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So sick or so cool? The language of youth on the internet

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Abstract

This article presents the results of a two-year study of North American youth which produced a 179,000 word corpus of internet language from the same writers across three registers: email, instant messaging, and phone texting. Analysis of three linguistic phenomena—(i) acronyms, short forms, and initialisms; (ii) intensifiers; and (iii) future temporal reference—reveals that **despite variation in form and contrasting frequencies across registers, the patterns of variant use are stable.** This offers linguistic evidence that there is no degeneration of grammar in internet language use. Instead, the young people are fluidly navigating a complex set of new written registers, and they command them all. (Internet, language change, youth)*
