

THE USE OF SLANG LANGUAGE IN DAILY CONVERSATION AMONG TEENAGERS: DOES GENDER MATTER?

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, slang words have now become part of teenagers' everyday language, since they use them in everyday speech. However, due to various of factors, there are disparities in the choice of slang phrases used by teenagers. Since the topic of gender's influence on language usage is not remarkably new, one of the factors that may have a large influence on the choice of slang words used is gender. Relying on this situation, the aims of this study are to investigate the types of slang words used by male and female teenagers, the influences of gender on the choice of slang words and the factors causing the differences. This study referred to the theory of types of slang words by Partridge (2004), gender theory by Diekman and Eagly's (2000), and ethnography of speaking theory by Hymes (1974). This study employed descriptive qualitative method. Observation and interview were employed during the study for the purpose of data collections. The participants of the study were 10 teenagers, 6 females and 4 males which are all college students in Surabaya. The analysis of the collected data revealed that English slang words that are commonly used by teenagers were identified as Society Slang. In addition to that, the investigation on the collected data also shows gender had no influence the choice of slang words. Lastly, the result of the study emphasized that the factors of how each person has their own choice of slang words are speech events which refers to Hymes' SPEAKING term.

Keywords: Slang, gender, teenagers.

INTRODUCTION

Slang language has become the part of Indonesian teenagers' daily language that have special and unique meaning, the typical language of the younger generation in which they use it a lot in informal conversation (Partridge, 1947). Since 1960s, slang has been a fascinating topic in gender and language studies as there are disparities in the use of slang words between men and women (Muhingi, 2016). Men and women speak in different ways because they make distinct decisions at all levels, from phonology to lexico-grammar. Gender influences how people communicate in various social contexts, actively creates diverse styles, and

constructs different social identities and social contexts. Gender is also considered as a function of achievement and social interaction. Watburg (1925) also claimed that women are more conservative when it comes to language. It is related to the fact that women generally seldom leave their homes.

In general, the topic of gender's influence on slang usage was not a new or unusual one. Numerous discoveries that aligned with the association between gender and slang usage had already been published in society. Firstly, Salma (2013) conducted a study which analyzed teenage language, more specifically slang phrases used in daily school conversations by male and

female students in a group of junior high school students. The study looks at how male and female adolescents utilize slang terms in their daily classroom talks. It investigates the effect of gender on teen slang usage in particular. The findings show that gender may play a role in the usage of slang language, that teenage males apply them more often than females.

The second prior study, by Safitri (2020), identifies the sort of slang term used by youtubers Pewdiepie and Lilly Singh and analyzes the gender pattern of Pewdiepie and Lilly Singh's slang word choices. The researcher looked at the nature and function of each slang and compared it to gender research to see if there are still disparities between men and women, especially when it comes to language usage. The researcher discovered in the table that women are the most likely to use offensive vocabulary in video vlogs. The researcher hypothesized that in this century, women have begun to act like men, and that they have taken up men's roles in several parts of society, such as politics, economics, commerce, and language.

Lastly, Rosa (2017) examined how male and female American rappers use slang words in their rap songs based on their lexical style. The findings show that despite gender differences in the lyrics of rappers' songs, both genders use specific connotations. In male rappers' slang terms, finance and career are semantic elements that reflect men's desire to assert authority, whereas in female rappers' slang terms, crime and body parts are semantic elements. Given these semantic characteristics, it is reasonable to argue that women generally seek to claim oppression, resulting in a lower status than men.

Those previous studies reveal the differences between male and female slang words usage, but none of the studies discovered the factors of how the

differences might occur. Therefore, the purpose of this study is not only to discover what types of slang words used by male and female teenagers, but also the effects of gender on their choice of slang words, as well as the factors on how the differences in their choice of words might exist.

Slang Language

According to Soeparno (2002), slang refers to the realization of a hidden language that is used exclusively by certain groups and that those outside of those groups do not understand. Slang is transient in nature since it is constantly amended or updated in order to retain its secrecy. Meanwhile, slang, according to Keraf (1994), slang words are nonstandard or informal words resulting accidentally from the destruction of common word to fill in other field of meaning. As a result, instead of emphasizing on phonology or grammar, slang accentuates more on vocabulary which always changes or is temporal. Slang is a type of non-standard English established and utilized by a certain subculture to express their social identity. People use slang more frequently than Standard English. Even though slang is not a formal language, it is increasing at a faster rate than formal language. It's because individuals feel more at ease conversing when they use slang terms. It's also utilized to make the individuals we talk to feel more intimate.

Furthermore, according to Zhou and Fan (2013), many types of slang involve taboo, including those related with sex, women, money, whiskey, politics, transportation, sports, and the like are predominantly male efforts and interests. Despite the fact that slang is typically associated with negative and rude meanings, it has become increasingly widespread in society, particularly among young people. They frequently use slang to

keep their conversations private, especially from their parents. A study by Wibisono (1992), discovered that slang has several functions, such as, as the language association of the Indonesian language, the number of words or terms that have special and unique meaning, and the typical language of the younger generation. Slang changes and develops almost every day, but even so, this language can be understood by almost all young people in the country.

Types of Slang Words

To begin discussing slang, we must first understand the many varieties of slang. The many forms of slang terms by Partridge (2004) will be discussed in this section.

Public-House Slang

This type of slang compensates for a limited vocabulary. Public house slang refers to words or phrases used within public houses that substitute for the subject's documented short vocabulary. As described by Partridge (2004), a public house slang is generally friendly, joyful, and materialistic, but not cynical or gross. Some examples of public house slang are

Slang in Public School and University

Slang in Public School and University focuses on students, because they are young and full of hope for the future. There are two types of slang at public schools, as well as board schools and private schools, that have existed for almost two centuries: proper slang and gibberish (Partridge, 2004). It's practically impossible to generalize this form of slang. since each school has its unique set of idioms that no one else knows. Some examples of slang from public schools are "bonse head", "bung a lie", and "what's the mat?"

University slang is distinct from slang used in public schools since

frequently leave and switch to the university's vernacular to replace their old school language. As they grow into adults, they are unable to control their need to try new things, think in new ways, and create their own laws. They've become accustomed to conversing openly with their university peers. Some examples of slang terms or phrases used at universities are "damn", "leccer" and "brute."

Society Slang

Society slang is a sort of slang with a social connotation that is commonly used in everyday conversation. Slang is used in some form by every social group, and as a result, certain terms or phrases become the property of that society group. Slang has become a defining aspect of many organizations in today's society. In dictionaries, the term "society slang" is frequently used to describe the world and how people live (Partridge, 2004). "Showy," "vogue," and "thou" are examples of social slang.

Language and Gender

Language is the most crucial instrument for humans to communicate with one another, not only to show the truth of society, but also to preserve and strengthen social existence. The other of language's many purposes is related to the subject of gender. According to (Sirbu, 2015), language reflects gendered perspectives and can influence and contribute to changing people's perceptions through time. Gender, in this context, refers to a cultural and social attribute acquired via the socialization process (Ridgeway, 1991). It is also a reality that gender plays a role in the formation of society (Wardhaugh, 2015). Some researchers believe that gender roles evolve as a result of a socialization process that begins in early childhood and continues

through puberty (Eagly, Wood & Diekman, 2000). Gender roles, once established in individuals, are applied to household and working life and passed down through generations.

Men and women do not select language options to express their masculine or femininity identities. Many people think men and women speak in different ways. This is a long-held idea that is still promoted in today's fiction and non-fiction works. In empirical studies, the subject of how men and women use language differently has been discussed. Men have normal social behavior and authoritarian traits, whereas women are more subservient, devout, domestic, and courteous than men. People perceive women as warm, sensitive, and caring when they observe them in home and social occupational demanding duties, according to implicit role theorists. Observing men in agentically responsibilities, such as leadership roles, reveals that they are assertive, domineering, and competitive (Diekman and Eagle, 2000).

Ethnography of Speaking

According to Hymes (1974), ethnography of speaking explores the probable reasons influencing the usage of linguistic types in speaking. Three levels of analysis were defined by Hymes (1974): speech situation, speech event, and speech acts. Speech situations are situations that are directly connected to speaking. Speech situation is connected to nonverbal context, which is made up of expressive and other types of occurrences, and it influences the behavior of a person when he or she communicates with someone. Speech events are made up of one or more speech acts. Speech event analysis is the most essential, as it deals with specific instances of communication exchange, such as greetings, inquiries, and so on. Some factors should be addressed

while analyzing speech events. Hymes' SPEAKING term has become the most comprehensive lists of such factors. SPEAKING stands for (S) setting, (P) participants, (E) ends, (A) act characteristics, (K) keys, (I) instrumentalities, (N) interaction and interpretation norms, and (G) genres.

Setting (S) refers to the physical circumstances of a communication event or the moment when the discussion takes place. For example, a person may alter their conversation when the situation changes, even if they are in the same location. Participants (P) are people or individuals who are involved in a speaking event. Addresser, addressee, and audience are the participants. Ends (E) are split into two categories: outcome and goal. The outcome is the event's cultural reason, whereas the goal is the intention of the participants involved. The objective stated by the speaker is delivered by the ends. The goals are to explain, discuss, convince, and occasionally simply chat. Act order (A) governs how anything is said (the structure of the speech) as well as what the person means (the content of message). Key (K) denotes a speaker's style that guides the listener to the speaker's concealed message. The tone and style of the discourse reveal the concealed message. The term "key" also refers to the emotions, environment, and attitude that arise throughout a dialogue. Instrumentalities (I) covers the medium and the style of communication. The medium might be written or spoken. Norms (N) are rules that govern discourse and interaction. Genres (G) are similar to speech classifications. It can be in the form of everyday discourse, oration, editorial, course, instruction, prayer, and so on. In general, genre is linked to a speaking occurrence.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach in which descriptive data were used to conduct the study. The data for this study were gathered through observations and interviews. This research evaluated topics and provides answers without the use of statistical data since it examined language and gender and data are also non-quantifiable as it is about a participant's life experiences. Thus, qualitative study was suitable for this research as according to Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña (2014) theory. The data were in descriptive form, specifically in the form of interaction between the participants and the researcher. The participants of this study were college students who live in Surabaya.

Instruments of the study were the supporting parts of the data collection process, such as questionnaire sheets, observation checklists, and observation field notes. Google-based questionnaire was used to gather the participants. Next, the observation and interview were carried out when the researcher and participants were having a conversation during a hangout together. The result data were analyzed and identified and then relating it with previous studies and the theory used. Concerning policy documents, slang words that have been collected from the observation were categorized into type of slang words. The final analysis was aimed to see whether gender influence the choice of slang words and the factors of how the differences in the choice of slang words might exist.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Most Common Slang Words Used by Teenagers

Table 1. Slang words used by teenagers

Datum No.	Slang Words	Type	Gender	
			F	M
1.	Spill	Society Slang	√	√
2.	Tea	Society Slang	√	√
3.	Salty	Society Slang	√	√
4.	Ghosting	Society Slang	√	√
5.	Stan	Society Slang	√	√
6.	Showy	Society Slang	√	√
7.	Lit	Society Slang	√	√
8.	Cap/No Cap	Society Slang	√	√
9.	Screw up	Society Slang	√	√
10.	Lowkey	Society Slang	√	√
11.	Creepy	Society Slang	√	√
12.	Hype	Society Slang	√	√
13.	Feeling blue	Society Slang	√	√
14.	Flex	Society Slang	√	√
15.	Dope	Society Slang	√	√
16.	Slay	Society Slang	√	√
17.	Shade	Society Slang	√	√
18.	Bae	Society Slang	√	√

19.	Ship	Society Slang	√	√
20.	Mood	Society Slang	√	√

According to the slang type distributions displayed on Table 1, society slang is a type of slang that is commonly used by teenagers. Society slang is a type of slang that is frequently used in ordinary conversation and has a social connotation. The slang words collected from the observation are all categorized as Society Slang because the words are used to describe the world and living. For instance, in datum No. 6, the word “showy” means over-dressed in which it refers to society's judgment of a person's physical appearance. The remaining words in the table all depict or relate to actions that occur in everyday life and are included in slang that is popular enough to be understood by the general public, indicating that all of these words are part of societal slang.

Literally, there are three types of slang according to types of slang theory by Partridge (2004). The types are Public-House Slang, Slang in University and Public School, and Society Slang. The other two types of slang were not appeared in the observation. Slang in University and Public-School slang did not appear because the participants of the observation came from different universities in Surabaya. As a result, they might try to avoid revealing this form of slang because each school or university has its own set of slang that no one from another school or university understands, in order to avoid

misunderstandings. As for public-house slang, this type also does not appear in the conversation during the observation. Students are less likely to use this type of slang in their daily conversations since it is typically used only to compensate for a restricted vocabulary, which usually refers to "adult conversation", for example, discussing alcohol like the example I used in the theoretical review, which are "favorite vice, liquor, and straight drinking."

The Influence of Gender on The Choice of Slang Words

Based on the data from the observations presented in table 1, it can be presumed that both male and female students utilize the same type of slang words, which is society slang. However, based on the findings, the participants utilize different words during the conversation but it was not based on their gender as between one female to another female might also apply different words in the conversation. To further investigate the influence of gender in the choice of slang words, below is presented data from the interviews of the participants. The textbox below presents the answer of the participants with the question: “*Are the slang words used by male and female teenagers usually different?*” F referred to females and M referred to males.

(Datum no. 21)

F 1: “As far as I know there is no difference. both of them use the same slang words when interacting but in different context.”

(Datum no. 22)

M2: “It is different because the context that is usually used for conversation is also different. In my opinion, girls usually use slang to talk about something that is trending or hype. In my opinion, guys prefer to use slang to give their opinion, usually about women's preferences, automotive, or other male hobbies.”

(Datum no. 23)

F3: "Should be the same, depending on how much that person knows about slang words. If you want a boy/girl with the same knowledge, then it means the same."

(Datum no. 24)

M4: "Mostly the same depends on how fluent the speakers (both native & non-native) in speaking "street languages" but I think it also depends on the background of the speakers."

(Datum no. 25)

F5: "Usually, sometimes it's a little different, but sometimes it seems it depends on the circle too. I mean sometimes when there is a very connected circle, they both understand the slang words that are used."

The majority of the participants stated that in general the slang used by male and female teenagers is the same. According to datum no. 21, participant F1 mentioned that both male and female teenagers use the same slang words when interacting but they use them in different context. Participant M2, in datum no.22, completed the explanation by saying that the contexts differ since the topics of the conversation are also varied. For instance, females usually use slang to talk about something that is trending or hype and gossips, while males use slang more to give their opinion, usually about women's preferences, automotive, or other men's hobbies.

Afterwards, in data no. 23 and 24, participant F3 and M4 explained that the choice of slang words depends on someone's knowledge and fluency of speaking "slang language". Participant F3 explained that male and female slang words should be the same, and it depends on how much that person knows about slang words. A boy or a girl with the same knowledge will use the same slang words. While participant M4 explained that explained that the slang words used by male and female teenagers are essentially the same, and that it relies on how fluent the speakers (both native and non-native) are in speaking "street languages," as well as their background.

However, participant F5 stated that the slang words used by male and female teenagers are sometimes different, but it relied on their circle. If both male and female teenagers are on the same circle, they must both be familiar with the slang terms. This participant also added that a group of close friends might have their own slang language without the knowledge from people outside the group. This is in line with Slang the theory proposes by Soeparno (2002) that slang is the realization of a specific and hidden language that is exclusively used by certain groups and that those outside of those organizations are not supposed to understand.

As a result of the findings, it can be stated that gender has no influence on the slang phrases used by male and female teenagers. It contradicts Diekman and Eagle (2000) gender theory, which claims that males exhibit authoritarian and socialist behavior while females exhibit piety, submissiveness, and domesticity. According to the findings of the observations and interviews, it cannot be found that "males have typical characteristics of socialistic behavior while females are domesticity." Furthermore, relating to today's society, gender equality is expanding, and men and women are treated equally in society and in their circles of acquaintances, where many women and men now have their same "hangout

locations." As a result, it's highly possible that they utilize the same slang terms.

The Factors of How Slang Word Choice Differences Exist

In using slang, people may differ the choice of slang words based on several factors. To further investigate the factors causing the

differences in the choice of slang words, below is presented data from interviews of the participants. The textbox below presents the answer of the participants with the question: "What influences the choice of slang words you use in everyday conversation?" F referred to females and M referred to males.

(Datum no. 26)

M1: "In my opinion, what affects the choice of slang words that I say usually depends on the place, so for example in college or the office I choose not to use slang because I don't know for sure if the other person I'm talking to will know what slang I mean or not, when I'm hanging out with close friends, I use slang because we are used to using that slang."

(Datum no. 27)

F2: "I think the participants of the conversation that made me "choose" the slang that suites our convo. Such as social background, social distance, the way they perceive the words, and how fluent they are in speaking foreign languages especially English."

(Datum no. 28)

M3: "Different ages influence the words they used, because parents tend not to understand slang words. If the person is polite, I will reduce the use of slang."

(Datum no. 29)

F4: "I think the topic of the conversation. Because each topic share different situation or emotion."

Datum no. 30)

M4: The context of the conversation matters. Because we have to know what we're talking about and choose the right slang."

Based on the result data from the interview, participant M1 stated that Setting (S) affects the choice of the use of slang words because he will consider the choice of words that he will use based on where he speaks. For example, in formal places such as on campus or at work, he may reduce the use of slang words or choose slang words that are still polite and known to many people because he does not know for sure If the person is familiar with slang words. However, when he is hanging out with his friends, he will use slang words more often because he knows that his friends are also familiar with the slang.

Participant F2 asserted that Participants (P) of the conversation

influence the slang words choice that suites the conversation. The slang words used in a conversation might vary depending on the participants' social backgrounds, how they perceive words, and how fluent they are in speaking foreign languages, particularly English. Participant M3 also referred to Participant (P), in which he highlighted about the age of participants. He mentioned that different ages influence the words they used, because parents tend not to understand slang words. He also mentioned the character of a person, stating if the person is polite, he will reduce the use of slang.

Afterwards, participant F4 stated that the topic or context of a conversation

affects the choice of slang words they use. Mentioning that in each topic shares different emotion and situation so it also affects the choice of slang words. To sum up, participant F4 mention two factors which are topic and emotion. Topic and context can be classified as Ends (E) in speech events, specifically to the goal of the conversation. While emotions can be classified as Key (K) in speech events as Key (K) refers to the emotions, environment, and attitude that arise throughout a dialogue.

Lastly, participant M4 further explained that context of a conversation has an important role in influencing the choice of slang words that are being used because he had to know what he was talking about and that he must choose the appropriate slang so that it is not perceived as unusual in people's ears and is appropriate in the situation. In this case, context of a conversation can be classified as Act order (A) since act order governs what the person means containing the content of message, as well as how anything is said which refers to the structure of the speech.

After analyzing the data, it can be concluded that the findings are in line with the theory of Ethnography of Speaking by Hymes (1974), that ethnography of speaking explores the probable reasons influencing the usage of linguistic types in speaking, and that speech events deal with specific instances of communication exchange, including words exchange. However, referred with Hymes (1974) SPEAKING term, only five out of eight terms that emerge, which are setting, participants, ends, act order and key. The participants did not mention the other three factors which are instrumentalities, norm, and genre (types of discourse) because the observation was in regular conversation. To further explain, the instrumental and genre

of the conversation was specific which is spoken daily conversation and there are no specific norms to be followed

CONCLUSION

The study focuses on the slang words used in everyday conversations by male and female teenagers. The study focuses on the several varieties of slang that were investigated using hypothesis of Partridge (1947). The study also investigates the gender influence on the use of slang by the teenagers and relating it with gender theory by Diekmann and Eagly (2000). Lastly, the study also investigates the factors of how slang words differences might exist and relating it with Ethnography of Speaking theory by Hymes (1974).

The results of the data analysis show that English slang words commonly used by teenagers are classified as Society Slang since they are frequently used in everyday discourse and are related to society. The other two types of slang were not appeared in the observation. Slang in University and Public-School slang different in each school and university and the participants are from various universities. Public-house slang also didn't appear in the observation since students are less likely to use this type of slang in their daily conversations as it is typically used only to compensate for a restricted vocabulary, which usually refers to "adult conversation".

Furthermore, the findings reveal that gender has no influence on slang word usage, implying that male and female teenagers use the same slang phrases in different contexts and for different reasons. Additionally, the findings show that the choice of slang depend on the person's knowledge and the fluency of speaking. The circle of the person also influenced their choice of slang words. This contradicts Diekmann and Eagly's (2000) theories,

which claimed that "Male behavior is typically authoritarian and socialist, whereas female behavior is devoted, submissive, and domestic."

Lastly, the findings also emphasized that the factors of how each person has their own choice of slang words are based on some factors that are used to analyze speech events which is Hymes' (1974) SPEAKING term. Notwithstanding, the findings revealed that only Setting (S), Participants (P), Ends (E) and Key (K) that influence the choice of slang words used by male and female teenagers.

Suggestion: Since the result of this study reveals that gender has no influence in the choice of slang words, future research can focus on subjects with a broader scope on society, rather than only teenagers, which can result in more diverse and comprehensive data. Considering more participants engaged and more detailed data could improve the outcome data.

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