how crucial slang is for enhancing confidence and fluency, which makes conversation more organic, expressive, and successful. When utilized properly, it is a helpful tool for assisting students in developing their communication abilities.

“It facilitates individual fluency and confidence for the speaker.” - Teacher 1

“It makes them fluent in sharing their thoughts but sometimes there are issues when it comes to the formal language usage and its grammatical rules.” - Teacher 2

“Slang helps them sound natural and fluent but it becomes a barrier when overused or used inappropriately, especially in academic or professional communication.” - Teacher 7

“Slang helps in building confidence and fluency, especially in speaking. But it can also be a problem if students cannot switch to formal English when needed.” - Teacher 8

“Allowing them to use this gen Z slang helps them to boost their confidence in answering or giving their ideas or perspective.” - Teacher 3

“Slang helps in building confidence and fluency, especially in speaking.” - Teacher 5

“Slang facilitates communicative competence when students understand context. It helps them sound natural and socially aware.” - Teacher 7

“Since slang can promote belongingness, the learners earn confidence to express themselves.” - Teacher 9

“This promotes belongingness that invites learners to speak, and adds English vocabulary, though some are sometimes misspelled.” - Teacher 8

“Slang is a helpful shortcut that gives students the self-assurance to talk if they are concerned about making mistakes in English. Their anxiety is reduced since they concentrate on interacting with others rather than strict grammar rules.” - Teacher 10

Table 15. *Thematic Analysis on Inclusivity Gaps and Barriers in Slang Use*

Participant's Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Theme Cluster	Emergent Theme	Theme
Student 1	"We use slang... teacher has a hard time."	Slang may disrupt interaction with teachers	Communication Barrier	Slang and Interaction Limits	
Student 2	"Teachers may not understand..."	Slang can affect teacher-student interaction	Teacher-Student Gap		
Student 3	"Teachers not ka-humor..."	Lack of shared slang creates social gap	Social Gap		
Student 4	"Creates gap... teachers not familiar..."	Slang causes misunderstanding	Communication Gap	Slang and Inclusivity Gap	Inclusivity Gaps and Barriers in Slang Use
Student 9	"Cause misunderstanding..."	Slang leads to confusion	Communication Barrier		
Student 10	"Teachers ask meaning..."	Slang disrupts communication flow	Clarification Need		
Teacher 1	"Not everyone understands..."	Slang excludes some learners	Inclusivity Issue		
Teacher 3	"I guess meaning... confusion..."	Slang causes comprehension difficulty	Comprehension Difficulty	Slang and Misunderstanding	
Teacher 5	"Cannot comprehend..."	Slang creates understanding gaps	Understanding Gap		
Teacher 7	"Exclude students unfamiliar..."	Slang isolates some learners	Inclusivity Issue		
Teacher 9	"Ask for translation..."	Slang requires clarification	Clarification Need		

The theme demonstrated how Gen Z can cause lack of mutual understanding between students and teachers. Slang might cause confusion and misinterpretation because of unequal familiarity with the slang terms. Students reported that teachers occasionally feel the need to ask for clarification of certain slang terms because they did not understand them. This can interrupt the flow of conversation and reduce the effectiveness of communication.

Teachers also admitted that there are times when they struggle to understand what students are saying, which may lead to misunderstandings or an incomplete understanding of ideas and lessons. Therefore, it is undeniable that there is a communication barrier existing between the students and teachers, particularly because of the differences in their generation and language used.

The findings also showed that some students may feel excluded with the use of Gen Z slang inside the classroom. Though Gen Z are considered digital natives, still some of them may not be aware of some terms they often use or they may have a different background from others. Because of this, some may feel left out, less confident and may be discouraged from participating. This will negatively affect the overall learning experience of the students or may lead to confusion, or worse, a breakdown of communication.

Students claim that they pretend to understand these terms which makes effective communication more difficult to achieve.

*“Para pong sa akin ay ayos lang po na gumamit ng Gen Z slang pero palagay ko po sa ibang teacher ay may kaunting pag iisip o maaari pong magalit ang isang teacher dahil yung ibang words po ng Gen Z ay hindi alam at hindi naiintindihan ng teacher.” (“For me, it's okay to use Gen Z slang, but I think some other teachers might think a little or might get angry because some Gen Z words are not known or understood by the teacher.”) - **Student 2***

*“May mga pagkakataong may mga guro kami na hindi namin ka-humor.” (“There are times when we have teachers who do not share our sense of humor.”) - **Student 3***

*“Pero minsan it can also create a big gap between students and teachers especially if hindi sila familiar sa mga slang na ginagamit mo. (“But sometimes it can also create a big gap between students and teachers, especially if they are not familiar with the slang you use.”) - **Student 4***

*“It can sometimes cause misunderstanding po especially po sa mga teachers na hindi naman po masyadong pamilyar sa certain terms na ginagamit po naming mga Gen Z.” (“It can sometimes cause misunderstanding, especially among teachers who are not very familiar with certain terms that we Gen Z use.”) - **Student 9***

*“Kapag po minsan may ibang mga teachers na magtatanong kung ano yong meaning no'ng gano'n.” (“Sometimes, other teachers ask what the meaning of that is.”) - **Student 10***

*“Even teachers like me cannot comprehend the certain Gen Z language. Its ease in the classroom often leads to confusion among students who are less digitally active. Thereby, creating barriers effective and inclusive communication.” - **Teacher 1***

*“Sometimes ako na teacher ay nanghuhula ng “are you trying to say that ganito gano'n? o Ano ba ang ibig sabihin noon?” Talagang minsan ay hindi ko sila nauunawaan. It brings confusion din so some of them kahit gustong sumagot pero hindi naman nila alam o confused sila do'n sa words kaya hindi na lang sila sasagot.” (“Sometimes I, as a teacher, guess 'are you trying to say this or that? Or what does that mean?' Sometimes I really don't understand them. It also brings confusion so some of them, even if they want to answer, don't know or are confused by the words, so they just don't answer.”) - **Teacher 3***

*“In my experience, slang is a double-edged sword. Even teachers like me cannot comprehend the certain Gen Z language. Yes, I do understand some but not all.” - **Teacher 5***

*“Discussions become livelier and more relatable. However, it can also exclude students who are unfamiliar with certain slang terms, especially in diverse classrooms.” - **Teacher 7***

*“If a student has a slang term, the student might ask for a definition or a translation.” - **Teacher 9***

Additionally, educators stated that slang can be a "double-edged sword" since it can both promote involvement and make things more difficult. If not everyone can comprehend or grasp the language being used, it can make talks less inclusive, even while it can make them more engaging and personable. This demonstrates how crucial it is to maintain communication among all students in the classroom. Generally, it comes to a conclusion of striking a balanced language use which can be comprehended by everyone to make the discussions more productive.

Strategies Applied By Educators To Deal With The Difficulties Posed By Gen Z Slang Usage In ELT Settings

Table 16. *Thematic Analysis on Teacher Strategies in Navigating Generational Language Gaps*

Participant's Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Theme Cluster	Emergent Theme	Theme
Student 1	"Nakikisabay siya... nagtatawa siya."	Teacher joins students' slang-based humor to build rapport	Teacher Adaptation		
Student 2	"Okay lang gumamit... nakikisabay din siya."	Teacher allows slang use and aligns with students' communication style	Acceptance Strategy		
Student 3	"Hindi nila tinatake as negative... sumasabay sa jokes."	Teachers respond positively and participate in informal exchanges	Positive Reinforcement	Teacher Flexibility and Relatability	Teacher Strategies in Navigating Generational Language Gaps
Student 5	"Updated sa slang... nakikisabay sila sa trip namin."	Teachers stay updated and engage using familiar slang	Cultural/Language Updating		
Student 9	"Allow slang in casual conversations pero emphasize formal use."	Teachers permit slang in informal talk but enforce formal English in academics	Boundary Setting Strategy		
Student 10	"Okay lang sa kaniya... may times gumagamit din siya ng slang."	Teachers occasionally use slang to connect with students	Reciprocal Language Use		
Student 1	"Hindi komportable sa Gen Z slang."	Some teachers resist slang due to unfamiliarity	Resistance to Slang		
Student 4	"May nagagalit pag hindi na-gets slang."	Misunderstanding slang leads to negative reactions	Miscommunication	Generational Communication Gap	
Student 7	"Reaction depends on age/generation... nagagalit."	Older teachers struggle and may react negatively	Age-Based Understanding Gap		
Student 9	"They just go quiet... can't relate."	Lack of familiarity leads to disengagement	Communication Breakdown		

The findings also revealed that many educators are open and flexible to their pupils' use of Gen Z language.

In order to improve student-teacher relationships and help students get to know one another better, some teachers employ slang and casual talk in the classroom. It facilitates simpler and more casual communication when professors "nakikisabay" or participate in what students are saying. This conduct facilitates communication between students and lessens the feeling of distance in the classroom.

Another strategy mentioned was learning to accept the use of Gen Z slang but setting a limitation. Allowing the students to speak the language in class is recognized to help them express but they were also

reminded every time regarding the use of proper English especially in accomplishing their written tasks. This demonstrates a sensible strategy where slang is limited by context rather than outright prohibited. Additionally, students participate better if they feel understood, which is why some teachers reinforce this with positivity and humor. Teachers exert extra effort in keeping up with the students and the trends in their learning preferences. They try to use Gen Z slang to adapt with them and reduce the gap they have in between. The modification they apply maintain students' attention while they try to regulate classroom rules in terms of formal English use. It showed that teachers find it challenging to provide adaptive measures to deal with Gen Z slang.

Uneven familiarity of teachers with the Gen Z slang is also one of the issues identified in this study. According to the participants, some teachers respond negatively when they cannot understand what the students are saying. The evidence also showed that the older the teachers, the harder it is to establish effective communication.

This reflects a generational gap in language comprehension, where differences in age and cultural exposure affect familiarity with current slang expressions. Because of this gap, students may feel that their way of speaking is not fully understood or appreciated, which can reduce the quality and meaning of classroom interactions. This may result to lesson disruptions and less participation inside the classroom where students feel less motivated with the belief that their language style is not being acknowledged or understood.

Teachers react to Gen Z slang in different ways depending on the situation. Many teachers try to be flexible and understanding because they know slang is part of students' everyday language. They use strategies such as encouraging the students to participate, keeping clear with the rules, being open minded and even utilizing Gen Z slang terms. However, challenges still exist. Because teachers and students may come from different generations and have different language habits, misunderstandings can occur. Some slang terms may be unfamiliar to teachers, which can make communication more difficult. Striking a balance between flexibility and maintaining academic control is the best method to deal with Gen Z slang in the classroom. Teachers who can modify their speech patterns while maintaining clarity and organization, are better equipped to manage the dynamics of classrooms where slang is prevalent.

*“Minsan naman mayroong teacher na nakaka-relate din. Kagaya ng isa naming teacher sa 21st Century, kapag nagsi-six seven (67) kami ay nakikisabay siya.” (“Sometimes I also have teachers who can relate. Like one of our 21st Century teachers, whenever we do six seven (67) he joins in- **Student 1***

*“When it comes to ma’am ____ po ay okay lang po na gumamit kami ng mga Gen Z slang kasi nakikisabay din po siya.” (“When it comes to ma’am, it’s okay for us to use Gen Z slang because she’s also in the same boat.”) - **Student 2***

*“Positibo naman silang tumutugon. Kung gumagamit kami ng slang sa pakikipag-usap sa aming guro ay hindi naman nila ito tinatake as negative kundi, sumasabay din sila minsan sa ibang biro namin.” (“When it comes to ma’am ____ it’s okay for us to use Gen Z slang because she also goes along with it.” “If we use slang when talking to our teacher, they don’t take it negatively; instead, they go along with our other jokes as well.”) - **Student 3***

*“May mga teachers na updated pa po sa mga slang words, yung mga millennials. Minsan naririnig na rin po nila kaya parang familiar na sila. So kapag gumagamit kami ng slang words ay nakikisabay sila sa trip namin o nagamit din po sila ng slang words.” (“There are teachers who are still updated with slang words, the millennials. Sometimes they also hear them, so they are somewhat familiar. So when we use slang words, they go along with our vibe or they also use the slang words.”) - **Student 5***

“Pero yung ibang teacher po ay pumapayag po sila na gumamit kami ng slang or casual in casual conversations pero still emphasized pa rin po yong proper language use in academic context po.” (“But some teachers allow us to use slang or casual language in casual conversations, but proper language use in academic contexts is still emphasized.”) - Student 9

“Okay lang po sa kaniya tapos mayro'n din naman pong times na nagamit si ma'am ng slangs, gaya po ng charot.” - Student 10

“Base po sa mga na-experience ko lalo na do'n sa isa kong matandang teacher, siya talaga'y hindi gano'n ka-komportable sa aming mga Gen Z tsaka sa kung paano kami mag-express gamit ang slang.” (“Based on what I have experienced, especially with one of my older teachers, he really isn't that comfortable with us Gen Z and with how we express ourselves using slang.”) - Student 1

“Mayroon din palang mga nagagalit pag hindi na nila na-ge-gets 'yong slang word lalo po yung matatanda.” (“It turns out that there are also people who get annoyed when they don't understand the slang word, especially the older ones.”) - Student 4

“Yung reaction po ng teachers kapag nagamit kami ng slang word ay depende sa age po nila tsaka sa generation nila. May times po na halimbawa po gumamit kami ng slang words sa mga outdated na teacher or mga medyo old na like Ma'am _____ po ay mapapatanong siya. Nagagalit sila kasi nga may mga discussions at saka may mga activities.” (The teachers' reaction when we use slang words depends on their age and their generation. There are times, for example, when we use slang words with outdated teachers or those who are somewhat old like Ma'am _____ and she would ask questions. They get angry because there are discussions and activities.) - Student 7

“May mga times po na natatahimik na lang sila kasi hindi sila nakakarelata sa sinasabi namin lalo na po yung mga medyo matatanda ng teachers tapos may iba naman pong terms na medyo familiar sa kanila.” (“There are times when they just go quiet because they can't relate to what we are saying, especially the older teachers, and then there are other terms that are somewhat familiar to them.”) - Student 9

Table 17. *Thematic Analysis on Teacher as Language Mediator for a Regulated Use of Gen Z Slang*

Participant's Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Theme Cluster	Emergent Theme	Theme
Student 1	“Bawal kaming gumamit ng slang... strict sa grammar.”	Teachers enforce strict rules on grammar and formal language use	Strict Regulation	Classroom Language Control Strategies	
Student 4	“Gumamit ng proper English... allowed sa fun activities.”	Teachers allow slang in informal tasks but restrict it in formal tasks	Context-Based Control		
Student 9	“Remind us to use formal English especially in discussion.”	Teachers consistently remind students to maintain formal language	Reminding Strategy		
Student 10	“Limit their use of slang kasi may	Teachers restrict slang to ensure clarity and understanding	Comprehension Control		

	hindi nakakaintindi.”				
Student 5	“Tatahimik ang teacher para tumigil kami sa ingay.”	Teachers use silence as a behavioral signal to manage slang use	Non-verbal Classroom Control	Classroom Discipline Strategies	Teacher as Language Mediator for a Regulated Use of Gen Z Slang
Student 2	“Nagbibigay ng warning kapag nakakasakit ang slang.”	Teachers use warnings to prevent harmful or offensive slang	Behavioral Warning System		
Student 6	“Kapag nakabastos... sinasabi agad na itigil.”	Teachers immediately correct offensive slang usage	Immediate Correction Strategy		
Teacher 1	“Linguistic mediators... balance slang energy.”	Teachers balance student slang use with formal language development	Language Mediation	Adaptive Teacher Roles	
Teacher 2	“Create zones... collaboration vs presentation.”	Teachers structure classroom spaces for different language uses	Structured Language Zones		
Teacher 3	“Correct grammar without affecting confidence.”	Teachers correct language gently while preserving student confidence	Sensitive Correction Strategy		
Teacher 4	“Teach students how to read a room... don’t ban slang.”	Teachers guide contextual language awareness rather than banning slang	Contextual Language Teaching		
Teacher 6	“Help align slang with lessons... academic and slang discussion.”	Teachers integrate slang awareness into lesson content	Instructional Integration Strategy		
Teacher 7	“Language mediator... don’t suppress slang, contextualize it.”	Teachers recognize slang but maintain appropriate use	Contextualization Strategy		
Teacher 8	“Balance enjoyment and formal English.”	Teachers balance informal engagement with academic language learning	Balanced Language Instruction		
Teacher 9	“Moderate pros and cons of slang use.”	Teachers evaluate and regulate slang depending on context	Moderation Strategy		
Teacher 10	“Let them use slang but teach professional boundaries.”	Teachers allow students to Gen Z slang but with limits	Boundary Reinforcement Strategy		

The study found that teachers use different methods to manage Gen Z slang in English classes. Instead of completely allowing or banning slang, teachers try to balance flexibility with maintaining proper language standards.

They guide students on when slang is appropriate and when formal English should be used. Many teachers act as mediators, helping students understand the difference between informal and formal language depending on the situation. Students shared that teachers are particularly strict when it comes to academic tasks such as essays, reports, and formal writing assignments. In these activities, slang is not allowed because teachers want students to develop correct grammar, vocabulary, and formal communication skills that are important for academic success.

At the same time, teachers may allow slang in certain situations, especially during creative, casual, or fun classroom activities. However, its use is discouraged in professional discussions, examinations, and other formal academic settings. Overall, teachers encourage students to use language appropriately by considering the purpose and context of the activity. This shows that teachers do not completely ban slang. Instead, they guide students on when and where it is appropriate to use it, especially in academic settings. Teachers focus on helping students understand the difference between informal and formal language so they can communicate effectively in different situations.

Another strategy mentioned by the teachers is the use of reinforcement and reminders. Teachers frequently remind students to use proper English during class activities, discussions, and assignments. Through these reminders, students are encouraged to practice correct language use while still understanding the role of slang in everyday communication.

“Ito lalo na 'yong mga English teachers namin lalo na ngayon nasa grade eleven kami, bawal kaming gumamit ng mga slang words pagdating sa mga essay. Sila'y strict sa paggamit ng grammar sa aming pronunciation sa aming pag-e-explain. Hay naku kami ay ma-minusan.” (“These are especially our English teachers, especially now that we are in grade eleven, we are not allowed to use slang words when it comes to essays. They are strict about the use of grammar in our pronunciation and in our explanations. Oh dear, we are going to be reduced.”) - Student 1

“Kay ma'am _____ po ay kapag napapasobra na po yung paggamit namin ng Gen Z slang at sobrang ingay na po ay ang ginagawa na lang po ni ma'am _____ ay siya na po mismo ang natahimik para po makaramdam kami na tama na po ang pag iingay o pag gamit ng Gen Z slang.” (“For ma'am _____, when our use of Gen Z slang becomes excessive and we get too noisy, what ma'am _____ does is she herself becomes quiet so that we can feel that it is enough with the noise or the use of Gen Z slang.”) - Student 2

“They intend to tell us na gumamit kami ng proper english when it comes to her classes. Minsan nag-a-allow sila ng slang pag maganda 'yong activities or it is more on the fun side pero siyempre pagka formal activities like essay writing, siyempre hindi sila namamayagan na slang yong gagamitin namin.” (“They intend to tell us to use proper English when it comes to her classes. Sometimes they allow slang if the activities are enjoyable or more on the fun side, but of course, for formal activities like essay writing, they certainly don't allow us to use slang.”) - Student 4

“Kapag po yung slangs po naming ginagamit ay naka nakabastos, nakakagalit o hindi nakaka-impluwensiya sa isang tao, nag-re-respond na po agad do'n yong teachers na itigil namin 'yong gano'ng slangs sapagkat nakakapagsakit ng damdamin ng tao.” (“When the slangs we use are rude, offensive, or do not influence a person, the teachers immediately respond there to tell us to stop using such slangs because they can hurt a person's feelings.”)- Student 6

The findings revealed that teachers use non-verbal cues and warnings to signal students when they inappropriately or excessively use Gen Z slang inside the classroom. This helps guide behavior without directly scolding them. Teachers also give warnings when slang becomes disrespectful or could hurt others. These cautions teach pupils to exercise self-control and help them realize how their language choices affect other people.

When they believe that slang is impolite or improper in more pressing circumstances, teachers immediately correct or cease using it. These tactics demonstrate that maintaining polite communication in the classroom is just as important to discipline as behavior.

The study found that many teachers support the use of Gen Z slang instead of completely banning it. They allow students to use both formal and informal language while teaching them when each style is appropriate. Teachers create situations where formal English is required, such as speeches and academic tasks, while informal language may be allowed during group discussions or casual activities. Teachers also correct students' language mistakes gently to encourage participation and confidence. Some even use slang as a teaching tool to help students understand language and how it changes over time. Overall, teachers act as guides and mentors, helping students balance informal and formal communication.

The findings show that teachers use both flexibility and discipline when dealing with Gen Z slang. They maintain academic standards while also encouraging student expression and engagement. Rather than seeing slang as completely good or bad, teachers treat it as a part of language that should be used appropriately depending on the context. This balanced approach helps students develop strong formal English skills while remaining effective communicators in everyday situations. This supported the idea of Tsquilan & Sumarlan (2025) that teachers cannot solely rely on traditional teaching methods and must be open to new ideas in teaching and handling Gen Z students.

*“Binabanggit po niya mismo na ‘okay tama na ‘yong mga inside jokes at ‘yong mga tawanan, balik tayo sa topic natin’”. Minsan naman po yong ibang teacher ay bigla na lang pong tatahimik so tatahimik po kami gaya po no'ng pagtahimik no'ng teacher and then tuloy na po sa discussion.” (“He himself mentions, ‘Okay, the inside jokes and laughter are enough, let's go back to our topic.’ Sometimes, other teachers just suddenly become quiet, so we stay quiet like when the teacher was quiet, and then the discussion continues.”) - **Student 5***

*“Meron po silang ginagamit na batayan kung paano namin maiiwasan or mako control ang pagamit ng slang. Nagbibigay po sila sa amin ng warning if ‘yong ginagamit po naming slang is nakakasakit or nakakapahamak ng isang tao.” (They have a basis that they use for how we can avoid or control the use of slang. They give us a warning if the slang we use is hurtful or harmful to someone.) - **Student 7***

*“My teachers usually remind us to use formal words, formal English words especially po during the discussion. At tsaka po, pag may written activities, dapat formal lang.” (“My teachers usually remind us to use formal words, especially formal English words during the discussion. And also, when there are written activities, it should be formal only.”) - **Student 9***

*“Sa ibang teacher po ay pagsasabihan sila na limitahan ‘yong kanilang paggamit ng slang kasi may ibang hindi nakakaintindi.” (“To other teachers, they will be told to limit their use of slang because some people do not understand it.”) - **Student 10***

*“We are linguistic mediators who should balance the raw energy of the Gen Z slang. I treat slang as a pedagogical scaffold wherein I allow it to build student confidence and engagement but provide the necessary boundaries to ensure they develop the formal proficiency needed.” - **Teacher 1***

“I see my role as an architect. I create "zones" in the classroom. In the 'collaboration zone,' slang is an affordance for quick, creative thinking. In the 'presentation zone', the constraints of standard English are enforced to prepare them for the professional world.” - Teacher 2

“Syempre as an English teacher, I need to to correct them in every grammar nila, sa tamang paggamit nila ng mga words na 'to. Sa pagtatama dapat sa una pa lang ay itatama na in a way na hindi ma-offend 'yong bata o in a way na hindi siya magsasawang gamitin 'yong Gen Z slang or in a way na hindi mawawala 'yong confidence niya.” - Teacher 3

“I see my role as a person teaching students how to read a room. Sometimes we use some of these terminologies for joking. I don't really ban slang, nor do I allow it everywhere.” - Teacher 4

“As an educator, susi tayo para maipakita at mai angkop ang pag gamit ng genz slang sapagkat ito ay may lakas maka impluwensya sa iba. May mga lesson lalo sa jhs na tinatalakay ang slang at academic.” - Teacher 6

“My role is to act as a language mediator. I validate students 'linguistic backgrounds while guiding them toward appropriate usage. I don't suppress slang—I contextualize it.” - Teacher 7

“My role is to guide students in using language properly. I help them enjoy learning through slang but also teach them the importance of correct and formal English. I balance both so they can communicate well in different situations.” - Teacher 8

“Like in a debate, I will serve as the moderator. The use of slang has pros and cons, which I must weigh when considering how the learners use it. I must always remind them to use it as long as it frees them to express their identity while considering its limitations.” - Teacher 9

“I consider my work teaching students the formal conventions of school language while also assisting them in using their "voice" naturally. I let them use slang to communicate and feel at ease, but I also educate them where professional boundaries begin.” - Teacher 10

Table 18. *Thematic Analysis on Strategic Pedagogical Management of Gen Z Slang*

Participant's Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Theme Cluster	Emergent Theme	Theme
Teacher 1	“Integration rather than isolation... slang as scaffolding... transition to formal English.”	Slang is used as a temporary support to build confidence and shift to academic English	Scaffolded Language Integration	Slang as a Pedagogical Bridge for Gradual Formal Language Development	Strategic Pedagogical Management of Gen Z Slang in Language Learning
Teacher 3	“Use slang in motivation... to hook students... apply in activities.”	Slang is used as an engagement tool to activate participation	Motivational Integration		
Teacher 6	“Used in vocabulary development before lesson.”	Slang is used to introduce vocabulary learning	Vocabulary Activation Strategy		
Teacher 9	“Let them know correct spelling like ‘dasurv’.”	Slang is corrected and redirected to standard spelling	Corrective Vocabulary Strategy		

Teacher 10	“Differentiate academic, technical, creative writing and slang use.”	Slang is contextualized through lesson structure and categorization	Language Differentiation Strategy	
Teacher 1	“Wardrobe analogy... contrast slang and formal sentences.”	Uses analogies and comparison to teach appropriateness of language use	Comparative Language Teaching	Explicit Instruction on Language Register and Appropriateness
Teacher 7	“Formal vs informal charts... role-playing switching styles.”	Uses visual and interactive methods to teach register switching	Register Teaching Strategy	
Teacher 8	“Examples of slang and formal English... explain usage situations.”	Demonstrates contextual differences through examples	Contextual Example Strategy	
Teacher 9	“Exercises choosing appropriate phrases per context.”	Students practice selecting correct language based on situation	Context-Based Practice	
Teacher 10	“Practice code-switching depending on audience.”	Students learn to adjust language depending on context and audience	Audience Awareness Strategy	
Teacher 1	“Code-switching... translate slang for different audiences.”	Students are guided to shift language based on context	Code-Switching Practice	Controlled Language Transfer and Meaning Negotiation
Teacher 2	“Slang in engagement then formal critique writing.”	Slang is used for engagement then transitioned to formal output	Engagement -to-Formal Transition	
Teacher 7	“Controlled integration... convert slang to formal English.”	Slang is transformed into academic language through exercises	Translation Strategy	
Teacher 10	“Compare slang descriptions with formal text.”	Comparison helps students understand register differences	Comparative Meaning Strategy	
Teacher 2	“Slang as conceptual bridge... contrast with academic register.”	Slang is used as a bridge to academic vocabulary learning	Conceptual Bridging Strategy	
Teacher 3	“Slang and English synonyms/antonyms for understanding.”	Slang is linked to formal equivalents for clarity	Synonym Mapping Strategy	
Teacher 7	“Exercises choosing appropriate context-based language.”	Reinforces correct usage through structured decision tasks	Contextual Decision Practice	
Teacher 9	“Using slang claps for engagement.”	Slang is used creatively for engagement and reinforcement	Interactive Reinforcement Strategy	

The findings showed that ELT teachers handle Gen Z slang carefully and thoughtfully. They do not see slang as something that should be completely banned or fully accepted. Instead, they use it in a controlled way while helping students improve their academic English skills. Teachers encourage student participation and engagement but also set clear rules about when formal language should be used. By

balancing flexibility, guidance, and language development, teachers turn slang into a useful learning tool that helps students communicate effectively in both informal and academic settings.

Teachers employ Gen Z slang to get students' interest in language instruction before switching to formal academic English, according to the first major trend. Teachers stated that they employed integration rather than isolation, viewing slang as a means of boosting students' self-esteem before advancing to more complex linguistic structures. This indicates that slang is viewed as a transient support system that speeds up learning rather than as an issue. Also, teachers intentionally utilize slang to engage students and pique their interest in the class, particularly at the beginning. In motivational exercises, teachers can use well-known slogans to grab students' attention and motivate them to participate. People are more eager to participate as a result, and the classroom becomes a more laid-back learning environment where everyone feels welcome.

In vocabulary-building exercises, teachers also employ slang, teaching students informal words before introducing them to their formal equivalents. Additionally, teachers employ corrective vocabulary techniques, such as teaching students how to appropriately spell and utilize terms derived from slang. Slang thus acts as a bridge between informal and formal language abilities. Additionally, teachers place a strong emphasis on teaching pupils the distinctions between academic, technical, creative, and informal language.

“Generally, I use integration rather than isolation. I use slang as a linguistic scaffold, a temporary support that feels comp that builds confidence and interest. Once the student is engaged, I use that momentum to transition them toward the formal academic English. They will need for their professional future.” - Teacher 1

“I integrate most of them in the motivational activity. I will use Gen Z slang words so right there I can hook them. In that way I can integrate it, so once in the motivation I started using it, then through questions or any activities they can also apply their Gen Z slang.” - Teacher 3

“Madalas ay ginagamit ko siya sa vocabulary development bago magsimula ang lesson.” (“I often use it for vocabulary development before starting the lesson.”) - Teacher 6

“Though we do not have a routine activity for spelling, if students misspelled word like “dasurv”, I let them know the correct spelling of it.” - Teacher 9

“Kaya mayroon tayong lesson proper ay para from the beginning of the lesson, nagkakaroon tayo ng mga unlocking difficulties at kung saan pwede gamitin ang mga slangs na ito.” (“That is why we have a proper lesson, so that from the beginning of the lesson, we encounter unlocking difficulties and where these slangs can be used.”) - Teacher 10

“Well, strategies like the use of the wardrobe analogy explain that language must fit the occasion. Another is using contrastive analysis or side-by-side comparison of slang and formal sentences. I often use the board to write down the words that are commonly used by my students in writing. I often ask them to ask about the differences between these words or what are the proper use of these words. That is how I do the contrastive analysis.” - Teacher 1

“I explicitly teach register. I use side-by-side examples, such as ‘formal vs informal’ charts, and discuss audience and purpose. Role-playing activities also help students practice switching between styles.” - Teacher 7

“I give examples of sentences using both slang and formal English. I also explain the situations where each type should be used, like casual conversations vs. academic writing.” - Teacher 8

“That’s by giving exercises with choices. For instance, they have to choose phrases, words, or sentences are appropriate for the given context/scenario.” - Teacher 9

“We learn how to change our language depending on who we are speaking to and where we are by practicing code-switching. Academic English is still the finest to use, even though slang is acceptable, as I always taught my students. This shows that although slang isn't "bad," knowing when to use standard English is still necessary for better communication.” - Teacher 10

Another pattern demonstrated how teachers employed systematic and transparent instructional strategies to help pupils in comprehending language register by letting them realize that language must “fit the occasion” by using analogies, such as comparing clothing. This facilitates the comprehension and relatability of abstract language concepts. Additionally, teachers employ role-playing exercises that allow students to practice switching between language styles and visual aids like charts that illustrate the distinctions between formal and informal language. These techniques encourage students to use appropriate language forms and see how various communication context’s function.

Instructors also provide students with real-world examples and practice tasks where they must choose the appropriate language for a particular circumstance. This aids in their decision-making regarding language use and improves their ability to adapt their speech to the person they are speaking to and the message they are attempting to convey. Students are also encouraged to practice code-switching, which enhances their comprehension of how to transition between formal academic English and informal slang depending on the circumstance. These teaching strategies generally demonstrate that the instructor is attempting to raise students' awareness of language, how to use it, and when and why specific forms are suitable.

“Code switching is a very common strategy to use. Instead of correcting slang as wrong or as a different register, still it depends on the situation. When students use slang in discussion, I ask them to translate their own statement for different audience like their classmates who can understand English.” - Teacher 1

“For example in our lesson of critiquing, I'll give them the title of the newly released movie and they're going to give their review (orally) so they can freely use slang as part of our engagement activity then they will write their critique on the movie as an application activity of our lesson using formal tone and academic words.” - Teacher 2

“I use controlled integration—bringing slang into lessons through comparisons, translation activities, or discourse analysis. For example, we might convert a slang-heavy sentence into formal English. This builds awareness without encouraging misuse.” - Teacher 7

“When teaching stories, for instance, I encourage my students to use their own words to identify a crucial narrative twist to gauge their understanding of the story. This makes the story feel more relatable. By comparing their slang descriptions with the original text, we can then discuss how formal language adds layers of authority and complexity to a story.” - Teacher 10

The study found that teachers help students move between slang and formal English in a structured way. They teach students that language should be used differently depending on the audience and situation. For example, students may be asked to explain slang terms to different groups of people, helping them understand that meanings can change based on context.

Teachers also use slang to make learning more engaging. Students may first discuss ideas using informal language and then express those same ideas in formal academic writing.

In addition, teachers encourage students to translate slang into formal English and compare informal expressions with their formal equivalents. These activities help students expand their vocabulary and develop the ability to switch between different language styles.

Rather than banning slang, teachers use it as a bridge to academic English. By connecting familiar slang terms with formal vocabulary, they help students better understand language and improve their communication skills.

Overall, the findings show that teachers use slang strategically as a teaching tool while ensuring that students continue to develop strong academic language skills.

Table 19. *Thematic Analysis on Contextualization Over Elimination—Reframing Slang as A Resource*

Participant's Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meanings	Theme Cluster	Emergent Theme	Theme
Student 1	"Mas maganda kung papayagan... pero hindi sa academic writing."	Slang is useful for explanation but inappropriate for formal academic writing	Contextual Acceptance with Academic Boundary	Contextual Awareness of Language Appropriateness	Contextualization Over Elimination: Reframing Slang as a Resource in ELT
Student 3	"Nakakatulong sa creativity... dapat inilulugar ang paggamit."	Slang enhances creativity but must be used in appropriate contexts	Creative Expression with Regulation		
Student 4	"Okay sa fun activities... but formal English sa essays and exams."	Slang is acceptable in informal tasks but restricted in formal assessment	Functional Language Separation		
Student 5	"Gusto ko i-normalize pero ilagay sa tamang oras."	Slang can be normalized if used appropriately in context	Normalization with Conditions		
Student 6	"Gamit sa fun and engaging pero dapat formal English pa rin."	Slang increases engagement but formal language remains priority	Engagement vs Academic Balance		
Student 9	"Slang used in moderation... formal English still prioritized."	Slang should be limited and balanced with academic English	Balanced Language Use Strategy		
Teacher 1	"Stop fighting it... treat as dialect with rules and context."	Slang is a legitimate linguistic system requiring contextual understanding	Linguistic Reframing Strategy	Slang as a Pedagogical Resource	
Teacher 2	"Context-dependent... compare slang and formal side-by-side."	Slang is used comparatively to teach academic English	Comparative Contextualization		
Teacher 5	"Functional linguistic tool... co-exist with formal identity."	Slang is a functional resource that coexists with academic English	Functional Coexistence Strategy		
Teacher 7	"Contextualized so it becomes more engaging and understandable."	Slang improves engagement when properly contextualized	Contextual Adaptation Strategy		
Teacher 8	"Support tool, not main focus."	Slang is supplementary to formal English learning	Supplementary Learning Strategy		

Teacher 10	“Rephrase slang into Standard English after engagement.”	Slang is a starting point for academic language development	Transformational Language Strategy
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The findings demonstrated that both teachers and students agree that Gen Z slang should not be prohibited in classrooms. Rather, it should be carefully employed and placed in context to aid children in language learning. Participants saw slang as a useful learning tool that, when used appropriately, may enhance engagement, creativity, and communication rather than as a hindrance to formal English ability. The idea that slang improves communication by making it more expressive, imaginative, and captivating was frequently expressed by students. However, they also emphasized how crucial it is to be situation-appropriate, particularly while writing for school, completing official assignments, and taking examinations. Slang is thought to be helpful in informal settings like conversations, group activities, and icebreakers because it makes them more enjoyable and invites participation.

This suggested that students already understand the importance of striking a balance between academic discipline and informal expression. Jabeen and Nawaz (2025) proved this finding to be true, highlighting the idea that educators and language policymakers should see digital language as a reflection of modern communication norms and include new forms into teaching and evaluation practices. Since Gen Z slang is frequently used in class, teachers must strike a balance between acknowledging linguistic innovation and maintaining academic language standards. Their study emphasized that a balance must be maintained. Gen Z slang should not be totally banned nor fully accepted without limits. It is also important that teachers understand the advantages and disadvantages to help students communicate naturally while mastering formal English.

*“Okay lang naman syang gamitin sa mga fun activities at saka sa Ice breaker. Pero sa formal tasks naman or activities na ginagawa sa school like essay, reporting and exam, siyempre mas okay pa rin yung mga formal english na ginagamit para maintindihan din ng mas maayos ng mga teachers.” (“It’s okay to use it for fun activities and ice breakers. But for formal tasks or activities done at school like essays, reporting, and exams, of course, it’s still better to use formal English so that teachers can understand it more clearly.”) - **Student 4***

*“Gusto ko po or bet ko po yung paggamit po ng slangs sa English classes dahil nagbibigay minsan sa amin ng saya o nawawala nga po yung pagka bored sa isang literature o asignatura so parang gusto ko po na ipatag o iimplement na yung paggamit po ng slangs ay I-normalize pero ilalagay po sa tamang oras.” (I like or prefer the use of slangs in English classes because sometimes it gives us joy or makes the boredom in a literature class or subject go away, so I kind of want to strengthen or implement the use of slangs to normalize it, but it should be done at the proper time.) - **Student 5***

*“Gusto ko pong gamitin yung slangs sa asignatura pong in English sa pamamagitan po ng pag-eengage o pag-iimpluwensya po sa aking kapwa kklase para makapagpapasaya o makapagbibiro po gamit ang slangs. Gagawin po naming mas masaya mas maganda at more engaging ang English.” (“I want to use the slangs in the subject in English by engaging or influencing my classmates so that I can make them happy or joke around using slangs. We will make English more fun, better, and more engaging.”) - **Student 6***

*“I prefer slang to be more used only in moderation such as during ice breakers or informal discussion para po mas engaging yung class. Pero dapat pong i-prioritize para rin ang formal English para ma improve yung ating academic skills.” (“I prefer slang to be used only in moderation, such as during ice breakers or informal discussions, so that the class is more engaging. But formal English should also be prioritized in order to improve our academic skills.”) - **Student 9***

However, when it came to incorporating slang, teachers demonstrated that they were very careful and systematic. Instead of banning slang, educators want to concentrate on contextualizing, contrasting, and altering it. Using slang as a means of comparison, where students examine slang terms alongside their formal equivalents, helps them better understand the differences between informal and formal language. This also aids students in expanding their academic vocabulary and learning about linguistic variations.

Additionally, educators emphasized that Gen Z slang should be viewed as a tool for learning rather than as an error that needs to be corrected. In this approach, they support students' development of formal language abilities while simultaneously affirming their linguistic identity. Teachers emphasized the value of functional coexistence between Gen Z slang and formal English in a classroom as long as students understand it and when to use it. Slang does not replace formal instruction; rather, it is used in class to keep pupils engaged and comprehend. Additionally, teachers employed transformational tactics, which teach pupils how to translate Gen Z slang vocabulary into standard English following the initial exercises. This made sure that slang supports learning rather than hinders it.

The overall findings demonstrated that both educators and students concurred that the usefulness and application of Gen Z slang are context-dependent. Slang can increase people's attention, creativity, and communication skills, according to both sides, but it must be handled properly in educational settings to minimize its negative effects. In order to assist students in acquiring new terms rather than replacing formal English, teachers played a crucial role in modifying the way slang is used in the classroom. As a result, students are becoming more conscious of when to use formal language and when to use slang.

Ultimately, the findings demonstrated a shift from restricting Gen Z language to integrating it, with slang being used appropriately rather than eliminated. This approach allows teachers to fulfill academic language goals while utilizing their pupils' natural language abilities. ELT becomes more effective, inclusive, and responsive as a result.

*“Mas maganda kung papayagan kaming gumamit ng mga slang dahil siyempre mas ma-explain ko ng maayos pero pagdating sa academic writing, naku! Hindi ako payag na mayroong gagamit ng gano'n dahil para namang binabaliw namin ang pag-aaral namin kung gagamitan namin ng mga Gen Z terms.” (“It would be better if we are allowed to use slang because of course I can explain things better, but when it comes to academic writing, oh no! I would not allow anyone to use that because it seems like we would be ruining our studies if we use Gen Z terms.”) - **Student 1***

*“Nakakatulong ito upang mas maging malikhain ang ating isip pagdating sa pagsusulat ng iba't-ibang teksto, ngunit sa kabilang banda ay inilulugar dapat ang paggamit ng mga ganitong salita dahil magkaiba ang larangan ng akademiko sa mundo ng social media.” (“This helps our minds become more creative when it comes to writing different texts, but on the other hand, the use of such words should be placed appropriately because the field of academics is different from the world of social media.”) - **Student 3***

*“As teachers, we stop fighting it and start deconstructing it by treating as a dialect of English that requires its own set of rules and context.” - **Teacher 1***

*“Rather than correcting it as wrong, I address it as context-dependent. I prefer it to be used as a comparative tool: we look at a slang expression and its formal equivalent side-by-side. This entertains the student's primary mode of communication while explicitly teaching them the academic mode, ensuring that instruction feels like an expansion of their skills rather than a replacement of their personality.” - **Teacher 2***

“I prefer slang to be addressed as a functional linguistic tool rather than a grammatical error. I believe instruction should not ban slang but contextualize it. Teaching students that their social identity and their professional identity can co-exist, provided they know when to use each.” - Teacher 5

“It can better be used when it is adjusted or contextualized or localized so that while it makes the class more fun and engaging, it can also lead to a better understanding of the language.” - Teacher 7

“I prefer slang to be used as a support tool, not the main focus. It should help students understand lessons better, but it should not replace standard English learning.” - Teacher 8

“I prefer addressing slang openly but critically. It should be acknowledged, analyzed, and contextualized—not banned or overly encouraged. The goal is awareness, not elimination. After all, it is already a nature for the type of students that we are catering in classes.” - Teacher 7

“My role is to guide students in using language properly. I help them enjoy learning through slang but also teach them the importance of correct and formal English. I balance both so they can communicate well in different situations.” - Teacher 8

“I help students rephrase such concepts in Standard English to improve their abilities once the “vibe” of the session has been established. This method helps students understand the importance of learning various speech patterns by treating slang as a legitimate beginning point rather than an error.” - Teacher 10

CONCLUSION

According to the study's findings, Gen Z slang is a linguistic phenomenon that is identified as both an affordance and a constraint in an ELT classroom.

Another key point concluded by the study is that Gen Z slang makes students confident, more participative, authentic, and expressive. It also makes learning more engaging and relatable.

In spite of the benefits that Gen Z slang offers in the classroom, there are still difficulties that may impede development if used too much or inappropriately. It can hinder learning proper English, especially in grammar, vocabulary, and formal writing. How it is handled in the classroom setting determines its overall impact.

Additionally, teachers play an important role in balancing the use of Gen Z slang inside the classroom. The shift from informal and formal, as well as the appropriateness of the language depending on the academic context, must be taught. It is also crucial to manage and explain the use of Gen Z slang because this will serve as the guide of the students how to speak clearly in everyday situations while they still master their formal English skills.

Fourth, the methods and strategies of the teachers were significant in controlling, incorporating, and contextualizing Gen Z slang in English classes so that students can achieve academic precision and communicative fluency. Therefore, Gen Z slang should be recognized as a contextual tool and not a barrier in language learning.

Lastly, the results discovered that despite the difficulty it presented in formal language learning, it still greatly impacted the classroom involvement, confidence, participation and identity expression of the Generation Z, which demonstrated a strong support to both Sociocultural Theory and Generational Theory. The generational differences brought about huge variations between the perceptions of the teachers and the students.

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