

Vocabulary Hybridization among Gen Z learners in the Digital Era

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Abstract- Hybridization investigates the vocabulary of Gen Z learners in the digital era to describe and explain the usage of Filipino affixes and English free morpheme within one of the universities of CALABARZON. This paper collected 502 hybrid words and was analyze with morphology to show the patterns of combining the Filipino feature to the English word, afterwards, markedness theory was utilized to explain the meaning and grammatical change of each word collected from the Gen Z learners within their Facebook post, comments, captions, and messenger. The result shows that the Gen Z learners of ages 20-27 were using hybrid words to suffice the need of communication since the existence of Filipino and English language were normally used. Also, this study found out that there are words that change its grammatical category from noun into verb. This implied that the language change according to the user and platform that they are using and this indicates the evolution of Filipino-English hybridization.

Index Terms- Affixes, Digital Platform, Gen Z learner, Hybridization, Morphological process

I. INTRODUCTION

Affixation has become prominent in the Philippine context that makes the language rich and evolving and as it evolves there were various factors that made the language profound based on its users and the context that they are using the language. Adjacently, the digital context confirms the use of language in various aspects based on its users, specifically the Gen Z, in which this research will prioritize. Sawe (2025) defines the language of Generation Z in which it does not prioritize the way they mark their social identity in communication but to emphasize their linguistic adaptation through internet-inspired expressions. It only means that the language that they have created was normalized within the digital context and mostly recognized internationally. As Grandez et., al. (2023) mentioned in their study that the existence of new words was mostly created by Gen Z. It emphasizes the creativity, technology, and the language of Gen Z that coexist in any platform. Various studies have mentioned that the Gen Z language evolved through slang (Jeresano and Craretero, n.d.), morphological structure (Olivia et., al. n.d., Abella et. al., 2024), neoclassical combination (Mikelionienè, 2020), codeswitching (Mikelionienè, 2020), and linguistic play

(Herawati et. al., 2025) in which students use even within the classroom. Hence, this study will describe the recurring affixation patterns and frequently occurring Filipino affixes in hybrid word formation.

Previous qualitative studies have used different kinds of analysis to explain the language of Gen Z in digital context. Grandez (2023) had used the morphological process to examine the Gen Z language which alter, and add morphemes, even change spellings and meanings that are considered as new lexicon in which Gen Z known for slang words and their skills in using social media platform which makes these word popular (Tufais and Ali, 2024) as Herawati and Syahrir (2025) mentioned on their study that the Gen Z employs a strategies (passive and active) to understand the slang words. In support to that, language styles and identity were discovered by Telumbanua et., al. (2024) where most of the language style that Gen Z are using is the casual style; in connection to this, Sawe (2025) define that the Slang through hybridization shows digital identity and the Gen Zs linguistic communication.

The extreme use of technology made Gen Z create, borrow, and translate languages (Mikelionienè, 2020) evidence has found that the student's diverse contact with language can influence the way they build and form new words which combine one language to another. For instance, the Philippines recognize two languages under the Philippine constitution in which English and Filipino were used within and outside the classroom setting (Clemente, 2025), with this phenomenon the Gen Z uses language interchangeably, due to this, most of the linguistic features from Filipino were applied to the English word or language and vice versa, specific feature that mostly used for Filipino and English are the affixes in which these Filipino affixes were mostly applied with the English word. For instance, nag-walk, na-bore, um-attend. This process is called hybridization (Shankar and Chandra, 2020). That process was used in classroom, daily conversation, and in digital settings in which the Gen Z are exposed. This exposure was seen by Herawati et., al. (2025) as a contributing factor in incidental learning of the students' that enriched Gen Z's casual interaction or their informal communication. A variety of platforms contribute to their incidental learning, self-expression, and word creation such as messenger (Abella et., al. 2024), Facebook (Grandez, 2020), Instagram (Telumbanua, 2024), WhatsApp (Tufais and Ali, 2024), and TikTok (Herawati et., al. 2025).

As recommended by Tufais (2024) the continuous use of technology may contribute to the use of slang words and code switching (Zhang and Yang, 2025). Also, Herawati (2025) suggests that the authentic input of social media guides the user of internet terms in a communicative competence of Gen Z. In addition, Grandez et., al. (2023) study reveals a wider setting to reveal the morphological structure of the Gen Z that was used to analyze as well the collected data. Slang language and codeswitching introduce the identity of the Gen Z on how they communicate socially.

Since Facebook and messenger are examples of social media, the use of diverse language may exist especially the target language in this research which is the English and Filipino language which highlight the implication of Shankar and Chandra (2020) where hybridization is unavoidable and suggested to be applied in policy formulation, materials, and pedagogy in accordance to this is the recommendation of Abella et., al. (2024) that linguistic awareness must be emphasized in educational institutions where neologism and other language forms must be recognize and may be put into practice.

Furthermore, Agustina (2024) concludes that codeswitching is used as a tool for expressing social belong and group affiliation this explains that hybrid words link them to social meaning. Codeswitching (Hien, 2022) is a wider use of two languages interchangeably but the position of hybridization of Dewan and Laksamba (2020) through markedness theory in which hybridization behavior changes: strategically and purposively (Rahman and Rahman, 2021). So, codeswitching and hybridization differs from its use since hybridization prioritizes the creative morphological process of combining features of two languages to create meanings in any informal conversation.

In support to the analysis of this study, Mikelionienė (2020) states on its methodology about neoclassical combining and hybrids in language brought an implication into its approach that researchers can use other approach other than neoclassical form since there is no unanimous approach in hybridization of contemporary linguistics.

This study addresses the affixation under hybridization of two languages which is Filipino and English that was used by Gen Z in digital contexts such as Facebook and messenger in which those publicly available data will be gathered and analyzed using Markedness theory, morphological analysis, and hybridization to substantiate the data.

Research Objective

To analyze the mostly used hybrid vocabulary words of Gen Z in the digital era and its implication to markedness theory.

Research Questions

- A. What are the commonly used affixes in the vocabulary of Gen Z learners?
- B. How do the Gen Z learners form their vocabulary?
- C. How does hybrid words in digital context are explained by markedness theory?
- D. What grammatical and theoretical implications does the hybrid word has?

This research questions are analyzed through markedness theory of Yang, J. (2018) and Waugh, L. R., & Lafford, B. A. (2006) was utilized in this research this will show the emphasis of the speaker using the hybrid word and will show the process of changing the function of the word from one gramatical category to another.

Morphological process of Abella et., al. (2024) through affixation was widen and explained through the collected data of the study. This explains the pattern of hybridization through combining the Filipino affix and English free morpheme of the Gen Z.

Hybridization was reflected through the process of morphological process and markedness theory that will categorize according to its simplicity and complexity. This shows an integration of Filipino language and English language to form meanings within the platform.

II. IDENTIFY, RESEARCH AND COLLECT IDEA

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design to examine the vocabulary hybridization among Gen Z learners in the digital era that seeks to answer the commonly used affixes in the vocabulary of Gen Z learners and the way Gen Z form their vocabulary. The study will describe and analyze the recurring affixation patterns and frequently occurring Filipino affixes attached to the root word from English vocabulary words.

The data was collected from the Facebook post, comments, captions, and messenger of the Gen Z learners, typically college students with an age range from 20-27 who are active users of digital platforms. These participants are chosen because they are more likely to produce a hybrid vocabulary in the Philippines using Filipino and English language that reflect contemporary language used in digital environments.

Data are collected from the uploaded screenshot of the students who participated in this study. The researcher gathers a corpus of hybrid words that combine English lexical items with Filipino affixes. The data were organized by separating the affixes and the root word (morphological structure) and were classified according to the patterns. Ethical considerations, such as maintaining anonymity and confidentiality of participants, are strictly observed.

The collected data are analyzed using morphological analysis and supported by marked theory (Waugh and Lafford, 2000) which will explain the frequency and preference of the users, and will be explained using hybridization (Sanchez-Stockhammer, 2012). The study will clearly examine the grammatical description of Gen Z through vocabulary forms in using two languages that exist in the Philippines.

III. WRITE DOWN YOUR STUDIES AND FINDINGS

The analysis of the dataset reveals sophisticated levels of linguistic blending among Gen Z learners, characterized by the systematic application that reflect the language identity in modern contexts (Suizo, 2024) of Filipino morphological rules to English lexical bases. This phenomenon, often termed as “Taglish” (Clemente, 2025) a hybridization through linguistic adaptation (Tak et. al., 2023) this imply that the vocabulary is increasingly globalized through English roots, the structural framework remains deeply rooted in Filipino grammatical systems because of the repetition of the initial sound of the English root word which is one of the rules of attaching the affix, also it reveals various innovated morpheme that enrich the Filipino affix. It indicates that hybridization is not a random occurrence of code-switching but a structured morphological

process that was supported by Dorias (2023) in which new words were formed through morphological creativity; this data is governed by the rules of affixation and phonological adaptation anchored with the study of Wray et. al., (2022).

The researcher gathered 502 hybrid words from Gen Z learners from their messenger, facebook post, comments, and captions. Most of the gathered data went from messenger which means that the prominent use of hybrid words was frequently used as a means of communication to attain the needs of the speaker.

Table 1: Frequency of Filipino Type of Affixes attached to English word

Type of Affixes	Frequency	Percentage
Prefix	492	98.21%
Suffix	1	0.20%
Infix	4	0.80%
Circumfix	2	0.40%
No Affix	3	0.40%
Total	502	100.00%

The data shows that the frequent affix used by Gen Z was prefix, followed by infix. This data shows that prefixes were more prominent than the other type of affix, because of its flexibility that can be used within the words, or phrases. The presence of No Affix was included because the Gen Z learners use the repetition of the first syllable of the English words rather than attaching any type of affix, which tends to suffice their needs in their conversation. This implies that Gen Z has the ability to enrich the learnt words from their second language by integrating their native language into it.

A. Recurring Affixation Patterns and Dominant Trends

In response to the research objective, the data identifies a clear preference for specific Filipino affixes that facilitate the transition of English nouns and verbs into functional Filipino Sentence structures. The most frequently occurring affixes include prefix nag-, and mag-, the infix -um-, and the suffix -an. Among these, nag- and mag-, stand as the most dominant, serving as a versatile tool for converting English nouns and verbs into active Filipino verbs (e.g., nag-submit, mag-boyfriend). The frequency counts suggest that the Gen Z learners rely heavily on these affixes to bridge the gap between their digital experiences that are largely conducted in English and their native Linguistic habits. This result is supported by Sawe (2025) cultural identity and hybrid language were used in digital communication.

Table 2: Dominant Affixes among Gen Z

	Affixes	Frequency	Percentage
Filipino Affixes	nag-	149	29.68%
	mag-	142	28.29%
	na-	61	12.15%
	ma-	20	3.98%
	naka-	3	0.60%
	-in-	5	1.00%
	paki-	3	0.60%
	magpa-	5	1.00%
	i-	26	5.18%
	maka-	2	0.40%
	pag-	8	1.59%
	-an	1	0.20%
	-um-	1	0.20%
	Invented Affixes	pang-	1
nakapag-		1	0.20%
-an		1	0.20%
pinag-		1	0.20%
nang-		2	0.40%
ni-		10	1.99%
pa-		32	6.37%
ka-		9	1.79%
pino-		1	0.20%
kaka-		1	0.20%
First sound word as affix	ba-	1	0.20%
	po-	1	0.20%
	sine-	1	0.20%
Semantic change according to its use	in-	8	1.59%
	um-	3	0.60%

The data also reveal the invented affixes, first sound word as affix, and semantic change of affix according to its use; committed by Gen Z learners just to follow the proper structure of the English word. The invented affixes such as "pa-", "ni-", and "ka-" are used as prefixes which is a product of their morphological play of affixes. The first sound of the word from English was also used as a present action. This process came from the Filipino language and was applied to the English words like "ba-ban" and "po-post" where prefixes were not used. Lastly, the semantic change of affix according to its use were committed in words like "umeffect", and "inask" in which the affix um-, and in- must be an infix but was used as prefix.

Table 3: Pattern of formation of Affixation among Gen Z learners

Pattern of Formation	Frequency	Data
Filipino Affix + English word	295	na + submit -in- + block -um- + success ma + mi + miss
Reduplication + Hybrid	122	mag + e + enroll ipa + pa + check
Multiple Affixation	2	pag + c + charge + an

		<i>ni + reply + an</i>
Repetition of first syllable of the root word	3	<i>ba + ban</i>
		<i>po + post</i>
		<i>sine + serious</i>
		<i>pino+ promote</i>
		<i>kaka + reinstall</i>
Innovated affixes	54	<i>ni + snatch</i>
		<i>pa + add</i>
		<i>ka + talk</i>
		<i>ni + v + view</i>
		<i>na + kiki + hotspot</i>
Invented morpheme	15	<i>na + pa + shot</i>
		<i>ma + kaka + miss</i>
		<i>um + absent</i>
Semantic Change of Filipino Affix	11	<i>in + a + access</i>
		<i>in + ask</i>

The second research question explores the mechanics of this vocabulary formation. Gen Z learners form their vocabulary through a process of "morphological integration" (Sanchez-Stockhammer, 2012), where English roots undergo Filipino affixation patterns such as prefixation, suffixation, and even complex infixation.

Prefixation remains the most prevalent pattern, likely due to its lower cognitive load (Wray et. al, 2022) and the ease with which it attaches to English stems. For instance, the hybrid word "*na-submit*" were extracted from the Filipino pre-fix "*na*" and the English word "*submit*" were combine together to form meaning: the past tense of submitting something, or done submitting. However, the presence of infixation like *blinock* and *sumaccess* highlights a deep internalized mastery of Filipino morphemic rules. This morphemic rule injects the affix within the word and was utilized to mean something have done. The infix "in" were injected within the word "block" to form the word "*blinock*" to emphasize that someone had been blocked.

Furthermore, the dataset reveals a significant trend in reduplication, particularly the first syllable of the English free morpheme, such *nage-edit*, *mage-enroll*, *mami-miss*, etc. are used to indicate aspectual shifts such as the contemplative or progressive tenses. For example, the hybrid word "*mami-miss*" it has the Filipino prefix "*ma*" and the duplicated syllable "*mi*" of the English word, "*miss*" that implies a future possibility of longingness to someone. This suggests that Gen Z does not merely borrow words, they reconstruct them to fit the temporal and aspectual requirements of the Filipino language.

The data also reveal that the Gen Z are fond of reinventing words to suffice their needs in terms of communication. The innovated affixes were revealed

and used entirely, words like, *pino-promote*, *kaka-reinstall*, *ni-s snatch*, *pa-add*, *ka-talk*, and *ni-v-view* where in the prefixes used were not given to the Filipino affix but was use in communication. The prefix "*pino*" that suspectedly came from the English word "*promote*" was used to state that something is being promoting. Also, the prefix "*kaka*" that is not present in the word "reinstall" were also use to say that something was installed. The prefix "*ni*" and the word English word "*snitch*" which means something that should be kept secret were told to others beyond their circle. Moreover, the prefix "*pa*" indicates a future action for "*add*" and the prefix "*ka*" describe someone at the level of getting to know each other with the word "*talk*".

Semantic change of Filipino Affix was also evident from the data given, within the words like, *um-absent*, *in-a-access*, and *in-ask*. Where the use of -um- and -in- had change from an infix to prefix to emphasize the tenses of the verb.

Also, the invented morpheme were also seen from the data which is combined with the Filipino prefix and English free morphemes, like "*na-kiki- hotspot*" to say that they are currently connected to someone's device for internet connection, "*na-pa-shot*" to say that they unexpectedly drink due to some circumstance, and "*ma-kaka-miss*" to say an assurance of someone is about to feel the longingness.

Multiple affixations were also given from the data where in the usage of prefix and suffix were seen. For instance, the invented Gen Z Filipino prefix "*ni*", English word "*reply*", and the Filipino suffix "*an*" that implies action were done. Meanwhile the word "*pag-ch-charge-an*" is a pure Filipino and English hybrid without the creativity of the Gen Z. Filipino prefix "*pag*" and the syllable repetition "*ch*" of the English word "*chage*" and a Filipino suffix "*an*" were considered as multiple affixations regardless of the creativity and proper usage of the affixation among Gen Z.

Repetition of the first syllable of the English word is considered as hybrid word, because the repetition rule of adding a Filipino affix were applied to the English

word, which might indicate that Filipino affixes were contracted among those words but still emphasize a meaning. For instance, the hybrid word “ba-ban”, this states a future action of banning something or someone which was contextually understood by Filipino Gen Z.

The language of Gen Z emphasize hybridization within the use of Filipino affixes and English word or free morpheme, this emphasizes their creativity, culture, and integration of language to form meaning.

This data is the evidence of hybridization which the Table 4 will emphasize and how it is considered as a hybrid word, in which Mikelionienė (2020) explains that this arises through combining classical and modern linguistic elements.

Table 4: Patterns of hybridization of Filipino Affixes and English word

Pattern Category of Hybridization	Frequency	Description
Simple Hybridization	267	Filipino Affix attached with the English word
Complex Hybridization	235	Filipino Affix attached with the English word with an emphasis to reduplication.

Filipino affixes are simply attached with the English word and are more dominant according to the data provided and this states as a simple hybridization. Meanwhile, complex hybridization exists through reduplication of the first sound of the main word like “mami-miss”, invented morpheme such “na-kiki-hotspot”, innovative affix like “pa-add”, multiple affixations such “ni-reply-an”, repetition of first sound of the root word like “ba-ban”, and Semantic Change of Filipino Affix such “um-absent” according to its use which was discussed above. This only emphasize that the hybridization was prominently use among Gen Z within messenger, Facebook post, comments, and captions.

C. Usage of Marked and Unmarked words in Digital Contexts

Regarding the third research question, the data given at table 5 will emphasize the process and distinction of

marked and unmarked words in morphological hybridization of Filipino affixes and English words.

Table 5: Markedness Analysis of hybridization

Markedness Analysis	Frequency	Description
Unmarked	268	mag + training nag + cram pag + pray na + feel i + public maka + graduate nang + scam ni + restrict mag + s + swimming um + effect pa + heart ka + happy na + kiki + hotspot magpa + pa + quiz ba + ban ka + excite na + pa + shot -in- + share in + i + involve i + se + save
Marked	233	mag + dinner mag + boyfriend nag + attendance mag + Christmas pag + ka + left out i + le + left out pag + ch + charge + an magpa + check up nag + basketball nag + loading nag + go + good night good morning + an mag + log out pa + fill up nag + i + Iloveyou

The presence of digital context reflects the social and functional intent of Gen Z. Marked words are those that have undergone visible morphological changes through hybridization and were frequently used to emphasize action, digital agency, or belonging within specific online subculture. These words serve as “identity markers” due to its frequent creation of new words through affixation (Abella et. al, 2024) that signal the speakers’ fluency in the modern, hybrid vernacular. Marked words were reflected from “nang-scam” in which “nang” were used as prefix instead of linking word this change the meaning and emphasize the function as an adjective, *mag-boyfriend*; where Filipino prefix “mag-“ was attached to a noun to transform its function as an action: that means to commit in a relationship. The same as the phrases like “nag-good morning” that means someone had greeted

good morning, so through the presence of Filipino prefix the simple phrase become an action, another is the term “*nagi-iloveryou*”; *Iloveryou* is a complete thought but it becomes an action since it was added with Filipino prefix “nag”, and the hybrid word “*good morning-an*”; good morning is a greetings and it becomes an action since Filipino suffix “an” were added, which means that the speakers are exchanging “good morning”. Based on the data mentioned, the marked words were emphasized through the presence of Filipino affixes to emphasize something and to change the grammatical category of the English word or free morpheme. This evidence is a process of hybridization that happens through the digital context of Gen Z.

In contrast, unmarked words which are pure English terms combined with Filipino affixes appear more frequently in words like *mag-training*, *mag-cram*, *na-feel*, etc. where the function does not change and the use of affixes were appropriate in its grammatical category.

The data suggest that markedness is a strategy for linguistic play (Sawe, 2025), expressions (Herawati et., al., 2025), creativity (Dewan and Laksamba, 2020), digital communication (Telaumbanua et., al., 2024), language usage (Dimaculangan and Sarmiento, 2022), linguistic adaptation (Tak et., al, 2023), Vocabulary formation (Bulaong, 2025), and affixation patterns (Pebriyanti and Rosyidah, 2026). This allows Gen Z learners to express nuances of digital behavior that pure Filipino or pure English might fail to capture with the same brevity or cultural resonance.

D. Grammatical and Theoretical Implications

The fourth research question addresses the grammatical description of these hybridizations. The data characterizes Gen Z’s use of Filipino affixes within English words as a form of “Intra-word Code-switching” and is supported by Khan (2017) where code switching is the foundation of hybridization. The researcher found out that the Free morpheme constraint, where the Filipino affix acts as a functional morpheme governing the English lexical root. The resulting hybrid words typically function as Filipino verbs or adjectives, adhering strictly to Filipino syntax even while utilizing English semantics. This aligns with Tumacder (2026) where language evolves through mainstreaming and digital influence. This posits that hybridization is a hallmark of “translanguaging” where

learners fluidly navigate their linguistic repertoire to maximize communication efficiency.

The finding suggests that the digital era has accelerated the evolution of Filipino-English hybridization, transforming it from a colloquial habit into a structured linguistic system. For language educators, this implies a need to acknowledge these hybrid forms not as “broken language,” but as evidence of a high degree of metalinguistic awareness. Understanding these patterns allows for more nuanced grammar instruction that recognizes the cognitive complexity involved in merging two distinct linguistic systems. Ultimately, the hybridization among Gen Z learners represents a dynamic adaptation of language, ensuring that their linguistic tools remain relevant and functional in an increasingly digitalized and globalized world.

IV. CONCLUSION

Morphological process and markedness explain the in-depth process of hybridization. The Filipino affix and the English morpheme usage were considered as hybrid itself since it combines two languages, but with the use of morphological process and markedness theory this states a deeper perspective of hybridization among Gen Z in digital era. The richness and the formation of words by generation changes based on their creativity, usage, and needs. The depth of Hybridization depends on the context that the speaker uses the words.

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