

Intergenerational Interaction: Understanding Post-Millennial Generation Expectation in English Learning

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ABSTRAK

Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji persepsi mahasiswa Generasi Z terhadap praktik pengajaran dosen *Baby Boomer* dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris serta mengidentifikasi ketidaksesuaian dengan preferensi belajar mereka.

Metode: Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan data yang dikumpulkan melalui wawancara terbuka terhadap mahasiswa yang pernah belajar dengan dosen *Baby Boomer*.

Temuan: Hasil menunjukkan bahwa dosen cenderung menggunakan metode *teacher-centered* dan konvensional yang dipersepsikan kurang menarik. Minimnya integrasi teknologi memperlebar kesenjangan serta menurunkan motivasi dan partisipasi mahasiswa.

Kontribusi/Nilai tambah: Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan tentang dinamika lintas generasi dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris serta menjadi dasar pengembangan strategi pembelajaran yang lebih adaptif dan berpusat pada mahasiswa.

Kebaruan: Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada penekanan hubungan antara praktik pedagogis, preferensi generasi, dan teknologi dalam membentuk keterlibatan belajar.

ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to examine Generation Z students' perceptions of Baby Boomer teachers' practices in English language learning and identify mismatches with their learning preferences.

Method: A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, using open-ended interviews with university students who had learned from Baby Boomer teachers

Findings: The findings show that teachers tend to use teacher-centered and conventional methods perceived as less engaging by Gen Z students. Limited use of technology further widens the gap, reducing motivation and participation.

Contribution: This study provides insights into intergenerational dynamics in English learning and informs more adaptive and student-centered teaching strategies

Novelty: The study highlights the interaction between pedagogical practices, generational preferences, and technology in shaping student engagement.

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Introduction

The characteristics of students belonging to the post-millennial generation are very much different from the previous generation. this makes them need special treatment in the learning process (Maya, 2024). a social construction in which there is a group of people who have similar age and historical experiences. same In the learning process, generation differences have a great effect on effectiveness of the learning process caused by diffences in the adaptation process to absorption of learning methods including the media of learning (Chillakuri, 2020). The students' perceptions is largely influenced by the way they are raised and educated, which is what influences the differences in learning styles between certain generations, hence the importance of understanding the preferences of certain generations (Szymkowiak et al., 2021). The pra-millennial generation consist of two generation, the first one is babyboomer, the one whose born between 1970-1982 (Slagsvold & Hansen, 2021) and millenial generation, the one whose born between 1983-1996 (Kim & Park, 2020). This generation generally born after the conflict of world war II, where the economic, political and education situation is quite unstable at that time (Kim & Park, 2020).

Currently, the post millenial generation consist of two generations as well, namely gen-Z and Gen-Alpha or also known as Strawberry generation. Both this generation also known as digital native due to their familiarity with Media (Jose et al., 2022). Gen Z is a generation that born in the early 1990 until 2010 (Twenge, J. M. 2023). Twenge also continued to explained that Gen Z is an individu that live in a world that full of technology influence, Social media, and Instant Culture. This generation is hanging on internet as their information sources. And because of these influences, this generation has turned into a generation that prefers to communicate via social media than in real life. Meanwhile, Alpha generation is the youngest generation nowadays. This generation includes the one who was born since 2010 untill 2025 (Szymkowiak et al., 2021). Born after the Gen-Z, alpha generation born in the higher level of Technology, grown up with the smartphone and the Artificial intelligence as lifestyle. Technology become their part of life. This generation predicted as a generation that going to have a educational revolution where they got more interactive in non-direct education method. But this wave of information also has complicated effects on how they could bear on their mental health, affected by several factors, including the ease of accessing information.

From this explanation we can see that there is a huge gap between the lifestyle of the both generation. The babyboomer and the millenial live with a high pressure in terms of economic and political side that also affect the education that time. The differences in characteristics and lifestyle, comes a huge gap in perspective of both generation. This gap could affect the learning process of learner, spesifically in the process of internalitation of the knowledge. as a generation that is familiar with information technology. the post-millennial generation is understood that they perceive the world based on the internet as also stated by (Hilman et al., 2023). A research conducted by (Chen, 2023) studying the characteristics of gen Z in english learning process located in one of the university in China. The results indicated the experimental Generation Z students have shown both the “general” characteristics (such as tech savy, multi-taskers) and the “typical” Chinese characteristics, and that these students had negative attitude to English writing and classroom instructions. This research also stated that it is urgent for language teachers to find effective methodology to enable the Generation Z students to achieve more in their English language learning practices.

In malaysia, a research about alpha generation was conducted by (Khizrani et al., 2023), resulting that that metacognitive and social strategies are the most dominant Language Learning Strategies (LLS) used by Generation Alpha while affective strategy was the least used by them in

enhancing their speaking skill. Future studies should consider finding the correlation between the use of digital tools and Generation Alpha's preferred Language Learning Strategies (LLS) as digitalisation has apparently shifted the education paradigm. It is imperative that teachers are provided with clearer apprehension on how they can develop more effective teaching strategies for Generation Alpha based on the LLS that the pupils gravitate to.

In Indonesia, a study titled *The Characteristics of Generation Z Students and Implications for Future Learning Methods* conducted by (Hendrastomo & Januarti, 2023) resulting that the characteristics of today's students differ from those of the previous generation. Students currently have self-confidence, creativity, competitive competitiveness, realistic realism, curiosity, independence, and exclusive exclusivity. These studies proven that there is a difference between one to another generation in perceiving the learning process but it is still not examining the relationship between the interaction between the generation could affect the Motivation of english learning. This study is purposed to analyze what are the post millennial students' perceptions about the instructor's teaching methods.

Method

This study is focusing on analyze the perceptions of the post millennial student on the teaching approach of babyboomer student. This study is designed as a qualitatif descriptive research. A qualitative descriptive design is a research approach used to gain a comprehensive and straightforward understanding of a phenomenon in its natural context (Doyle et al., 2020). The approach is not tied to a specific theoretical framework like phenomenology (exploring lived experiences) or grounded theory (developing theories from data). Instead, it focuses on the pragmatic goal of providing an accurate account of a phenomenon as described by the participants (Urcia, 2021).

The participant selected using purposive sampling to ensure the diverse and relevant sample of the ELT Classroom. The participants are students that born between 2000-2002 which means that they are currently 21-23 years old, leading them to be catgorized as Gen Z student. Participants currently studying at University level but has experience in learning from some babyboomers and millennial teachers. Inclusion criteria required pasrticipants to be include as post millennial student that have experiences in learning from different generation teacher. To protect the participants data and information, the researcher make a pseudonym for each participant. The study measured how the student perceive the teaching method of the babyboomer teacher, including their point of view, and how long they have been thought by babyboomer teacher that answered the instrumen. The instrumen contains themes including: their general experiences, the learning method, the interaction between the teacher and the student and the expectation of the student. The data collected by interview session with open ended questions to understand deeply about the student's perception. It is also will prevent the bias during the data collection, since the question totally goes deep into the participant's perception.

Results and Discussion

Result

The findings of this study reveal several themes from the analysis of participant interviews. These themes include general experiences, teaching methods or approaches, intergenerational interaction, and their effects on studying motivation. A thematic analysis was conducted to identify patterns within the data and provide a deeper understanding of the perceptions of post-millennial students toward the teaching methods employed by pre-millennial instructors, particularly Baby Boomer teachers.

General Experience

This part is provided in order to confirm the post-millennial student experiences about have they thought english by pre-millennial teacher. From the participants' answer could be confirmed that all of them are have thought by a babyboomer teacher.

The first participant said

"I think yes, i have thought by babyboomer teacher, the one that i remember was.. Eum.. i think when i was on my elementary, junior and senior high school" (P1 interview)

The second participant said

"...yes all the time"

From the theme of general experience, the analysis confirmed that all participants had been taught by at least one Baby Boomer teacher during their educational journey. These experiences were not confined to a single level of education but happened from elementary school to senior high school. This finding establishes a strong foundation for understanding intergenerational teaching and learning dynamics.

Teaching Method/Approach

To answer the research question about the perception of the post-millennial student about the pre-millennial teacher, it is important to know what teaching method and approach that used by the pre-millennial teacher when they are teaching. Below are the method that used by the babyboomer teacher in the post-millennial student's point of view:

" ... So in the three hours classroom, so for the first two hours, there will be a delivery, material delivering and afterwards we'll be continue with the discussions, courses, tests and Q&A session sort of like that" (P2 interview)

"As my experience when I was in senior high school, my teacher also, a baby boot teacher, I spell the name Mem Ani. So she teach me by using the..old method, really old method because in the classroom process the teacher becomes a center. So the teacher is a center, we call it apa ya. Kalo di Indonesia kan itu kaya metode drama"

"My babyboomer teacher usually teach usingthe traditional method which is teacher centered to explain the material in the class" (P1 interview)

Teaching methods or approaches, highlighted a significant reliance on traditional, teacher-centered practices. Participants frequently described Baby Boomer teachers as prioritizing direct instruction with minimal interaction. For example, one participant shared that the teacher typically delivered material for the first two hours of class, followed by structured activities such as discussions, tests, or Q&A sessions. Another participant described their experience with a Baby Boomer teacher who employed "really old methods," emphasizing the teacher's role as the central figure in the classroom. This traditional approach often limited the integration of modern, interactive strategies or the use of technology, making it less appealing to Gen Z learners who thrive on engagement and active participation.

Intergeneration Interaction

And to dig in into the deeper understanding between two different generation in English Classroom, here are the proven answer from the participants.

" It usually happened when we talk about the technology. So when I was in junior high school, the final grade of junior high school, there was the first implementations of UTBK and then there are a problem.I'm sorry, it's not UTBK, but it is UNBK, which is Ujian Nasional Berbasis Computer. And at that moment, my batch were divided into three sections. Three sessions. And then my sessions was on the middle session, which is on the second sessions. And then in the first session, students who enrolled in first session

suddenly after they finished the Remember it is unbk or a point one is something about Assessment using computer and There are sad there is suddenly technical issues that It really need a serious What is called? Serious solving by technician and the teacher are mad towards the students in session too. I don't know why she's mad at us but I think she's just nervous or she's just afraid about the technology integration will not run smoothly. On the other hand, the students think that is not the students fault because we just didn't know nothing. This is the different point of view. So the teacher thought that we do something, we do mistakes with the computer things and it affects to the technical issues but the students think this is our first didn't really hear that.”

“Of course, here about the technology in the learning process because the Baby Boomer teacher like mine, my teacher when I was in the Sanur High School. so she doesn't know the technology she teaches us maybe freeware using the traditional tools whereas using the technology or digital integration in the classroom process and also the approach in Also the approach. the approach here, baby bird teacher make prioritize rules while student make paper composition practice instead come for a little bit more conversation with practice with their students.”

“I think we always have a different point of view in every subject with every teacher. So I think the way that if we doesn't have, the point of view is not aligned enough for students to comprehend. So the students simply will just ask the questions about it. And the teacher will clarify”.

Revealed several points of friction between Baby Boomer teachers and Gen Z students. A recurring issue was the gap in technological competence and adaptability. Participants frequently noted that Baby Boomer teachers struggled with incorporating technology into their teaching, resulting in misunderstandings and frustration. One participant recounted an incident during the introduction of computer-based national exams (UNBK), where technical difficulties arose, and the teacher incorrectly assumed that students were at fault. Another participant observed that Baby Boomer teachers often preferred traditional tools, avoiding digital integration altogether, which further exacerbated the generational disconnect. This theme highlights how differing levels of technological literacy between generations can hinder the effectiveness of classroom interactions.

Effect on Studying Motivation

In this part, the result shown that the effect of different study method really impact the motivation of the students. As shown on the interview result below:

“The question is number seven. Yes. Uh, I've ever feel bored with a, with some teacher explanations because it's not, it's not a weather subject. It's not a subject mistakes, but it's because to, I think it's because of the teacher fault because I think they kind of failed to, to fail to comprehend the student needs and wants” (P2 interview)

“of course of course because yeah I felt bored because once you teach as a teacher center It's not make me interested with the topic also Because yeah, I think What is English? It's crazy, a little bit Nepalese, a little bit Rhumus And the way that she teach me is not really interesting there is no technology That see use and teach eyes. This using the traditional method. and it's very possible to reduce my focus and attention ultimately affecting my understanding because yeah if i feel bored the class so the material also doesn't and the last question here have you ever felt and wanted to go to the english class if yes why Hmm...

for this question... Yeah... Sometimes, maybe I feel unmotivated in the teaching method. teaching method doesn't engage to... me and my understanding so yeah because of the material, I have to say I think it's a little bit difficult for me to understand what the teacher said and the method also Really old and Not interesting, it doesn't make me interactive in class So sometimes I feel unmotivated to come to the class Especially in the English class” (P3 interview)

“I have one subjects that makes me feeling so bored because the first one, the material is very difficult for me. And then the second one, the atmosphere. was very very sleepy because the teacher also explained with a low voice “ (P1 Interview)

The fourth theme, the effect on studying motivation, was particularly striking. Participants repeatedly expressed that the traditional methods employed by Baby Boomer teachers negatively impacted their interest and motivation to learn. For instance, one participant described feeling bored due to the lack of interactive and technology-driven teaching methods. Another participant noted that the monotony of the lessons, coupled with the teacher’s failure to engage students actively, made the material difficult to understand. This lack of engagement not only reduced motivation but also had a direct impact on their ability to focus and absorb information during class sessions.

Conclusion

This study set out to explore the perceptions of post-millennial students, specifically Gen Z, toward the teaching methods and approaches of Baby Boomer teachers within the context of English language learning. The findings have illuminated key generational differences that influence the learning process, particularly in terms of teaching methods, technological adaptation, and classroom dynamics. It was evident from the participants' responses that Baby Boomer teachers predominantly rely on traditional, teacher-centered teaching methods, which often lack the interactivity and technological integration that Gen Z students expect. While these methods may provide structure and discipline, they frequently fail to engage students, resulting in boredom, a lack of motivation, and diminished focus during class sessions. The participants’ perspectives also highlighted significant challenges in intergenerational interaction, particularly concerning technological competence. Baby Boomer teachers were often perceived as struggling to adapt to the digital tools that are second nature to Gen Z learners, creating friction in classroom interactions and sometimes leading to misunderstandings.

Despite these challenges, the study emphasizes the potential for meaningful intergenerational learning when both parties are willing to adapt and communicate. By addressing the identified gaps, such as incorporating more interactive and student-centered teaching strategies, as well as improving digital literacy among Baby Boomer teachers, the learning environment can become more inclusive and effective. The findings of this study reinforce the importance of acknowledging generational differences in the classroom and using these differences as an opportunity for growth and innovation. By bridging the generational divide, educators can create learning experiences that not only meet the needs of Gen Z students but also prepare them for success in an increasingly dynamic and technology-driven world. This study set out to explore the perceptions of post-millennial students, specifically Gen Z, toward the teaching methods and approaches of Baby Boomer teachers within the context of English language learning. The findings have illuminated key generational differences that influence the learning process, particularly in terms of teaching methods, technological adaptation, and classroom dynamics. It was evident from the participants' responses that Baby Boomer teachers predominantly rely on traditional, teacher-

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Suggestion

Based on the findings of this study, several suggestions are proposed to improve the teaching and learning experience between post-millennial students and pre-millennial teachers, particularly in English language teaching contexts. First, it is imperative for Baby Boomer teachers to adapt their teaching methods to align with the preferences and learning styles of Gen Z students. Transitioning from teacher-centered approaches to more interactive, student-centered methodologies will foster greater engagement and motivation among learners. Teachers should incorporate collaborative activities, problem-solving tasks, and discussions that allow students to actively participate in the learning process. Second, integrating technology into the classroom is essential for bridging the generational divide. Baby Boomer teachers must enhance their digital literacy to effectively use tools such as multimedia presentations, online learning platforms, and interactive applications.

Educational institutions should provide targeted training and support for teachers to build their confidence and competence in utilizing digital resources. Third, promoting open communication and mutual understanding between teachers and students is crucial. Baby Boomer teachers can benefit from regularly seeking feedback from their students regarding teaching methods and classroom practices. This will enable teachers to identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments. Similarly, students should be encouraged to express their expectations and needs constructively, fostering a collaborative and respectful learning environment. Finally, future research should explore more specific strategies for integrating technology into teaching methods and examine their impact on student motivation and learning outcomes. Longitudinal studies could also investigate the long-term effects of intergenerational interactions on both teacher effectiveness and student academic success.

By implementing these suggestions, educators and institutions can create a more inclusive and effective learning environment that addresses the unique challenges posed by generational differences. This not only enhances the educational experience for students but also empowers teachers to adapt and thrive in an evolving academic landscape.

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