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Generation alpha speaks in memes: a conceptual framework for platformed language

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This article develops a conceptual framework for analyzing the platform-mediated language practices of Generation Alpha through what is termed *memetic linguistics*. Drawing on sociolinguistics, meme theory, and platform studies, the paper conceptualizes linguistic expression as viral, iterative, and multimodal, shaped by algorithmic curation and platform affordances rather than by stable lexical innovation alone. The framework proposes five analytical dimensions—form, function, circulation, stance, and genre—and introduces a typology of memetic linguistic genres that captures recurrent patterns of youth expression across short-form video and gaming platforms. Focusing on TikTok, YouTube Shorts, and Roblox as key linguistic ecologies for early digital socialization, the article argues that Generation Alpha's language is best understood as platform-native: performative, compressed, and optimized for circulation. While explicitly conceptual in nature and not based on original empirical data, the framework is designed to support future empirical research on multimodal language, algorithmic mediation, and youth discourse in platform environments.

KEYWORDS
digital youth, generation alpha, meme theory, memetic linguistics, multimodality, platformed language, sociolinguistics

1 Introduction: platformed language and the case of generation alpha

Generation Alpha's slang has attracted growing attention, particularly for its perceived unintelligibility to other generations (e.g., Gupta, 2025; Kircher, 2023; Mabaquiao, 2024). These reactions reflect the distinctive conditions under which Generation Alpha's linguistic practices are emerging, which differ fundamentally from those that shaped earlier generations' youth language. Born into a media environment dominated by algorithmically curated platforms, short-form video, and audiovisual remix, this cohort encounters language not primarily through extended conversation or written text, but through looping sounds, captions, gestures, and repeatable formats embedded in social media platform infrastructures (Calude, 2025; Henry and Shannon, 2023).

In this article, *platformed language* refers to linguistic practices shaped by platform affordances, algorithmic recommendation systems, and moderation regimes, rather than by neutral transmission or speaker intention alone. Expressions such as *rizz*, *skibidi*, *6–7*, or *caught in 4K* (brief explanations are provided in Appendix) circulate less as isolated lexical items than as compact, stylized units designed for imitation, repetition, and performance. Their meaning is inseparable from the platforms through which they travel. Some expressions also reflect plat-

form moderation logics; for example, euphemistic "algospeak" such as *unalived* or *seggs* emerges as a strategic adaptation to content filtering (Aleksic, 2025).

There is some disagreement in the literature and popular discourse regarding the precise temporal boundaries of Generation Alpha, with proposed cutoffs ranging from 2010 to 2013 (Henry and Shannon, 2023; Höfrová et al., 2024; Nagy and Kölcsey, 2017; Ziatdinov and Cilliers, 2021). This article does not hinge on a strict birth-year definition. Instead, it treats Generation Alpha as a cohort defined by early and sustained exposure to platform-native communication environments during formative years. What matters analytically is not chronological purity, but the shared condition of linguistic socialization within algorithmically mediated, multimodal platforms. This emphasis on platform-native socialization aligns with broader work on youth and networked publics, which shows how visibility, peer norms, and platform affordances shape participation long before formal linguistic or civic competencies are established (Boyd, 2014).

Unlike earlier youth cohorts, whose slang developed primarily through spoken interaction or text-based media (Bucholtz, 2006; Coleman, 2012; Green, 2016), Generation Alpha's language is shaped by platforms that privilege brevity, visibility, and remix. Short-form video platforms such as TikTok and YouTube Shorts, alongside interactive gaming environments like Roblox, function as linguistic ecosystems in which expressions spread through imitation, mutation, and repetition. In these environments, linguistic choices are influenced not only by peer norms, but by platform affordances, moderation regimes, and recommendation systems that shape what is seen, repeated, and rewarded (Gillespie, 2018; Srnicek, 2016; Van Dijck et al., 2018).

This paper develops *memetic linguistics* as a conceptual framework for understanding these developments. While the term has been used previously (Rojas Berscia, 2014), it has not been systematically applied to language use in platform-mediated social media environments. The term *meme* is used here in its original analytical sense as a unit of cultural transmission (Dawkins, 1976), while explicitly departing from biological reductionism by conceptualizing linguistic memes as socially learned, platform-mediated, and multimodal forms.

Building on earlier work on linguistic memes (e.g., He, 2008; He and Xie, 2009) and digital meme culture (Milner, 2018; Mitman and Denham, 2025; Shifman, 2013, 2014), memetic linguistics treats linguistic expressions as viral, repeatable units whose circulation and meaning are shaped by platform infrastructures. These units are not merely words or phrases, but multimodal packages that may combine sound, text, gesture, timing, and visual framing. Their communicative force lies as much in recognizability and circulation as in semantic content.

While related approaches such as internet linguistics, digital discourse analysis, and sociopragmatics have offered valuable insights into online language use (Androutsopoulos, 2014; Calude, 2023; Seargeant and Tagg, 2014; Tagg and Seargeant, 2014), they tend to under-theorize the role of algorithmic selection, platform-specific affordances, and multimodal replication in shaping linguistic form. Platform governance and political economy scholarship has shown that moderation systems and recommendation infrastructures actively shape visibility, participation, and cultural circulation, rather than merely hosting it (Gillespie, 2018; Srnicek, 2016; Van Dijck et al., 2018). While meme studies have productively analyzed images, formats, and participatory culture (Milner, 2018; Shifman, 2013, 2014), language itself has often remained analytically secondary, motivating the present focus on linguistic units as primary carriers of memetic circulation.

The article is explicitly conceptual in nature. It does not report original empirical data, nor does it claim representativeness or frequency of specific expressions. Examples such as "rizz," "skibidi," "6–7," and "unalived" are used illustratively, drawing on existing literature, documented platform trends, and sustained observation of platform cultures, to clarify theoretical mechanisms rather than to measure prevalence or frequency. The contribution lies in providing an analytical scaffold to support future empirical research on multimodal language, youth discourse, and algorithmic mediation.

The paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 positions memetic linguistics in relation to existing approaches in sociolinguistics, meme theory, and digital discourse studies. Section 3 defines the concept of the linguistic meme and clarifies its analytical distinctiveness. Section 4 introduces five core analytical dimensions—form, function, circulation, stance, and genre—that structure the framework. Section 5 examines TikTok, YouTube Shorts, and Roblox as platformed linguistic ecologies particularly relevant to Generation Alpha. Section 6 proposes a typology of memetic linguistic genres, while Section 7 briefly addresses multimodality and translanguaging in global meme circulation. The final two sections discuss the implications of language change under platform conditions, highlight contributions, and outline directions for future research.

2 Positioning memetic linguistics in existing scholarship

Memetic linguistics is not proposed as a replacement for existing approaches to digital language but as a complementary framework that foregrounds dimensions that remain underdeveloped in current scholarship. To clarify its contribution, this section positions memetic linguistics in relation to four adjacent traditions: internet linguistics, digital discourse analysis and sociopragmatics, meme theory, and usage-based linguistic approaches. This section does not aim to review these literatures exhaustively, but to situate memetic linguistics in relation to them by highlighting points of overlap, extension, and analytical departure.

2.1 Internet linguistics and digital discourse analysis

Internet linguistics and digital discourse analysis have provided foundational insights into how language adapts to online environments. Research in this tradition has examined orthographic variation, audience design, context collapse, and register shifts across platforms (Androutsopoulos, 2014; Calude, 2023; Davis and Jurgenson, 2014; Tagg and Seargeant, 2014). These studies demonstrate how users adjust linguistic choices in response to visibility, imagined audiences, and interactional norms.

While this work is essential, it often treats platforms as backdrops rather than as active mediators of linguistic circulation. Algorithmic recommendation, remix affordances, and moderation systems are frequently acknowledged, but not theorized as structuring forces in linguistic replication. As a result, much internet linguistics remains oriented toward text-based variation and interactional context, even as youth language increasingly unfolds through audiovisual formats

optimized for repetition and spread. This move parallels work on platformization, which conceptualizes platforms not merely as channels but as infrastructures that organize cultural production, circulation, and value (Nieborg and Poell, 2018; Van Dijck et al., 2018).

Memetic linguistics shifts the analytical center from interaction alone to circulation. It treats algorithmic selection, recurrence, and recognizability as constitutive features of contemporary linguistic form, particularly in short-form video environments. Empirical studies of platform recommendation and virality suggest that exposure pathways, engagement signals, and remix affordances systematically shape what linguistic material becomes visible and repeatable (Boeker and Urman, 2022; Zannettou et al., 2024). These dynamics are central to the framework proposed here.

2.2 Sociopragmatics and digital interaction

Sociopragmatic approaches emphasize language as social action (Eslami and Guo, 2025; Haugh et al., 2021). From this perspective, utterances perform stance, identity work, and relational positioning within specific contexts. Applied to digital environments, sociopragmatics has illuminated how irony, evaluation, and affect are encoded in online discourse, including through multimodal cues (Androutsopoulos, 2014; Tsakona, 2024; Zappavigna, 2011).

Memetic linguistics builds directly on this insight but extends it by treating repeatability itself as a pragmatic resource. Many expressions circulating among Generation Alpha function less as novel utterances than as recognizable performances of prior forms. Their pragmatic force depends on shared familiarity with templates, sounds, or formats, rather than on propositional content alone. In this sense, memetic expressions operate as stylized routines that index stance through iteration.

Research on multimodal pragmatics supports this view by showing how meaning in digital interaction often emerges from the alignment of visual, textual, and temporal cues rather than from language alone (Jiang et al., 2018). Memetic linguistics incorporates this insight by conceptualizing linguistic units as multimodal packages whose pragmatic effects depend on coordinated form and circulation.

2.3 Meme theory and digital culture

Meme theory has been central to understanding participatory culture, remix, and virality online. Shifman's formulation of internet memes as composites of content, form, and stance has been especially influential (Shifman, 2013, 2014). Subsequent work has examined memes as cultural artifacts, political tools, and vehicles of collective meaning-making (Milner, 2018; Mitman and Denham, 2025).

In this sense, linguistic memes align with Shifman's (2013) model of internet memes as composites of content, form, and stance. Applied linguistically, content may consist of a short phrase such as "rizz," form its pairing with audio, text, or emoji, and stance the affective or ironic positioning it performs. These layered dimensions help explain how meme language operates not merely as slang, but as a shared infrastructure for affective and affiliative participation in Generation Alpha's platform cultures.

However, much meme research treats language as one element among others, often secondary to images, formats, or visual templates. Linguistic expressions appear as captions, slogans, or punchlines, but are rarely theorized as linguistic units in their own right. Memetic linguistics reverses this emphasis by placing language at the center of analysis. It asks how phrases, soundbites, and caption structures function as replicable cultural units that are learned, repeated, and transformed through platform participation. Critical meme scholarship has further emphasized the ambivalence of meme culture, highlighting how irony, repetition, and play can simultaneously enable community formation and normalize exclusion or detachment (Phillips and Milner, 2017).

This focus aligns with earlier proposals in linguistic memetics, particularly He's (2008) argument that language evolves through replicable units transmitted via use rather than inheritance. What changes in the platform era is the speed, scale, and modality of replication. Network-based studies of remix and diffusion show that meme circulation often follows hub-and-spoke or chain-like patterns shaped by platform affordances such as duets, stitches, and comment cascades (Høgenhaug et al., 2025). These patterns are directly relevant to understanding how linguistic material spreads and stabilizes.

While meme theory foregrounds circulation and participatory repetition at the cultural level, usage-based linguistics provides a complementary account of how repetition and frequency shape linguistic learning and stabilization.

2.4 Usage-based linguistics and formulaic language

Usage-based and constructionist approaches emphasize the role of frequency, repetition, and schematicity in language learning and change. From this perspective, formulaic sequences and constructions emerge through repeated exposure and use. This insight is highly compatible with a memetic view of language. Usage-based approaches emphasize how linguistic knowledge emerges from repeated exposure and use, with frequency and entrenchment shaping the stabilization of forms over time (e.g., Bybee, 2010; Tomasello, 2003).

The limitation lies in scale and modality. Usage-based models were developed primarily for spoken or written language in relatively stable interactional settings. They offer limited tools for analyzing multimodal replication across platforms where sound, gesture, and visual framing are integral to the unit being repeated. Nor do they typically account for algorithmic amplification as a factor shaping exposure and recurrence.

Memetic linguistics does not reject usage-based insights. Instead, it extends them to platform-native conditions by treating circulation as structured not only by social interaction, but by infrastructural selection. Moderation-induced linguistic adaptation, such as euphemistic substitutions developed to evade content filters, clearly illustrates this point. Empirical work on orthographic variation following moderation interventions demonstrates how platform policies can reshape linguistic form through selective pressure (Stewart et al., 2017). These dynamics sit squarely within the scope of memetic linguistics.

2.5 What memetic linguistics adds

Taken together, existing literatures provide essential building blocks for understanding digital language. Internet linguistics, sociopragmatics, meme theory, and usage-based approaches each illuminate important aspects of online linguistic practice. Memetic linguistics integrates insights from these traditions while foregrounding elements that remain analytically under-specified elsewhere:

platform-native circulation, algorithmic selection, multimodal unitization, and genre-level repetition. The framework treats linguistic expressions as cultural units whose meaning and persistence depend on their capacity to circulate under platform constraints.

By shifting the analytical center from interaction or innovation alone to circulation and repeatability, memetic linguistics offers a way to analyze Generation Alpha's language not as a collection of fleeting slang terms, but as a patterned system of repeatable, performative forms optimized for visibility, imitation, and affective resonance. In this sense, memetic linguistics complements rather than replaces existing approaches, while reorienting attention toward how linguistic forms are shaped, stabilized, and transformed within platform infrastructures.

Table 1 summarizes how memetic linguistics relates to adjacent theoretical perspectives. The comparison is heuristic rather than evaluative; it highlights differences in analytical focus, units of analysis, and treatment of platforms, clarifying the specific contribution of the proposed framework. The comparison presented in Table 1 is heuristic rather than evaluative and is intended to clarify analytical emphases rather than to rank or subsume existing approaches.

Together, the framework and comparative overview clarify how memetic linguistics provides an analytical scaffold for examining platform-native language practices. The next section defines the concept of the linguistic meme more precisely and delineates its analytical boundaries.

3 What is a linguistic meme?

The concept of the linguistic meme is central to the framework proposed in this article and requires careful definition. While the term "meme" has been widely used in both popular and academic discourse, its application to language often remains loose or metaphorical.

Building on Dawkins's (1976) original formulation of memes as cultural replicators, linguistic memetics reframes replication as socially learned and interactionally enacted rather than biologically inherited (He, 2008; He and Xie, 2009). Memetic linguistics adopts the term in a deliberately analytical sense, referring to repeatable linguistic units whose form, meaning, and circulation are shaped by platform conditions.

Following early work in linguistic memetics, language can be understood as evolving through replicable units transmitted via use rather than inheritance (He, 2008; He and Xie, 2009). In traditional contexts, such units include idioms, proverbs, catchphrases, and formulaic expressions. In platform-mediated environments, however, the nature of these units changes. Linguistic material is no longer transmitted primarily through face-to-face interaction or extended textual exchange, but through audiovisual repetition, remix, and algorithmic amplification.

In this framework, a linguistic meme is defined as a repeatable, recognizable, and performative linguistic package that circulates across platform contexts. It may consist of a word, phrase, soundbite, caption structure, or short utterance, but it is not reducible to lexical content alone. Instead, its identity depends on a combination of linguistic form, multimodal presentation, and circulation history. A sound reused across thousands of short videos, a caption template repeatedly adapted to new situations, or a phrase embedded in a recognizable audiovisual format all qualify as linguistic memes.

This definition distinguishes linguistic memes from broader digital memes such as image macros or video formats. While those artifacts may contain language, their primary unit of replication is visual or formal. Linguistic memes, by contrast, center on language as the main carrier of meaning, even when that language is inseparable from sound, gesture, or timing. The phrase itself is what users learn, repeat, and redeploy, often with minimal modification.

While linguistic memes are often embedded in audiovisual formats, their defining feature is that language itself remains the primary carrier of replication and recognition, distinguishing them analytically from broader digital memes whose core unit is visual or formal rather than linguistic.

The distinction from usage-based constructs such as formulaic language or constructions is more subtle. Like constructions, linguistic memes rely on repetition and schematicity. However, constructions are typically analyzed within relatively stable linguistic systems, where frequency and entrenchment emerge through social interaction over time. Linguistic memes operate under different conditions. Their exposure is shaped by algorithmic recommendation, their recurrence may spike rapidly and decay just as quickly, and their form is often inseparable from platform-specific affordances such as looping audio, duet functions, or comment threading.

A further difference lies in unitization. In memetic linguistics, an instance of a linguistic meme is not defined solely by textual similarity. A repeated sound paired with different captions, or a fixed caption structure paired with different audiovisual content, may still constitute the same meme. What matters is recognizability within a shared participatory culture.

Importantly, linguistic memes are both pragmatic and formal units. They do things in discourse. They mock, affirm, accuse, align, and distance. An utterance such as "caught in 4K" does not merely

TABLE 1 Positioning memetic linguistics in relation to adjacent frameworks.

Perspective	Main focus	Unit of analysis	Platforms treated as	Key gap addressed
Internet linguistics	Online language use	Textual interaction	Communication contexts	Circulation and algorithms
Digital discourse / sociopragmatics	Language as social action	Situated utterances	Interactional settings	Repetition and templates
Meme theory	Virality and remix	Formats and artifacts	Remix infrastructures	Language as primary unit
Usage-based linguistics	Learning through repetition	Constructions	Largely absent	Multimodality and algorithms
Memetic linguistics	Platformed circulation	Linguistic memes	Structuring infrastructures	Integrates all above

describe an event. It performs a social action by framing someone as exposed or embarrassed, often humorously. In this respect, linguistic memes function as stylized speech acts whose force depends on shared cultural recognition (Olmsted, 2021).

This performative dimension is especially pronounced in Generation Alpha's discourse, where repetition often signals participation rather than originality. To use a meme correctly is to demonstrate platform literacy and social attunement. Misuse, by contrast, can signal outsider status. Linguistic memes, therefore, operate as markers of in-group competence, not simply as expressive resources.

Finally, linguistic memes are inherently platform-native. Their emergence, spread, and stabilization are shaped by the infrastructures through which they circulate. Recommendation systems influence exposure, moderation policies shape euphemistic adaptation, and remix affordances encourage iterative variation. Studies of platform virality and moderation-induced linguistic change show that these infrastructural factors exert selective pressure on language, favoring forms that are short, repeatable, and algorithmically legible (Ling et al., 2022; Stewart et al., 2017).

In sum, linguistic memes are not incidental by-products of digital culture. They are structured units of language adapted to platform conditions. The next section introduces the analytical dimensions through which such units can be systematically examined.

4 Analytical dimensions of memetic linguistics

Building on this definition, the following dimensions are introduced to operationalize memetic linguistics as an analytical framework rather than a descriptive metaphor.

To analyze linguistic memes systematically, memetic linguistics requires a set of analytical dimensions that capture both linguistic form and platform-mediated dynamics. This section introduces five core dimensions: form, function, circulation, stance, and genre. Together, these dimensions provide a conceptual scaffold for examining how linguistic memes emerge, stabilize, and acquire meaning within platform environments.

The purpose of these dimensions is not to prescribe a fixed coding scheme, but to offer a common analytical vocabulary that can support future empirical work across methods and disciplines. Each dimension highlights a different aspect of how linguistic memes operate under conditions of algorithmic mediation and multimodal expression.

4.1 Form

Form refers to the observable structure of a linguistic meme. In platform environments, form is inherently multimodal. It may include spoken language, written text, sound clips, gesture, timing, and visual framing. A linguistic meme's form is often compact and optimized for repetition, relying on short phrases, rhythmic patterns, or easily recognizable caption templates.

Importantly, form is not limited to linguistic material in the narrow sense. The same phrase may function differently depending on whether it is delivered as a soundbite, overlaid as text, or embedded in a specific audiovisual format. Memetic linguistics, therefore, treats form as a composite structure rather than a purely lexical one.

4.2 Function

Function concerns what a linguistic meme does in interaction. Drawing on sociopragmatic perspectives, this dimension captures the social action performed by an expression. Linguistic memes may praise, mock, accuse, align with, distance from, or signal belonging. Their function is often indirect and relies on shared cultural knowledge rather than explicit propositional content.

Many linguistic memes function as stylized routines. Their pragmatic force depends on repetition and recognizability rather than originality. For Generation Alpha, using the correct expression at the right moment often matters more than semantic precision. Function, therefore, links linguistic memes to affective positioning and identity work within peer cultures.

4.3 Circulation

Circulation refers to how linguistic memes spread, mutate, and recur across platform environments. This dimension is central to memetic linguistics. Unlike traditional models of language diffusion that emphasize interpersonal transmission alone, circulation here includes infrastructural mediation.

Circulation can be analytically decomposed into three elements. The first is exposure pathways, including algorithmic recommendations, social sharing, and remix chains. The second is mutation, referring to how linguistic material is altered through substitution, recontextualization, or multimodal variation. The third is recurrence, which captures patterns of repetition over time, including sudden spikes, saturation, and rapid decline.

Memetic communication research emphasizes that circulation often produces convergence around recognizable templates rather than diversification of meaning, as repetition stabilizes form while allowing limited variation (Shifman, 2013; Wiggins, 2019).

Empirical studies of platform virality and remix networks suggest that circulation follows structured patterns shaped by platform affordances rather than random spread (Boeker and Urman, 2022; Høgenhaug et al., 2025). Memetic linguistics treats these patterns as integral to linguistic form and meaning. These dynamics resonate with earlier accounts of "spreadable media," where circulation depends less on transmission fidelity than on social motivation, recognizability, and participatory uptake (Jenkins et al., 2013; Jenkins et al., 2016).

4.4 Stance

Stance captures the affective or evaluative positioning enacted through a linguistic meme. Many expressions associated with Generation Alpha rely on layered stance, combining sincerity and irony, enthusiasm and detachment. Stance is often signaled indirectly through tone, timing, or contextual pairing rather than through explicit markers.

This dimension draws on work on stance-taking in digital discourse, where meaning emerges from alignment with shared cultural scripts (Zappavigna, 2011). In memetic linguistics, stance is inseparable from circulation. An expression's stance may shift as it moves across contexts, platforms, or audiences, even when its form remains stable. This sociopragmatic work shows that meaning in digital discourse often resides in stance, alignment, and performative uptake rather than in propositional content alone (Olmsted, 2021; Zappavigna, 2011).

4.5 Genre

Genre refers to the patterned category or template to which a linguistic meme belongs. Genres emerge through repeated use and shared expectations. They provide users with recognizable formats for expression, such as ironic praise, euphemistic substitution, or iterative punchlines.

Genres are not rigid taxonomies. A single linguistic meme may participate in multiple genres depending on context. However, identifying dominant genres helps reveal the underlying regularities of platformed language. Genre connects individual expressions to broader discursive patterns and makes visible the cultural logic organizing memetic communication.

4.6 Core analytical dimensions

Table 2 provides an overview of the core analytical dimensions of memetic linguistics. These dimensions are intended as heuristic lenses rather than exhaustive categories, allowing linguistic memes to be compared across platforms, genres, and interactional contexts. Taken together, these dimensions allow linguistic memes to be analyzed as structured, socially meaningful units rather than as isolated slang items. They foreground the interaction between linguistic form and platform infrastructure, highlighting how meaning is shaped by circulation, repetition, and recognizability. The next section situates these dimensions within the specific platform environments most relevant to generation alpha.

5 Platformed linguistic ecologies of generation alpha

Linguistic memes do not circulate in abstract space. They emerge, stabilize, and decay within specific platform environments that shape how language is produced, repeated, and recognized. For Generation Alpha, this ecology is defined by early and sustained exposure to platforms that privilege short-form, multimodal, and participatory expression. This section focuses on TikTok, YouTube Shorts, and Roblox as particularly consequential linguistic environments for this cohort. Rather than neutral channels, platforms function as infrastructural environments that condition how linguistic material is produced, circulated, and recognized (Gillespie, 2018; Srnicek, 2016; Van Dijck et al., 2018).

These platforms are not selected because they exhaust young users' digital lives, but because they share three characteristics central to memetic linguistics. First, they are widely accessed during the early stages of digital socialization. Second, they prioritize audiovisual and performative modes of expression. Third, they foster rapid replication and iteration of linguistic material. Together, these features make them analytically useful sites for understanding platform-native language.

5.1 TikTok

TikTok plays a central role in shaping contemporary youth language through its emphasis on short, looping videos and reusable audio. Linguistic material on TikTok often circulates in the form of soundbites, catchphrases, or caption templates that are detached from their original context and redeployed across thousands of videos. The platform's design encourages imitation, with features such as sound reuse, duets, and stitches lowering the threshold for participation.

Core mechanisms such as looping video, viral soundbites, and remix functions foster the creation and circulation of stylized linguistic forms. Phrases such as *rizz*, *caught in 4 K*, and *skibidi* often originate in TikTok audio and quickly permeate speech and writing beyond the platform. The algorithm reinforces these patterns by promoting content that aligns with trending sounds and formats, amplifying the visibility of brief, iterative, and highly stylized expressions among youth (Lee, 2023; Schellewald, 2023).

From a memetic linguistics perspective, TikTok foregrounds circulation over originality. Linguistic memes gain traction not because they are novel utterances, but because they are easily recognizable and adaptable. Expressions with minimal semantic load but high rhythmic or affective salience can achieve extreme spreadability. The widely circulated "6–7" meme, which consists of a short numerical utterance repeated across diverse contexts, illustrates how recognizability and repetition can outweigh propositional meaning. Its uptake depends almost entirely on shared familiarity and platform literacy.

Algorithmic recommendation further amplifies these dynamics. Exposure pathways on TikTok are shaped less by social networks than by engagement signals, making certain linguistic forms highly visible regardless of their origin. Research on recommendation systems suggests that such mechanisms systematically favor short, repeatable, and affectively engaging content (Boeker and Urman, 2022). Linguistic memes that fit these criteria are therefore more likely to circulate widely.

5.2 YouTube shorts

YouTube Shorts extends many of TikTok's dynamics while embedding them within a broader comment-driven discourse environment. While short-form videos on YouTube often mirror trends originating

TABLE 2 Core analytical dimensions of memetic linguistics.

Dimension	Definition	Analytic focus	Illustrative example
Form	Multimodal structure of the expression	Mode, brevity, audiovisual composition	Reused sound with caption overlay
Function	Social action performed	Evaluation, mockery, alignment	"Slay" as approval and affiliation
Circulation	Pattern of spread and mutation	Exposure pathways, mutation, recurrence	Repeated remix of a short sound
Stance	Affective or evaluative positioning	Irony, sincerity, detachment	Layered irony in praise
Genre	Patterned template of expression	Discursive regularities	Euphemistic moderation workarounds

elsewhere, the accompanying comment sections play a distinctive role in linguistic circulation. Phrases and expressions are frequently repeated, evaluated, and parodied in comments, creating iterative chains of textual remix.

While many Shorts mimic TikTok trends, they are often accompanied by substantial comment threads where phrases are repeated, redefined, and parodied. Adhi and Masykuroh (2025) find that YouTube Shorts is a key site for slang innovation among Gen Alpha, especially in the domains of parody, ironic labeling, and iterative memes. Comment sections themselves function as sites of memetic play, with phrases like *sigma behavior* or *he's literally me* used both sincerely and sarcastically.

For Generation Alpha, YouTube Shorts thus serves as both a viewing platform and a site of participatory commentary. Linguistic memes here often take the form of short evaluative phrases or ironic labels that can be easily reproduced in comment threads. The visibility of comments reinforces repetition and encourages alignment with dominant expressions, further stabilizing certain linguistic forms.

Platforms also facilitate cross-platform circulation. Linguistic memes that originate on TikTok often migrate to YouTube Shorts, where they undergo subtle shifts in form or stance while retaining recognizability. From the perspective of memetic linguistics, such movement is not incidental but constitutive: it shows how platform-specific affordances shape linguistic mutation without severing memetic continuity.

5.3 Roblox

Roblox differs from short-form video platforms in that it centers on real-time interaction within user-generated game environments. Language use on Roblox is embedded in gameplay, chat, and role-play, making it a primary site of peer-to-peer linguistic socialization for younger users. Many Generation Alpha participants encounter Roblox as one of their first sustained online social spaces.

Linguistic memes on Roblox often appear in chat, emotes, and game titles, frequently drawing on expressions circulating on video platforms. The real-time nature of interaction encourages rapid uptake and adaptation of trending phrases, while moderation constraints incentivize euphemistic or coded language. As a result, Roblox functions as a site where linguistic memes are not only observed, but actively negotiated and repurposed in interaction.

Live chat systems, avatar customization, and user-generated game tools support slang innovation, expressive role-play, and peer-group coded speech (Fu et al., 2025; Han et al., 2023), making Roblox a site of linguistic affordance comparable to TikTok's remix culture. Players use chat and emotes to communicate, often blending trending phrases from TikTok or YouTube Shorts with platform-specific in-group expressions. Many Roblox experiences explicitly reference or recreate viral memes in interactive form. Mabaquiao (2024) notes that Generation Alpha users often treat gaming platforms as primary social spaces, suggesting that such environments function as linguistic incubators. More broadly, Roblox has been identified as a social and educational space that fosters collaborative learning and novel communicative practices (Han et al., 2023).

Research on children's communication in online games consistently shows that these environments foster collaborative meaning-making and experimentation with language (Fu et al., 2025; Han et al., 2023). From a memetic linguistics perspective, Roblox illustrates how platform-native language extends beyond content consumption into embodied and interactive practice, where repetition, adaptation, and performance unfold in real time.

5.4 Cross-platform comparison of linguistic affordances

While each platform supports distinct forms of linguistic expression, their differences can be more clearly understood through systematic comparison. Table 3 synthesizes the core affordances, linguistic impacts, and dominant meme practices associated with TikTok, YouTube Shorts, and Roblox. Rather than treating platforms as isolated environments, the table highlights how varying interactional logics, from audiovisual remix to real-time chat, shape the form, circulation, and stabilization of linguistic memes in Generation Alpha's discourse.

5.5 Why other platforms are not central Here

Other platforms, including Instagram, X, and Facebook, also host linguistic innovation and meme circulation. However, they are less central to this analysis for two reasons. First, they tend to play a smaller role in the early digital socialization of Generation Alpha. Second, their dominant modes of expression are less tightly aligned with the audiovisual repetition and performative remix that characterize platform-native linguistic memes.

This does not imply that memetic linguistics is limited to the platforms discussed here. Rather, TikTok, YouTube Shorts, and Roblox provide analytically clear cases of how language adapts under conditions of algorithmic mediation, multimodality, and rapid circulation. They serve as illustrative environments for articulating the core dynamics of memetic linguistics.

Having established the platformed contexts in which Generation Alpha's linguistic memes circulate, the next section turns to the internal organization of these expressions. Specifically, it proposes a

TABLE 3 Platform constraints and meme practices across TikTok, YouTube shorts, and Roblox.

Platform	Affordances	Linguistic impacts	Example memes
TikTok	Short looping videos, viral audio, duets/stitches	Audio-based memes, catchphrases, visual-text sync	"skibidi," "no cap," "rizz," "caught in 4 K"
YouTube Shorts	Video + comment ecosystem, parody channels	Caption remixing, sarcastic labels, slang repetition in comments	"literally me," "sigma male," "slay king"
Roblox	Multiplayer games, live chat, user-generated content	In-game slang, meme-themed experiences, live meme narration	"based," "sus," meme-themed game titles

typology of memetic linguistic genres that captures recurring patterns of form, function, and stance across platforms.

6 A typology of memetic linguistic genres

Treating memes as genres builds on earlier arguments that memes function as patterned communicative forms rather than isolated artifacts, with genre conventions shaping expectations of stance, humor, and participation (Wiggins and Bowers, 2015).

While individual linguistic memes may appear fleeting or idiosyncratic, their repeated use reveals patterned forms of expression. These patterns can be understood as *genres* in the Bakhtinian sense: typified ways of speaking that emerge through repeated social use and shared expectations (Bakhtin, 2000; Bakhtin, 1986). In platform environments, such genres are shaped not only by interactional norms, but by affordances that reward brevity, recognizability, and repetition. This section proposes a typology of memetic linguistic genres that captures recurring modes of expression in Generation Alpha's discourse.

The genre categories proposed here are not intended as fixed classifications, but as analytical heuristics that capture recurring patterns in how linguistic memes are framed and used. Genres often overlap in practice, and a single expression may participate in more than one genre depending on context. What distinguishes these genres is their primary organizing principle, whether tonal, functional, or structural.

6.1 Absurdist genre

Absurdist linguistic memes foreground nonsense, phonetic play, and semantic disruption. Their communicative force lies less in propositional meaning than in rhythm, sound, or sheer incongruity. Expressions in this genre often appear meaningless in isolation, yet acquire significance through repetition and shared recognition.

Examples include sound-based memes such as *skibidi* or other phonotactically playful utterances that circulate widely without stable referential content. The appeal of these expressions lies in their detachment from ordinary semantic expectations. Their absurdity signals in-group familiarity with platform culture and a willingness to participate in playful, non-serious discourse. Research on digital humor suggests that playful repetition and irony enable ambiguous expressions to circulate widely without requiring shared interpretation, making humor a key mechanism for memetic spread rather than merely a stylistic feature (Chiaro, 2017; Kuipers, 2008).

Absurdist linguistic memes are often structurally resistant to long-term stabilization. Their value lies in momentary recognizability rather than durability, which makes rapid saturation and abandonment an expected outcome rather than a failure of uptake.

The "6–7" meme exemplifies this genre particularly clearly. Consisting of a brief numerical utterance, it achieved extreme spreadability across short-form video platforms despite lacking intrinsic semantic meaning. Its uptake depended almost entirely on recognizability, timing, and repetition. In memetic terms, it illustrates how minimal linguistic material can function as a meme when optimized for circulation.

Decision rule: an expression belongs to the absurdist genre when its meaning is primarily aesthetic or rhythmic, and when semantic opacity is central to its appeal.

6.2 Euphemistic genre

The euphemistic genre encompasses linguistic memes that rephrase or soften taboo, sensitive, or restricted content. These expressions often emerge in response to platform moderation systems that penalize explicit language. Euphemistic linguistic memes allow users to reference sensitive topics while maintaining platform visibility.

Examples include substitutions such as *unalived* or *seggs*, which rework conventional terms to evade automated filtering. While euphemism has long existed in language, its platform-mediated form is distinctive in that it is shaped by algorithmic enforcement rather than by face-to-face politeness norms.

These expressions often spread rapidly because they solve a shared communicative problem. Once recognized, they become standardized within platform cultures, functioning as signals of both linguistic creativity and platform literacy.

Decision rule: an expression belongs to the euphemistic genre when its primary function is indirect reference shaped by moderation constraints rather than by interpersonal politeness alone.

6.3 Ironic genre

Ironic linguistic memes rely on tonal layering and stance ambiguity. They often express evaluation while maintaining plausible deniability or detachment. Expressions such as *slay* or *main character energy* can function sincerely or sarcastically depending on context, delivery, and accompanying cues.

In this genre, meaning is not fixed but emerges through shared expectations about irony and exaggeration. The same phrase may praise, mock, or both simultaneously. This ambiguity is a resource rather than a problem. It allows users to align with peers while minimizing risk of overcommitment.

The ironic genre is closely tied to platform performativity. Short-form video encourages exaggerated delivery and visual cues that reinforce tonal play. As a result, ironic linguistic memes often circulate widely because they are flexible and easily recontextualized.

Decision rule: an expression belongs to the ironic genre when its stance is intentionally ambiguous and relies on shared interpretive norms rather than explicit markers.

6.4 Mimetic genre

The mimetic genre consists of linguistic memes that explicitly reference their own repeatability. These expressions often appear as copyable templates, such as caption structures, sound pairings, or fixed phrasal frames. Their primary function is to signal participation in a recognizable format.

Examples include caption prefixes like *POV:* or evaluative constructions such as *he's literally me*. The communicative force of these expressions lies in their recognizability as part of a broader pattern. Originality is less important than accurate reproduction with slight variation.

Mimetic linguistic genres illustrate how language functions as a shared resource rather than as individual expression. Users demonstrate belonging by reproducing established forms, often with minimal modification.

Decision rule: an expression belongs to the mimetic genre when its use presupposes recognition of a template and when variation occurs within a stable frame.

6.5 Iterative genre

The iterative genre emphasizes repetition as a core structural feature. Linguistic memes in this category rely on rhythmic recurrence, looping, or serial repetition to produce humor or emphasis. Iteration may occur within a single utterance or across multiple uses of the same expression.

Phrases such as *caught in 4K* or repeated evaluative responses illustrate how iteration amplifies effect. The humor or force of the expression often increases with repetition rather than diminishing. The iterative genre aligns closely with platform mechanics such as looping video and repeated audio playback.

The "6–7" meme also participates in this genre through extreme repetition. Its persistence across videos demonstrates how iteration itself can become the message, independent of semantic depth.

Decision rule: an expression belongs to the iterative genre when repetition is central to its structure and communicative impact.

6.6 Typology

Table 4 outlines the typology of memetic linguistic genres. This typology highlights how Generation Alpha's linguistic memes are organized around recurring expressive logics rather than isolated lexical innovation. The genres reflect different strategies for managing visibility, stance, and participation under platform conditions. While analytically distinct, they often overlap in practice, underscoring the fluidity of platform-native language.

The next section briefly addresses multimodality and translanguaging, extending the framework beyond Anglophone examples and toward global circulation dynamics.

7 Multimodality, translanguaging, and global circulation

Linguistic memes circulating among Generation Alpha are rarely monolingual or unimodal in a strict sense. Even when individual expressions appear linguistically simple, their meaning is distributed across sound, text, gesture, timing, and visual framing. This multimodal composition is not incidental. It reflects the communicative logic of platforms that privilege audiovisual repetition and rapid recognition over extended verbal elaboration.

From a memetic linguistics perspective, multimodality affects both form and circulation. A short utterance may gain traction not because of its lexical properties, but because it is paired with a distinctive sound, rhythm, or visual cue that makes it easily identifiable and repeatable. As linguistic memes travel across platforms, these multimodal elements often remain more stable than the words themselves, allowing expressions to persist even as surface language changes.

This dynamic is closely linked to translanguaging and cross-linguistic play. Global platforms host users with diverse linguistic repertoires, and many widely circulating memes draw on hybrid, stylized, or pseudo-linguistic forms rather than on standard language varieties. The spread of so-called "Italian brainrot" memes (Gupta, 2025; Riesco and Goering, 2025), in which nonsensical or exaggerated Italian-sounding expressions are paired with audiovisual characters or AI-generated voices, illustrates how phonetic style and affect can travel independently of semantic transparency. Such memes are not primarily about Italian as a language, but about the aesthetic and rhythmic qualities associated with it.

These dynamics align with research on multilingual and cross-language internet memes, which shows how meme circulation increasingly relies on translanguaging practices that mobilize phonetic style, affect, and visual rhythm across linguistic boundaries rather than stable language systems (Huang et al., 2024; Nooney and Portwood-Stacer, 2014).

These practices challenge conventional distinctions between languages. Linguistic memes often operate in a space where code-switching, borrowing, and stylization are fluid and unconstrained by grammatical norms. For Generation Alpha, competence in this space involves recognizing sounds, patterns, and formats rather than mastering vocabulary in a single language. Memetic linguistics accommodates this by treating linguistic units as platform-native packages whose identity is shaped by circulation and recognition rather than by linguistic boundaries.

Cross-platform movement further accentuates this process. As linguistic memes migrate from one platform to another, they may undergo subtle transformations in form or stance while retaining recognizability. A phrase may lose its original audio, gain subtitles, or be embedded in a new genre template. These shifts do not necessarily weaken the meme. Instead, they demonstrate how circulation across infrastructures contributes to linguistic mutation and stabilization.

By acknowledging multimodality and translanguaging without treating them as separate analytical problems, memetic linguistics extends beyond Anglophone and text-centric models of digital language. It offers a way to conceptualize how linguistic meaning travels in global, platform-mediated environments where sound, style, and repetition often matter more than lexical clarity.

TABLE 4 Typology of memetic linguistic genres.

Genre	Core logic	Primary function	Illustrative examples
Absurdist	Semantic disruption	Play, in-group signaling	*skibidi*, *6–7*
Euphemistic	Indirect reference	Moderation evasion	*unalived*, *seggs*
Ironic	Stance ambiguity	Evaluation, distancing	*slay*, *main character energy*
Mimetic	Template reuse	Affiliation, participation	*POV:*, *he's literally me*
Iterative	Repetition	Emphasis, humor	*caught in 4K*, repeated sound loops

Together, these observations reinforce the need to treat linguistic memes as multimodal and mobile forms whose circulation depends on pattern recognition rather than linguistic purity or semantic stability.

The next section considers what these dynamics imply for broader processes of language change, particularly under conditions of algorithmic mediation and accelerated circulation.

8 Implications for language change under platform conditions

The framework of memetic linguistics has implications that extend beyond the description of contemporary youth slang. It points to broader shifts in how language changes, stabilizes, and acquires social meaning under conditions of platform mediation. For Generation Alpha, linguistic innovation is not simply accelerated. It is reorganized around circulation, repetition, and performative visibility.

The following implications draw together the analytical strands developed above to reflect on what memetic linguistics reveals about contemporary language change under platform conditions.

8.1 Acceleration, saturation, and ephemerality

One of the defining features of platform-native language is the speed with which linguistic memes emerge, peak, and disappear. Unlike traditional models of language change, where diffusion and stabilization unfold gradually, memetic circulation is often characterized by abrupt rises in visibility followed by equally rapid decline. This pattern reflects the dynamics of algorithmic amplification and attention saturation rather than long-term linguistic entrenchment.

The lifecycle of the "6–7" meme illustrates this dynamic clearly. The expression achieved widespread recognizability within a short period, despite minimal semantic content. Its communicative value rested almost entirely on repetition, timing, and in-group familiarity. Such memes are structurally optimized for momentary dominance rather than durability, making rapid abandonment an expected outcome once saturation is reached.

This saturation phase is visible not only within platform environments, but also through external signals of attention. Google Trends data show a pronounced, short-lived spike in search interest for "6–7," followed by rapid decline. This pattern is difficult to reconcile with gradual adoption or consolidation. Instead, it is more plausibly interpreted as a marker of interpretive friction, as the meme becomes visible to audiences lacking shared contextual knowledge and prompts attempts at explanation rather than participation. Heightened search activity, in this sense, reflects exposure beyond the originating community rather than deepening use within it.

Saturation is often accompanied by retrospective narration. Mainstream media commentary declaring the meme "over," such as coverage in *The Atlantic* (Bogost, 2025), does not so much precipitate decline as register it symbolically. From a memetic linguistics perspective, search spikes and media pronouncements function as parallel indicators of boundary collapse. They mark the moment when a platform-native linguistic form becomes legible outside its originating community and is reclassified from participatory practice to cultural artifact. Decline, in this sense, reflects saturation and symbolic closure rather than simple exhaustion or loss of appeal.

To illustrate this saturation dynamic, Figure 1 presents Google Trends data for the "6–7" meme, showing a sharp spike in search interest followed by rapid decline. The figure is included as an illustrative indicator of external attention and symbolic saturation, not as evidence of linguistic usage or demographic adoption.

8.2 Multimodal grammar and compression

Platform-native language operates under strong constraints of time, space, and attention. These constraints encourage linguistic compression. Meaning is condensed into short phrases, sounds, or gestures that can be immediately recognized. Over time, this gives rise to an emergent multimodal grammar in which rhythm, timing, and visual cues play roles analogous to syntax and prosody.

This grammar is not codified, yet it is learned implicitly through participation. Users acquire competence by observing which forms circulate

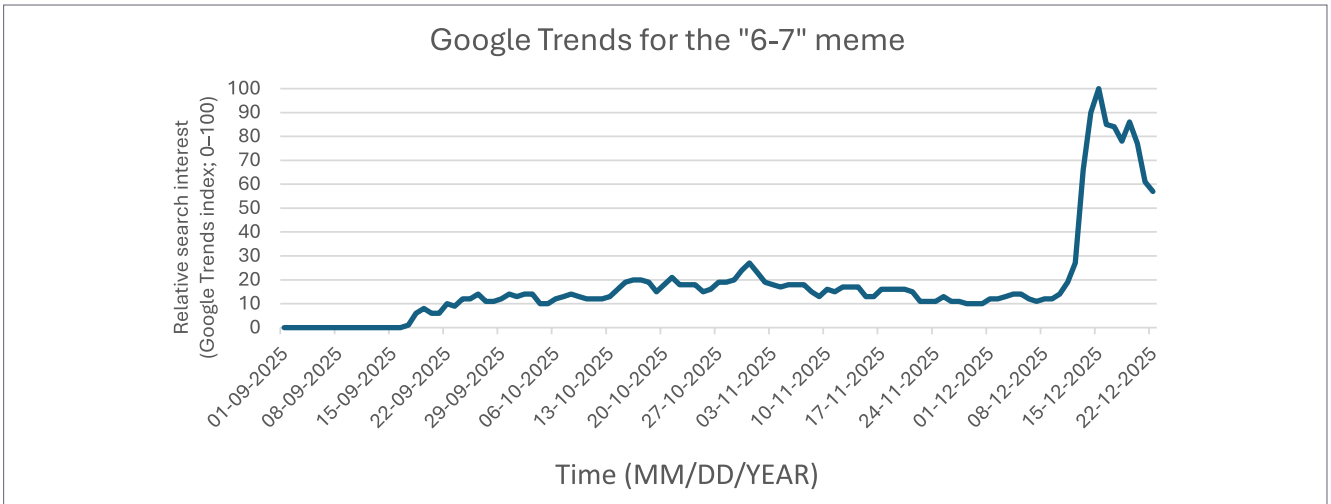

FIGURE 1
Illustrative google trends data for "6–7" (worldwide), showing a short-lived spike in search interest consistent with saturation-driven visibility rather than long-term linguistic entrenchment. Values represent normalized search interest relative to peak interest within the selected period and do not indicate absolute search volume or frequency of language use (source: https://trends.google.com/trends/, retrieved 22 December 2025).

successfully and by reproducing them with slight variation. From this perspective, language learning becomes closely tied to platform literacy. Knowing how to speak is inseparable from knowing how to circulate.

8.3 Language as performance rather than proposition

Memetic linguistics also reframes linguistic expression as performance rather than proposition. Many expressions circulating among Generation Alpha do not aim to convey new information. Instead, they signal stance, alignment, or participation. To utter a linguistic meme is often to enact a recognizable role within a shared cultural script.

This performative orientation aligns with research on digital self-presentation and ambient affiliation, where brief, stylized utterances function as social signals rather than as carriers of propositional content (Zappavigna, 2011). Platform affordances reinforce this orientation by rewarding recognizability and engagement over elaboration.

8.4 Algorithmic mediation and selective pressure

Finally, memetic linguistics foregrounds the role of algorithmic mediation in shaping linguistic form. Recommendation systems influence which expressions are seen, repeated, and imitated. Moderation policies introduce selective pressures that favor euphemistic adaptation and indirect reference. Together, these mechanisms shape the ecology in which linguistic memes compete for visibility.

Empirical studies of virality and moderation effects suggest that algorithmic systems do not merely reflect user preferences. They actively structure linguistic possibilities by privileging certain forms and suppressing others (Ling et al., 2022; Stewart et al., 2017). Memetic linguistics incorporates these dynamics into the analysis of language change, treating infrastructure as part of the linguistic environment rather than as an external constraint.

Taken together, these implications suggest that Generation Alpha's linguistic practices are not aberrations or degradations of language. They are adaptive responses to platform conditions. Language changes not because speakers abandon meaning, but because meaning is reorganized around circulation, performance, and algorithmic visibility.

The final section reflects on the framework's contributions and limitations and outlines directions for future research.

9 Conclusion and future directions

This article has proposed *memetic linguistics* as a conceptual framework for analyzing the platform-mediated language practices of Generation Alpha. Rather than treating contemporary youth expressions as isolated slang terms or fleeting trends, the framework conceptualizes linguistic memes as repeatable, multimodal units shaped by circulation, recognizability, and platform affordances. By integrating insights from sociolinguistics, meme theory, and platform studies, the paper has outlined how language adapts under conditions of algorithmic mediation and compressed attention. Seen in this light, memetic linguistics can be read as part of a broader shift toward algorithmic culture, in which cultural forms evolve in response to computational selection and visibility regimes rather than solely through interpersonal transmission (Bucher, 2018; Striphas, 2015).

The core contribution lies in reframing language change as a process organized around circulation rather than accumulation. For Generation Alpha, linguistic competence increasingly involves knowing how to participate in repeatable forms, how to align with recognizable genres, and how to perform stance within platform-native constraints. Expressions such as absurdist soundbites, euphemistic substitutions, ironic evaluations, and iterative punchlines illustrate how meaning is produced through repetition and performance rather than through propositional novelty. The case of the widely circulated "6–7" meme underscores this point clearly. Minimal linguistic material can achieve extreme visibility when optimized for repetition and recognition, even in the absence of stable semantic content.

The analytical dimensions introduced in this paper—form, function, circulation, stance, and genre—offer a structured vocabulary for examining these dynamics. The genre typology further highlights recurring expressive logics that organize platformed language. Together, these elements provide a foundation for studying linguistic memes as patterned, socially meaningful forms rather than as anecdotal curiosities.

At the same time, the paper is deliberately limited in scope. It is conceptual and illustrative, not empirical. No claims are made regarding frequency, representativeness, or causal effects. This limitation is partly methodological and partly ethical, given the challenges of systematically studying the language practices of minors in platform environments. Rather than presenting data, the aim has been to articulate a framework that can guide future empirical research.

Future studies could operationalize memetic linguistics in several ways. Multimodal corpora linking audio, text, gesture, and circulation trajectories could be used to trace how linguistic memes emerge and decay across platforms. Network-based approaches could model diffusion and mutation patterns. Qualitative work could examine how young users learn and negotiate platform-native language in interaction. Comparative research could explore how linguistic memes travel across languages, cultures, and generations, refining the framework's applicability beyond Anglophone contexts.

In this sense, memetic linguistics is best understood as an analytical invitation rather than a closed theory. It encourages scholars to take seriously the infrastructures through which language now circulates and to recognize repetition, remix, and performance as central mechanisms of contemporary linguistic change. For a generation raised within algorithmically curated environments, language does not merely evolve. It circulates.

Ethics statement

Ethical approval was not required for the study involving human data in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. Written informed consent was not required, for either participation in the study or for the publication of potentially/indirectly identifying information, in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. The social media data was accessed and analyzed in accordance with the platform's terms of use and all relevant institutional/national regulations.

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The author(s) declared that Generative AI was used in the creation of this manuscript. The author used ChatGPT-5.2 and Grammarly Premium to edit the manuscript's language, style, and structure. The author has reviewed and edited the output and takes full responsibility for the content of this manuscript.

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Appendix: illustrative explanations of selected linguistic memes

To support readers unfamiliar with contemporary platform vernacular, Table A1 provides brief explanations of selected expressions referenced illustratively in the article. These explanations are intended solely to aid comprehension and do not imply empirical representativeness or exhaustive coverage.

TABLE A1 Illustrative linguistic memes referenced in the article.

Expression	Platform context	Primary genre	Brief explanation
Caught in 4K	TikTok, YouTube Shorts	Iterative	Used humorously to frame someone as visibly exposed or embarrassed
No cap	TikTok, Roblox	Ironic	Signals sincerity or truthfulness, often with playful tone
Slay	TikTok, Shorts	Ironic	Expresses approval or admiration, sometimes sincerely, sometimes sarcastically
Skibidi	TikTok	Absurdist	Nonsensical sound popularized through repeated audiovisual remix
Rizz	TikTok, Roblox	Euphemistic	Refers to perceived charisma or flirtatious ability
Unalived	TikTok, Shorts	Euphemistic	Substitute term for "killed" used to avoid moderation filters
6–7	TikTok, Shorts	Absurdist / Iterative	Minimal numerical utterance spread through repetition and recognizability
Italian brainrot	TikTok, Shorts	Absurdist / Mimetic	Example: *"Tralalero Tralala, Bombardiro Crocodilo"*—pseudo-Italian vocalizations paired with surreal visuals, emphasizing phonetic rhythm, repetition, and recognizability rather than semantic meaning