

Forms of Semantic Changes in English Loanwords Used by Indonesian Users on Social Media Platform X

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ABSTRACT

Pragmatics is the study of the meaning of conversations, which occurs based on the context and the situation. This study focuses on analyzing the flouting maxim in the Barbie (2023) movie. The researcher aims to identify the types of flouting maxims in the conversations carried out by the characters in the Barbie (2023) movie, and also to capture the implied meaning of what is conveyed through the flouting maxim. This study uses Grice's grand theory, namely the cooperative principle (1975). This research uses a qualitative descriptive method. Meanwhile, the movie and its transcript are used as data sources. The researcher serves as the main instrument in this research. In collecting data, the researcher watched the movie, identified the dialogues that contained flouting maxims, classified them based on the types of flouting maxims, and analyzed their implicatures based on the context of the conversation. Although many studies have discussed Gricean maxims, limited research has focused on how characters in recent popular movies flout maxims to express hidden meanings. The results of this research show that there are four types of flouting maxims in the movie, with a total of 27 data found. Those are flouting maxim of quantity, it was found 6 times; flouting maxim of quality, it was found 12 times; flouting maxim of relation, it was found 7 times; and flouting maxim of manner, it was found 2 times. Researchers also found the implicature of the flouting maxim used by the characters in the Barbie (2023) movie. These findings are expected to help readers understand how pragmatic strategies can reveal implied messages in fictional conversations.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental means of communication that undergoes dynamic development in response to globalization and technological advances. The pervasive utilization of social media has exerted a profound influence on the structure and function of language (Srisudarso et al., 2024). In Indonesia, English has become increasingly prevalent in daily communication, especially on digital platforms such as Platform X (formerly Twitter). Research has demonstrated that English words which initially possess a fixed meaning frequently undergo semantic shifts to align with the language and cultural context of social media users in Indonesia.

This phenomenon aligns with Ullmann, (1963) theoretical conceptualization of semantic

change, which posits that the meaning of a word can evolve over time as its usage adapts to psychological, social, and cultural influences. The classification system of semantic change proposed by this theorist consists of four categories: specialization, generalization, amelioration, and pejoration. In a similar vein, Chaer, (2014) underscores that shifts in meaning do not occur abruptly but rather evolve over time, frequently unnoticed by the speakers themselves. Firdaus and Firdaus & Yohanes, (2023) posit that specific semantic categories, including specialization and generalization, can be discerned when the meaning of a word becomes more narrow or more broad, contingent on its frequency of use and the context in which it is employed.

A considerable body of research has examined semantic change across diverse domains. A notable study in this area was conducted by Arifin, (2021), who examined English words on Twitter that developed new unrecorded meanings through the use of metaphors. His research focused on identifying the emergence of meanings that have not been covered in standard dictionaries. This study, therefore, narrows its focus by explicitly applying Ullmann, (1963) theoretical framework to identify and classify the forms of semantic change specialization, generalization, amelioration, and pejoration as manifested in English loanwords used by Indonesian users on Platform X.

The present study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by situating classical semantic theory within a modern digital context. This will offer a structured understanding of real-time meaning transformation in social media discourse. It is argued that the work under discussion contributes not only to the study of semantics but also to the growing field of digital linguistics by documenting how borrowed lexicon is reshaped in response to digital interaction, cultural shifts, and user creativity. This research employs Ullmann, (1963) classification of semantic change to provide a formal linguistic understanding of how meaning evolves in a digital context. This research is significant for several reasons. Firstly, it enhances the study of semantics by focusing on real-time language change in digital communication. Secondly, it provides a concrete application of classical semantic theory Ullmann, (1963) in a modern context, thereby demonstrating its continued relevance. This study makes a significant contribution to the development of digital linguistics research by providing a detailed documentation of the manner in which borrowed language elements are reshaped through everyday online interactions in Indonesia.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A multitude of studies have examined the phenomenon of semantic change in various contexts. Yuan et al. (2022) have focused on detecting semantic change in satellite images using a computational approach, illustrating the broader application of semantic analysis in the technology domain. Salsabilla (2023) examination of Instagram texts revealed evidence of generalization and total meaning shift, underscoring the dynamic nature of language in social media. Asri et al. (2024) conducted a comparative semantic study on English and German, exploring how historical and cultural contexts shape meaning. Nayak (2021) also addressed the dimensions of meaning change in Odia, offering insights into language evolution within a regional and cultural framework. Subsequent research conducted at the undergraduate level has also investigated analogous linguistic phenomena. Maulana (2023) analysis of Arabic words in fatwas in Indonesia highlighted the impact of religious discourse on semantic change. Utami (2019) investigated the shift in word meanings in political news headlines in Indonesian online media, thereby reflecting the manner in which media discourse shapes and redefines lexical meanings.

The present study, however, differs from these earlier works in its specific focus and theoretical approach. Rather than concentrating on contextual or functional shifts, this study applies Ullmann (1963) theoretical framework, which classifies semantic change into four categories: specialization, generalization, amelioration, and pejoration. This research is grounded in the structural categorization of meaning change, particularly as observed in English loanwords used by Indonesian speakers on Platform X. By applying Ullmann's theory, this study seeks to

contribute a systematic perspective to the understanding of semantic transformation in the context of digital communication.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to analyze the forms of semantic change found in English loanwords used by Indonesian users on Platform X (formerly Twitter). A qualitative approach is appropriate for examining phenomena in their natural context and for exploring meaning based on patterns of interpretation and usage, as suggested by Creswell & Creswell (2018). According to Sugiyono (2020), qualitative descriptive research is conducted to describe conditions or phenomena as they occur naturally, with a focus on understanding meaning from the perspective of the subject. The population in this study consisted of English loanwords appearing in tweets by Indonesian users, and the sample was selected purposively to ensure that each item reflected observable semantic change. The data collection period was from February to April 2025. These tweets were selected based on the presence of English-origin words that exhibited a semantic shift from their original meanings in English. Data were gathered using a non-participant observation technique, wherein tweets were identified using keyword-based searches and manually filtered to ensure contextual relevance. The analysis employed Ullmann (1963) theory of semantic change, which classifies meaning changes into four categories: specialization, generalization, amelioration, and pejoration. The present study analyzed all four categories, as each type of semantic change was identified in the data. While specialization and generalization were identified as the prevailing patterns, instances of amelioration and pejoration were also noted and incorporated into the classification system. A comparative analysis was conducted of the original English meaning of each word with its contextual usage in tweets. The result of this analysis was that the words were then categorized accordingly. This methodological approach facilitated a systematic, theory-based interpretation of semantic transformation in the digital language practices of Indonesian Twitter users.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents research findings on the forms of semantic change found in English loanwords used by Indonesian speakers on Platform X. This analysis is based on Stephen Ullmann (1963) theory, which classifies semantic change into four types: specialization, generalization, amelioration, and pejoration, with 12 data identified and analyzed.

Table 1. Forms of Semantic Changes

No	Forms	Original Definition	Target Language Definition	Context Analysis	Semantic Changes
1	Cloud	Water vapor in the atmosphere	Internet-based technology	Online data storage such as Google Drive or iCloud.	Specialization
2	Drama	A theatrical performance or story	Exaggerated conflict	Situation of conflict or contention	Generalization
3	Story	A narrative or account of events	Temporary social media posts	Instagram, WhatsApp, or Facebook that disappear within 24 hours.	Generalization
4	Sick	Unhealthy or ill	Problematic, manipulative, or toxic	Negative personality or behavior	Pejoration
5	Savage	Wild, untamed, brutal.	Cool sayings	Comments that are scathing and sarcastic, but considered cool.	Amelioration
6	Stream	A small river or flow of water	Online content transmissin	Watch or listen to content live on the internet	Specialization
7	Society	A group of people living together.	Socially and morally oppressing or judging women	Used to convey social criticism	Specialization

8	Victim	Being attacked, injured, killed due to crime, disease, accident, etc.	Position yourself as the aggrieved party.	People who pretend to be victims to attract sympathy.	Pejoration
9	Toxic	Poisonous, harmful substance.	Emotionally harmful behaviour.	Describes a negative relationship, behaviour or environment	Generalization
10	Cut	Physical cutting (knife, scissors)	Disconnecting	Declaring the breakup on social media.	Specialization

Prior to analysis, data obtained from Platform X underwent a process of identification and classification based on Ullmann's theory of semantic change (1963). English words that were identified were then organized into categories based on their semantic changes, including types such as generalization, specialization, improvement, and degradation.

Specialization

Ullmann (1963) explains the narrowing of meaning in a word occurs when it evolves from a more extensive to a more specific usage. This transformation is marked by the word's exclusive use within specific contexts, leading to a contraction in its scope and a narrowing of its meaning.

Data 1. *Cloud*



Figure 1.mending cloud si nder

The term “**Cloud**” originally possessed a literal meaning, referring to *a grey or white mass that floats in the sky, made of very small drops of water* Klotz (2003) in Oxford Collocations Dictionary. However, within the paradigm of digital and social media, the connotation of this term has undergone a substantial metamorphosis. In contemporary discourse, the term cloud is predominantly associated with internet-based data storage technologies, such as Google Drive and iCloud. This changes in connotation falls under of **Specialization**, as postulated by Ullmann (1963) theory, signifying the process of narrowing meaning. The term cloud, which was originally general and included natural phenomena, has now narrowed its meaning to a technical term specifically used in the realm of information technology. As Geeraerts (2010), underscores changes in meaning occur due to a shift in conceptual prototypes in the minds of users. In this case, the initial prototype of cloud as a geophysical object (*i.e., clouds in the sky*) has shifted to a representation of virtual storage in a digital context. Additionally, Jackendoff (1997) posits that the meaning of words is closely related to mental conceptual structures that can undergo changes in tandem with social and technological developments. The shift in the interpretation of the term *cloud* is indicative of a phenomenon known as cognitive remapping, which is the process of redefining words and meanings in response to novel experiences and societal demands that characterize contemporary society.

Data 2. *Stream*



Figure 2. windut libur streamnya sampe kapan

In Oxford Collocations Dictionary Klotz's (2003), the original meaning of the word “**Stream**” is *a river flowing through a narrow valley* and the word *stream* is classified as a *noun* (Cambridge English Language Assessment, 2012). This term is employed in the context of nature or geography, as evidenced by its use in expressions such as “a mountain stream”. However, in the contemporary digital landscape, particularly within the context of social media and digital platforms such as YouTube, this phenomenon has gained significant traction. This changes in connotation aligns with the concept of semantic **Specialization**, as theory by Ullmann (1963). The term stream has undergone a semantic change, evolving from its original general meaning of “*water flow*” to a more specialized interpretation referring to the real-time transmission of digital content, such as video, music, or live broadcasts over the internet. As Cameron (2007) underscores, the formation of meaning in the digital era is not exclusively determined by lexical transformation but is also shaped by performative social practices. Besides Flores-Saviaga et al. (2019) revealed the dynamics of participation between viewers and streamers on platforms such as Twitch, highlighting how these interactions shape shared experiences and meanings.

Data 3. *Society*



Figure 3. karena dia beneran contoh ‘korban’ cerminan galaknya society

The term “**Society**” is defined as “*a group of people living together*” in klot Collocations Dictionary Klotz's (2003). The term is employed in sociological or cultural contexts, which describe broad and formalized forms of social life. However, in the contemporary era of social media and digital discourse, the term society has undergone a substantial shift in connotation. The term society is employed to denote social forces that are characterized by oppressive tendencies, judgmental attitudes, and a propensity for double standards, particularly with regard to women. This phenomenon can be elucidated through the theoretical framework of semantic **Specialization** proposed by (Ullmann, 1963). His statement to this theory, a word undergoes a semantic change, narrowing its meaning from a broad scope to a more specific one. In this case, the term society, which was originally neutral and broad, has now narrowed its meaning to aspects of society that are oppressive or full of moral judgment, especially towards women in the public and digital spaces. Furthermore, this semantic change can be better understood through the lens of subjectification (Traugott, 2007), where meaning develops based on the speaker's personal attitudes or evaluative stance. In this case, the term society becomes a linguistic tool to express

frustration or resistance to unjust norm. Harris (1954) shows that the meaning of words can change due to contextual changes and usage patterns. If the environment of use changes drastically, the meaning of the word undergoes a systemic shift.

Generalization

Ullmann, (1963) explains the process of meaning expansion occurs when a word that previously possessed a specific meaning becomes more extensive in its application. This development is marked by the word's introduction to diverse contexts, leading to an augmentation of its semantic scope and a broadening of its contextual applicability.

Data 4. *Drama*



Figure 4. drama bari lagi

Brown & Cook (2016) in Large English Dictionary the term “**Drama**” is *historical play was performed in theaters as a musical, on the radio, and on television, complete with elaborate costume designs*. However, in the context of social media usage, the term has undergone a semantic expansion. In contemporary discourse, the term drama is frequently employed to describe situations characterized by conflict, emotional intensity, or the pursuit of attention, whether in real-life contexts or within digital spaces. According to Ullmann's (1963) theory this change is categorized as **Generalization** or expansion of meaning. The term drama has undergone a semantic change in its usage. Once exclusively employed in the domain of artistic performance, the term has expanded to encompass real-life events characterized by emotion and conflict. This development occurs when a word, previously used exclusively in one domain (art), begins to be used widely in everyday social spheres without losing its original meaning, but adding new meanings. Ojomo & Sodeinde, (2021) posit that the advent of social media culture has precipitated a paradigm shift in the manner in which entertainment is consumed. This shift has engendered a transformation in the role of audiences, who now function not merely as passive recipients but also as active producers and distributors of content. Furthermore, as Tufekci (2015) asserts, social media algorithms serve to amplify the visibility of conflict, thereby magnifying the drama narrative as an allure, and encouraging individuals to utilize this term in their comments, both to accentuate and to trivialize authentic issues.

Data 5. *Story*



Figure 5. story anaknya

According to O’Shea et al (2008) in Cambridge School Dictionary term “**Story**” has meaning An account of events or people, whether true or invented. In the conventional paradigm,

the term is employed in literary works, cinematic productions, and informal discourse to delineate a sequence of events. However, the term was adopted in Indonesia, where it underwent a semantic shift, acquiring a new connotative meaning that pertains to social media, particularly Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook. The term now refers to a feature that allows users to share short, temporary snippets of images, text, or video that disappear within 24 hours. Ullmann (1963) theory that the semantic changes in the word story is a case of the **Generalization** function. Generalization or broadening of signification happens when a word previously limited to one set of contexts extends the range of its application to new contexts. Also, in this context, story denotes a feature on social media, which still alludes to story time in a superficial sense, but also in a shallower form and with a shorter duration. According to Crystal (2019), the advent of digital technology has precipitated a *functional shift* in numerous English words, whereby obsolete terms are endowed with novel functions to satisfy the demands of digital users. For instance, the term *story* has undergone a change in its connotation, no longer referring to a meaningful tale but rather to an interactive format designed for expeditious, visually based consumption. Additionally, Annison's (2011) work, *Twitter: A biography* illustrates that novel interpretations of social media are not solely shaped by users; the design of digital features and affordances, such as *Your Story* or *Add to Story* buttons, also play a pivotal role in this process.

Data 6. Toxic



Figure 6. fandomnya toxic banget

According to Cambridge English Language Assessment (2012), the term “**Toxic**” traditionally refers to *something that is poisonous or harmful to health*, usually used in a medical or chemical context. However, within the paradigm of digital communication, particularly on social media platforms, the connotation of this term has undergone a substantial metamorphosis. In contemporary discourse, the term toxic is frequently employed to characterize individuals exhibiting emotionally detrimental traits or behaviors, such as manipulation, mental anguish, or harm to others. According to Ullmann's (1963) theory of meaning change, this changes is categorized as **Generalization**, defined as the expansion of meaning from the specific domain of toxic substances to a broader social-emotional domain. The term toxic retains its original denotation while acquiring new connotations that are metaphorical and more pertinent to the social experiences of digital media users. This phenomenon is reinforced by the concept of the online disinhibition effect Suler (2004) which explains how free expression in digital spaces encourages the emergence of new evaluative terms to simplify conflict or social tension including the labeling of *toxic* in interpersonal interactions. Furthermore, Gevers et al. (2011) demonstrate that language utilized on social media platforms undergoes a semantic evolution due to the high demand for concise and emotive expressions, thereby encouraging the expansion of word functions to become more extensive and applicable.

Data 7. Cut



Figure 7. akan cut beberapa temen lagi setelah projek

O'Shea et al (2008) in Cambridge School Dictionary and Brown & Cook (2016) Large English Dictionary, the term "**Cut**" originally signified "*to separate something with a sharp instrument*". It is employed in both physical and literal contexts. This meaning is concrete and directly related to a physical action. However, within the paradigm of digital communication, particularly on social media platforms, the connotation of the term cut has undergone a substantial metamorphosis. The term is now frequently employed to denote the dissolution of a romantic relationship, particularly in the context of publicly disseminated announcements or declarations on social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook. This modification in connotation falls within the ambit of semantic **Specialization**, as elucidated by Ullmann (1963) theory. The term cut has undergone a semantic shift, evolving from its original denotation as an act of physically severing objects with sharp instruments to its current interpretation as a metaphorical expression denoting the dissolution of interpersonal bonds, particularly within the context of social media interactions. As Wierzbicka (1999) contends, semantic change is frequently linked to the articulation of emotional and social values. Additionally, Xu et al. (2021) lend support to this view by demonstrating that the meaning of emotional words evolves over time, with less prototypical emotional words undergoing semantic change more rapidly than more prototypical words. The emphasis is placed on the notion that meaning is produced through social interaction, with words acquiring significance based on their role in relationships and identities. In this context, the act of cutting must be regarded not merely as a lexical shift, but rather as a form of emotional expression. The act of "*cutting someone off*" is associated with notions of self-defense, rejection, and the establishment of psychological boundaries.

Amelioration

Ullmann (1963) explains the process of meaning enhancement occurs when a word that was originally imbued with neutral or even negative connotations undergoes a shift in its connotations, acquiring a more positive direction. This transformation results in an increased appreciation for the word, leading to its more effective usage.

Data 8. *Savage*



Figure 8. mau keliatan savage abis

The word “**Savage**” has original meaning is wild, violent, brutal or cruel in Large English Dictionary (Brown & Cook, 2016). The use of the term savage in the picture such as “*anjir liat nih opinion gueeehhh savage abieeeeezzzz*” indicates that the word is employed as a form of social acknowledgment, recognizing qualities such as courage, assertiveness, cool or sarcasm in the articulation of opinions. This shift in connotation signifies a transition in the definition of savage from its original sense of wild or cruel to a term used to describe sharp, bold, and impressive in the context of online communication. In Ullmann, (1963) theory include the changes in connotation from “cruel” to “noble” exemplifies a process of **Amelioration**, wherein a negative connotation is supplanted by a more positive one. Initially, the term was perceived with disdain or derision, but it has since acquired a positive connotation, serving as a form of acknowledgment for fortitude or assertive communication. According to Lighter & Dumas, (2013) in the context of slang and slang, many terms with crude connotations actually experience **semantic inversion**, which is when negative meanings are deliberately reversed and used in the community as a form of expression of solidarity, strength, or identity. In the case of savage, this change in meaning constitutes a linguistic strategy that aims to reclaim previously offensive words and imbue them with a new sense of power and value. Allan & Burridge, (2006) further substantiate this claim by highlighting a frequent changes from **dysphemism** to **euphemism** in informal language practices, particularly within the context of social media.

Pejoration

Ullmann (1963) posits the process of semantic change involves the transition of a word from a neutral or positive connotation to a more negative one over time.

Data 9. *Sick*



Figure 9. orang-orang bener-bener sick in the head

A word that has undergone a change in meaning on social media is “**Sick.**” From both of dictionaries, Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English Klotz (2003) and Cambridge English Language Assessment (2012), the word's original meaning is *unhealthy, both physically and mentally*. However, within the context of Platform X (Twitter), the term sick has undergone a substantial shift in connotation. In contemporary discourse, the term is frequently employed to characterize individuals exhibiting undesirable behaviors, including manipulative tendencies,

emotional instability, and even detrimental impacts on others within social interactions. In accordance with Ullmann (1963) theory of meaning change, the semantic changes in the word sick can be classified as **Pejorative**. Pejoration is defined as the process of altering the connotation of a word from a neutral or positive state to a more negative one. Tufail et al. (2024) research on Generation Z slang on social media demonstrated that the evolution of the semantic nuances of words such as "sick" is intricately intertwined with individuals' expressive needs and the process of establishing group identity. In this context, the term no longer functions as a literal expression, but rather as a symbolic representation of admiration or satire, contingent upon the prevailing social context. Concurrently, Pasa & Mahyuni (2023) underscore that adolescent language variations on social media are manifestations of linguistic creativity, reflecting the aspiration to cultivate community solidarity and existence.

Data 10. *Victim*



Figure 10. orang² yg punya sifat victim mentality

According to O'Shea et al.'s (2008) in Cambridge School Dictionary, the term *Victim* is defined as *an individual who experiences harm as a result of criminal activity, illness, accident, or disaster*. Conventionally, this term conveys a objective sense, denoting an individual who has genuinely endured physical or psychological trauma. However, within the context of digital communication, particularly on social media platforms, the term *victim* has undergone a semantic change. The term's contemporary usage has expanded beyond its original connotation to encompass individuals who claim to be victims for the purpose of eliciting sympathy, cultivating a self-image, or influencing public opinion. According to Ullmann (1963) theory of Semantic change, this phenomenon is categorized as **Pejoration**, defined as a shift in meaning toward a more negative connotation. The term *victim*, once a neutral or empathetic designation, has acquired a pejorative connotation due to its employment in a derogatory manner, particularly in contexts that denigrate those who feign victimhood. Shah & Ali (2025) study demonstrates the profound impact of social media on the evolution of word meanings. They observe that specific terms undergo rapid semantic changes, often serving as vehicles for the articulation of cultural and political ideologies through metaphorical expression. Research by Savitri & Dewi (2023) also reveals that the slang used by Indonesian netizens on platforms such as TikTok and YouTube undergoes changes in meaning, including expansion, metaphor, hyperbole, and pejorative usage.

The analysis demonstrates that specialization and generalization are the most dominant types of semantic change found in the data, followed by amelioration and pejoration. This phenomenon can be attributed to the inherent characteristics of social media communication. Social media platforms such as Platform X promote brevity, speed, and contextual creativity, which inherently facilitate the specialization and generalization of meanings. It has been demonstrated that users frequently adapt words to suit specific digital features (e.g., *story*, *cut*) or social discourses (e.g., *society*, *toxic*), leading to targeted or expanded interpretations. The real time and participatory nature of online discourse also demands efficient, relatable language use, promoting flexible semantic boundaries. Conversely, amelioration and pejoration remain present, yet their occurrence is contingent on changes in collective social attitudes and protracted evaluative trends, rendering them less frequent or immediate in impact. Therefore, the prevalence of specialization and generalization is not merely an observable phenomenon in the data; it is also a manifestation of the communicative requirements and behavioral norms that characterize digital interaction.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study provide evidence that semantic change in English loanwords uttered by Indonesian users on Platform X portrays an accommodation linguistic since it has been affected by the social media situation. These words are not just shifting definitions, but show how meanings and user perception, platform specific use and interaction between these evolve. The concepts made evident, specialization, generalization, amelioration and pejoration, not only reveal theoretical trends, but also reveal how borrowed lexicon is adapted, in its evolution as it happens, to express identity, affect and stigma. This process highlights that digital communication is not merely a field of informal language use, but the locus wherein meaning changes are produced as the result of collective practices and cultural refrains.

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