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Expansion and Narrowing of the Meaning of Slang in the Comment Column on the Instagram Account @fadiljaidi

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ABSTRACT
This study aims to describe the forms of meaning expansion (generalization) and meaning narrowing (specialization), as well as the factors influencing the lexical meaning changes of slang terms found in the comment sections of the Instagram account @fadiljaidi. This study employs a qualitative approach, specifically a descriptive qualitative research design. The data consist of slang words and expressions that have undergone changes, as found in the comment sections of the Instagram account @fadiljaidi. The data were sourced from comments made by Instagram users between January and March 2026. Data collection was carried out using documentation, observation, and note-taking techniques. Data analysis involved identification, classification, analysis, interpretation, and presentation. The research findings identify 5 instances of semantic expansion: *gebrakan, gila, kompor, frekuensi*, and *gas*. Additionally, there are 5 instances of semantic narrowing: datar, healing, kalcer, redflag, and *pengikut*. The factors driving these semantic shifts include social, cultural, psychological, and technological elements. Social factors relate to interactions among social media users; cultural factors pertain to digital language trends; psychological factors concern creativity and expression; and technological factors relate to developments in communication technology and social media features. Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the slang used in the comment section of the Instagram account @fadiljaidi undergoes both expansion and narrowing of meaning. These shifts demonstrate that slang is dynamic, with its meanings adapting to the communication context of the digital community. Such changes in meaning are influenced by social, cultural, psychological, and technological factors.

Keywords: expansion of meaning, narrowing of meaning, slang, instagram

Perluasan dan Penyempitan Makna Bahasa Gaul dalam Kolom Komentar Akun Instagram @fadiljaidi

ABSTRAK
Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan wujud perluasan makna (generalisasi), penyempitan makna (spesialisasi), serta faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi perubahan makna leksikal bahasa gaul dalam kolom komentar akun Instagram @fadiljaidi. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Data berupa kata dan ungkapan bahasa gaul yang mengalami perubahan dalam kolom komentar akun Instagram @fadiljaidi. Sumber data diperoleh dari komentar pengguna Instagram pada periode Januari–Maret 2026. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui dokumentasi, simak, dan catat. Analisis data dilakukan melalui identifikasi, klasifikasi, analisis, interpretasi, dan penyajian data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan 5 data perluasan makna, yaitu gebrakan, gila, kompor, frekuensi, dan gas. Selain itu, terdapat 5 data penyempitan makna, yaitu datar, healing, kalcer, redflag, dan pengikut. Faktor perubahan makna tersebut meliputi faktor sosial, budaya, psikologis, dan teknologi. Faktor sosial berkaitan dengan interaksi pengguna media sosial, budaya berkaitan dengan tren bahasa digital, psikologis berkaitan dengan kreativitas dan ekspresi, sedangkan teknologi berkaitan dengan perkembangan teknologi komunikasi dan fitur media sosial. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, dapat disimpulkan bahwa bahasa gaul dalam kolom komentar akun Instagram @fadiljaidi mengalami perluasan dan penyempitan makna. Perubahan tersebut menunjukkan bahwa bahasa gaul bersifat dinamis dan menyesuaikan makna dengan konteks komunikasi masyarakat digital. Perubahan makna dipengaruhi faktor sosial, budaya, psikologis, dan teknologi.

Kata kunci: perluasan makna, penyempitan makna, bahasa gaul, instagram

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INTRODUCTION

The development of slang usage on social media shows changes in how people communicate. Instagram has become one of the digital interaction spaces that allows users to use language informally, creatively, and flexibly through comment sections. This language usage can be found on @fadiljaidi Instagram accounts, which have diverse interactions among their followers. This condition makes the comment section of these accounts relevant for observing the development of slang usage in digital communication. This aligns with Fauziah et al. (2025:8), who stated that online communication encourages the use of non-standard and flexible language in social interactions.

Slang is one form of linguistic creativity that has developed on social media. Its use not only functions as a communication tool but also as a means to express the social identity of its users (Hijrah et al., 2024:94). Over time, the use of slang can cause changes in the form and meaning of words because they are influenced by the context of communication and interaction between users. Social media also accelerates the spread of new terms, so slang increasingly develops in digital communication (Dewi, 2024:1204).

This phenomenon is related to semantic studies, especially meaning changes. Meaning changes can take the form of generalization or expansion of meaning and specialization or narrowing of meaning. Both forms of change show that word meanings can evolve according to the context and communication needs of society. Kristinaupi et al. (2024:87) state that meaning changes in social media include the expansion and narrowing of word meanings. These changes are also influenced by the development of communication technology that drives changes in the form and meaning of language in online interactions (Yayang and Supadi, 2025:226).

Based on this phenomenon, research on the expansion and narrowing of slang meaning in the comment section of Instagram accounts is @fadiljaidi important to conduct. This study is aimed at examining the forms of generalization and specialization as well as the factors influencing changes in slang meaning in digital communication.

This article contains three problem formulations. The problem formulation referred to is:

1. How is the expansion of slang meaning manifested in the comment section of @fadiljaidi Instagram account?
2. What is the form of narrowing the meaning of slang in the comment section of @fadiljaidi Instagram account?
3. What factors influence changes in the lexical meaning of slang in the comment section of @fadiljaidi Instagram account?

This article contains three research objectives. The objectives referred to are:

1. To describe the forms of expanded slang meaning in the comment section of the Instagram account @fadiljaidi.
2. To describe the form of narrowing of slang meaning in the comment section of the Instagram account @fadiljaidi.
3. To identify the factors influencing changes in the lexical meaning of slang in the comment section of the Instagram account @fadiljaidi.

This research benefits from two perspectives. First, from a theoretical perspective, this research is expected to contribute to the development of linguistic studies, especially in the field of semantics related to changes in lexical meaning. This research is also expected to enrich understanding of the expansion and narrowing of slang meaning in digital communication. Second, from a practical perspective, this research is expected to provide readers with information about the dynamics of slang usage on social media. Furthermore, the results of this research can be utilized by students and future researchers as references in studying changes in language meaning.

Semantics is a branch of linguistics that studies the meaning of language. Ullmann

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(1972:12) states that semantics is the study of meaning, while Chaer (2009:2) explains that semantics studies the relationship between linguistic signs and the things they sign. One study in semantics is meaning change, which is the shift of a word's meaning from its original meaning to a new meaning (Chaer, 2013:140). Meaning change can take the form of generalization and specialization. According to Ullmann (1972:193), generalization is the expansion of the scope of a word's meaning so it can be used to refer to more things. Conversely, specialization is the narrowing of the scope of meaning so that a word is used more specifically (Ullmann, 1972:194).

Slang is a variation of informal language that develops among communities and is influenced by popular culture and social media (Suweleh, 2024:233). Its development allows for changes in meaning due to the use of words in different communication contexts. These changes are also influenced by social, cultural, psychological, and technological factors. Nabilla and Yulianti (2022:206) explain the influence of social factors on language change, while Pratiwi et al. (2025:408) relate it to cultural development. Psychological factors relate to the emotional expression and creativity of language users (Sa'idah et al., 2021:3), while technological factors relate to the role of social media in generating new meanings (Pratiwi et al., 2025:406).

Relevant articles are relatively easy to find in online journals. The following are presented the 3 articles in question:

1. Sonya Nur Aziza's (2021) study entitled "Semantic Shifts in the Use of Slang on Instagram Social Media (A Study of the Meaning of Euphemism and Dysphemism)" uses a qualitative descriptive method. The results show a shift in slang meaning in Instagram comments, both in the form of euphemisms and dysphemism. The similarities lie in the object of slang language and semantic studies, while the difference lies in the focus of the meaning changes studied.
2. The research by Hijrah et al. (2024) titled "Shifts in Meaning and Identity Expression in the Use of Slang Language on Social Media" discusses the use of slang on Instagram, TikTok, and X. The results show that slang language has undergone a shift in meaning and is used as a means of expressing social identity. The difference from this study lies in the more specific object of study, namely the comment section of Instagram accounts @fadiljaidi with a focus on generalization and specialization.
3. The research by Nurfadilla et al. (2026) entitled "Analysis of Meaning Changes in Words in the Comment Column of Netizens on the Instagram Account El Rumi" uses a descriptive qualitative approach with Abdul Chaer's theory of meaning change. The results show various forms of meaning changes in Instagram comments. The similarity lies in the study of meaning changes in the Instagram comment section, while the differences lie in the accounts studied and the focus of the study. This study specifically examines generalizations, specializations, and factors influencing changes in slang meaning on @fadiljaidi accounts.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a qualitative descriptive design to describe the expansion and narrowing of slang meaning in the comment section of the Instagram account @fadiljaidi. The qualitative approach is used because it focuses on understanding meaning in natural conditions (Sugiyono, 2023:9; Abubakar, 2021:37; Razak, 2017:176). This study also refers to Creswell and Creswell (2018:185), who explain that qualitative research provides an opportunity to examine themes and patterns of meaning inductively. The research was conducted through observation of the comment column of the account with data collection time from January 1 to March 31, 2026.

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The research data consist of slang words and expressions that have undergone meaning changes, while the data source was obtained from user comments on the Instagram account @fadiljaidi. Data collection was carried out through documentation, observation, and note-taking techniques. Documentation was done by saving screenshots of comments, observation techniques were carried out by observing the use of slang and its context, while note-taking techniques were used to record data relevant to the research focus. The main research instrument was the researcher themselves, assisted by data recording tables and screenshot documentation.

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively descriptively through several stages, namely identifying slang words or expressions, classifying data based on meaning expansion (generalization) and narrowing of meaning (specialization), analyzing lexical meaning and meaning based on usage context, and interpreting and presenting the analysis results in descriptive description. Analysis was also conducted to identify factors influencing changes in slang meaning.

RESULTS

The results show two forms of slang meaning changes in the comment section of the Instagram account @fadiljaidi, namely the expansion of meaning (generalization) and the narrowing of meaning (specialization). From all the data analyzed in this study, this article focuses the discussion on ten data points consisting of five generalizations and five specializations.

1. A Form of Meaning Expansion (Generalization)

Meaning expansion is the development of word usage from the initial meaning to a broader scope of use. In this study, five words were found that show meaning expansion, as presented in the following table.

Table 1
Meaning Expansion Data (Generalization)

No.	Words	Quote Comment	Lexical meaning	Meaning in the comments
1	*gebrakan* [breakthrough]	Ka Yislam ada perkembangan, ga datar bgt ekspresinya" ["Yislam is showing some progress; his expression isn't as flat as it used to be."]	A jolt or action that produces noise.	Interesting and unexpected ideas or actions.
2	gila [crazy]	"Ayooo, enaknya healing kemana lagiii??" ["Come on, where should we go for a little 'healing' next??"]	A state of memory sickness or insanity.	An expression of admiration for something.
3	frekuensi [frequency]	"Gila dalam keadaan kalcer ya kak" ["Wow, he's actually getting into the 'culture' [trendy lifestyle/vibe], huh?"]	The number of vibrations or waves in one unit of time.	Compatibility of mindset, traits, or behaviors.
4	kompor [stove]	"Like ah biar dikira redflag" ["Gonna 'like' this just so people think I'm a 'red flag.'"]	Tools used for cooking.	The act of provoking or encouraging someone to do something.
5	gas [gas]	"Pengikut Fadil di ig nya juga ikut stress" ["Fadil's followers on Instagram are getting stressed out too."]	Substances that have certain properties and can fill space.	An invitation, agreement, or readiness to do something.

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Based on Table 1, the expansion of meaning is seen when words that originally had certain meanings are used to express something else in daily communication. The word *'gebrukan'*, for example, no longer refers to a jolt or punch but is used to describe an interesting and unexpected idea or action. The word *crazy* is used as an expression of admiration, while *frequency* is used to describe human compatibility. Furthermore, the word *stove* is used to describe the act of provoking or pushing someone, while the word *gas* is used as an expression of invitation or approval.

2. Forms of Narrowing of Meaning (Specialization)

Meaning narrowing is a change in word usage that shows a more specific meaning scope compared to the original meaning. In this study, five words were found that show meaning narrowing, as presented in the following table.

Table 2
Meaning Narrowing Data (Specialization)

No.	Words	Quote Comment	Lexical meaning	Meaning in the comments
1	[datar] flat	"Ka Yislam has development, his expression is not very flat"	Flat or unwavy surface.	Expressions or responses that do not show emotion.
2	[healing]healing	"Come on, where else is healing nice??"	The healing or recovery process of physical and psychological conditions.	Traveling or vacationing activities to refresh the mind.
3	[kalcer] limestone	"It's crazy in the wild, my dear."	It comes from *culture*, which is culture or culture in general.	A style or state that follows trends and popular culture.
4	[rredflag] redflag	"Like ah, let it be considered a red flag"	Red flags serve as warning or danger signs.	Behavior or character of a person considered problematic.
5	[pengikuti] followers	"Fadil's followers on his IG also get stressed"	A person who follows or adheres to a teaching, groups, or certain parties.	People who follow Fadil's Instagram account Jaidi.

Based on Table 2, the narrowing of meaning is seen in the use of words that receive more specific coverage according to the communication context. The word *flat* is used to describe a person's expression with minimal emotion, while *healing* is specifically used for vacation activities or refreshing the mind. The word *'kalcer'* is used to refer to a style that follows trends, while *redflag* is used to describe behavior or character considered problematic. Meanwhile, the word *'follower'* is specifically used to refer to users who follow certain Instagram accounts.

3. Factors Influencing Meaning Changes

The results show that changes in slang meaning are related to four factors: social, cultural, psychological, and technological. Social factors are seen through habits and interactions among users in using words with certain meanings. Cultural factors relate to trends, lifestyle, and popular culture that influence term choice. Psychological factors are seen through the use of words to convey emotions, admiration, responses, and judgments. Meanwhile, technological factors relate to social media as a space that enables the use and dissemination of terms with new meanings.

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These four factors can be interrelated. For example, the use of the word *'crazy'* as an expression of admiration relates to social communication habits as well as the speaker's need to express emotions. The use of *healing* and *kalcer* is also related to the development of trends and popular culture spread through social media.

DISCUSSION

Expansion of Meaning (Generalization) of Slang

Based on the research results, the five words that show meaning expansion are *breakthrough, crazy, frequency, stove,* and *gas*. These changes show that word usage is not always tied to its lexical meaning but can develop according to communication needs. Bardi et al. (2025:173) explain that generalization is a change in meaning when the scope of a word's use expands. This view aligns with the concept of meaning expansion proposed by Ullmann (1972), which is a change that causes words to be used in a broader scope than the previous meaning.

This expansion is seen in the word *gebrakan*. Lexically, this word relates to a jolt or action that produces sound. However, in the comment "There's always a breakthrough, Dil," the word is used to describe Fadil's idea or action that is considered interesting and unexpected. This change shows the development of usage from physical actions to abstract actions or ideas.

A similar thing is seen with the word *crazy* in the comment "Crazy so cool, the fix must debut this." The word *crazy* lexically relates to a state of insanity, but in comments it is used to express admiration for something considered extraordinary. This usage shows that the word *crazy* acquires an expressive function in informal communication. The speaker is not expressing someone's mental state but emphasizing admiration.

In the word *frequency*, its original meaning relates to the number of vibrations or waves in one unit of time. However, in the comment "Candidates of the same frequency are the same as uncle," the word is used to describe the compatibility of a person's mindset, character, or behavior. The use of terms from the field of physics to describe human relationships shows the development of the context of word usage.

Meanwhile, the words *stove* and *gas* show the use of more expressive language. The word *stove* , which lexically means cooking utensil, is used to describe the actions of someone considered to provoke or encourage others to do something. Meanwhile, *the word gas* , which means substance in certain conditions, is used as an expression of invitation, approval, or readiness. Both words show that social media users use familiar vocabulary to convey their meaning briefly.

These findings show that generalizations in the Instagram comment column are not only related to the increase in referents but also to the evolving context of word usage. The use of short, informal, and expressive language provides space for words to acquire new uses. Thus, the results of this study show that digital communication is one of the environments that supports the development of slang meaning usage.

Narrowing of the Meaning (Specialization) of Slang

The results show five words that experience narrowing in meaning, namely *flat, healing, kalcer, redflag,* and *follower*. Narrowing occurs when the scope of word usage becomes more specific compared to the previous meaning. Ansori (2021:158) explains that specialization is a change in meaning that causes a word to experience limitations so it is used in a more specific context. This view aligns with Ullmann (1972), who explained that specialization relates to the limitation of the scope of meaning of words.

In the word *flat*, its lexical meaning relates to a flat or unwavy surface. However, in the comment "Ka Yislam ada kembang, the expression is not very flat," the word is specifically used to describe a person's expression that does not show meaningful emotions or reactions. This usage

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indicates a restriction of context from the surface state toward human expression or response.

The word healing generally means the process of healing or recovering physical or psychological conditions. However, in the comment "Come on, where else is healing good?", the term is used to ask about activities or places to relax and refresh the mind. The meaning used becomes more specific because it refers to recreational activities as one way to achieve self-refreshment.

Narrowing is also seen in the word *kalcer*. This word comes from the English slang pronunciation culture, which means culture or culture in general. In the comment "Crazy in a state of kalcer, sis," the word is used more specifically to describe a style or state that follows trends and popular culture. Thus, the use of the word is limited to the context of certain lifestyles or trends.

Furthermore, the term *red flag* , which literally means red flag as a warning or danger sign, is used to describe the behavior or character of someone considered problematic. This usage shows a limitation of context from a general danger sign to a judgment of behavior in relationships or social interactions.

A similar thing is seen with *the word follower*. In general, the word refers to a person who follows or adheres to a certain teaching, group, or party. However, in the comment "Fadil's followers on his IG also get stressed," the word specifically refers to Instagram users who follow Fadil Jaidi's account. The use of this word indicates a restriction on referees on following accounts on social media. Based on this explanation, the narrowing of meaning in this study occurs through limiting the context of word usage. Words that originally had a general scope are used more specifically to describe expressions, recreational activities, trends, behaviors, or social media user activities. These findings indicate that communication needs and the development of digital culture also influence the meaning of words in slang.

Factors Influencing Meaning Changes

The changes in slang meaning in this study are related to social, cultural, psychological, and technological factors. These four factors do not always work separately but can be interconnected in the use of a word.

Social factors are seen through user interaction and habits in responding to posts. The use *of gebrokan* and *komkomkan*, for example, relates to users' assessment of someone's actions. The word *follower* also shows the relationship between language and social activities of users in following Instagram accounts. The habit of repeatedly using words in digital communication environments can make a meaning easier to understand by other users.

Cultural factors relate to trends, lifestyle, and popular culture. This is evident in the use of *healing* and *kalcer*. The word *healing* is used to refer to recreational activities or self-refreshment, while *kalcer* is used to describe something that follows trends. The use of these two words shows how popular terms are adapted into everyday communication.

Psychological factors are seen through the user's need to express emotions and provide judgment. The use *of the word crazy* as an expression of admiration and *frequency* to describe compatibility shows that users use certain words to convey responses concisely. The word *flat* is also used to assess the expression of someone considered to have minimal emotion.

The technological factor relates to the development of social media, which provides space for the rapid use and spread of language. Instagram comment sections allow users to respond spontaneously, briefly, and informally. In this study, technology is not positioned as the sole cause of meaning changes, but rather as a communication environment that enables the use and dissemination of new meanings.

Thus, changes in slang meaning in the comment section of Instagram accounts

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@fadiljaidi influenced by the relationship between social habits, popular cultural developments, psychological needs, and digital communication characteristics. These four factors provide context for the emergence of words with meanings different or more specific than their lexical meanings.

The advantage of this study lies in the selection of specific data sources, namely the comment section of Instagram accounts @fadiljaidi, so the analysis can be directed towards the use of slang in the context of real digital interaction. This study also examines two directions of meaning change, namely generalization and specialization, as well as the influencing factors. This study has limitations in data sources focusing only on one Instagram account and the data collection period from January to March 2026. Therefore, the research findings cannot yet describe the use of slang among all social media users or other digital platforms.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, two forms of slang meaning changes were found in the comment section of the Instagram account @fadiljaidi, namely the expansion of meaning (generalization) and the narrowing of meaning (specialization). The expansion of meaning is shown by the words *gebrakan, gila, fréquence, komstove,* and *gas*. These words have evolved from lexical meaning to broader meanings according to the communication context, such as expressions of admiration, compatibility, encouragement, and invitation. Meanwhile, the narrowing of meaning was found in the words *flat, healing, kalcer, redflag, and follower*. These words are used in a more specific scope, such as to describe expressions, recreational activities, trends, behaviors, and users who follow social media accounts.

These changes in meaning relate to social, cultural, psychological, and technological factors. Social factors relate to interaction and habits of language use, cultural factors relate to trends and popular culture, psychological factors relate to emotions and user judgment, while technological factors provide space for the use and dissemination of slang in digital communication. Thus, the use of slang on social media shows that the meaning of language is dynamic and can evolve according to the communication needs of society.

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