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An Analysis Of Common Slang Words In Chris Brown Songs Lyric

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Submitted: Abstract

Revised: 2024/04/21 Accepted: 2024/04/28 Published: 2024/05/08 Language as a tool for communicating with each other, and as a forum for realizing one's identity in social life. In everyday life, humans use several types of language choices in communicating, such as official language or standard language used in formal conversation situations, informal language used in everyday casual communication, and slang which is only used by certain groups of people when send information to others. one another. This type of language is spoken by language users in casual situations or within their own community exclusively. This research focuses on the forms of slang that appear in the songs sung by Chris Brown. This research aims to identify and analyze the types of slang words used in several Chris Brown song lyrics, and explain their meaning. This research method is descriptive qualitative. After analyzing the slang words contained in Chris Brown's song lyrics, 19 data points were obtained which included 2 reduplication copies, 4 clippings, 12 coins, and 1 blending. The research results show that there are several forms of slang that are only found in the lyrics of Chris Brown's songs and are only used by certain groups of people. This research can be an entry point for further research related to slang words by other researchers who are interested in similar research.

Keywords

Chris Brown, Slang Words, Lyric



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INTRODUCTION

Humans are inseparable from language. Language is a system of meaning – a semiotic system.¹ According to Cook & Seidlhofer, "language is a genetic inheritance, a mathematical system, a social fact, the expression of individual identity, the expression of cultural identity, the outcome of dialogic interaction, a social semiotic, the intuitions of native speakers, the sum of attested data, a collection of memorized chunks, a rule-governed discrete combinatory system, or electrical activation in a distributed network".² Edward, J. R; proposed that language is "a communication

¹ Halliday, M. A. K. (2003) On Language and Linguistics: Volume 3. Continuum

² Cook & Seidlhofer. (1995) The Principle and Practice in Applied Linguistics: Studies in Honour of H.G. Widdowson. Oxford University Press. USA.

system composed of arbitrary elements which possess an agreed-upon significance within a community.3 All these elements are connected in the rule-governed ways. According to Gorys Keraf (1997: 1) "language is a means of communication between members of society in the form of sound symbols produced by human speech tools".4 "Language is a human method of transferring thoughts, feelings, and intentions through a system of purposefully generated symbols".5 In Robin. R.H. and Crystal. D; "language is a system of conventional spoken, manual (signed), or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture, express themselves. 6 Icbay (2008) later affirmed that "communication through language occurs as a result of interactions that exist within various communities of language users."7 They will then be able to comprehend what their partners are thinking, planning, and wishing to accomplish. Furthermore, language involves the transmission of sound and the conversion of that sound into information and message. Language can be used to describe the speaker's personality and temperament, as well as to generate the speaker's identity. Language performs many different functions; however, primary language function is to serve as a communication tool.8 Language is used by people to send messages and information to express their willingness and intention. In general, there are two kinds of language forms: spoken and written (unspoken). Proposed that spoken or written language is "language produced in its spontaneous form".9

Meanwhile, the unspoken language is "anything that we use to communicate outside of our voice" (Boone. A. 2024). Unlike spoken language, which is communicated spontaneously through daily conversation, the unspoken one has changed substantially over time, allowing for a variety of language variances. Furthermore, language has morphology, which is one of the characteristics of creating new words. "Morphology is the branch of linguistics concerned with the structure of words within a language". Nordquist, R (2019) defines that "morphology can be base words or components that form words, such as affixes. 11

Language diversity is "many different ways that people can speak and communicate with each other",12 while Barzan, proposed that language variation "refers to regional, social, or

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³ Edward, J. R (2009). Language and Identity: Introduction. Key Topics in Sociolinguistics Cambridge University Press.

⁴ Keraf, G. (1997) Komposisi: Sebuah Pengantar Kemahiran Bahasa. Nusa Indah, Jakarta. 1997.

⁵ Sapir, E. (1921). Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech. New York. Harcourt, Brace. 1921.

⁶ Robin. R.H. and Crystal. D. (2024) Language Geography and Travel: Can Language Be More Gender Neutral? https://www.britannica.com/topic/language#ref393748

⁷ Icbay, A. M. (2008). The role of classroom interaction in the construction of classroomorder. A Conversation Analytic Study. *Middle East Technical University*. https://open.metu.edu.tr/handle/11511/17801

⁸ Indelicato. D. (2017) Forms of Language Oral and Written: Their Comparison and Functions. https://pickwriters.com/blog/the-value-of-spoken-vs-the-written-word-cultural-thing

⁹ Wijayatiningsih. T. D., and Ardiyani. A. P. I (2016) Spoken Text Principles Analysis Found in Conversation Video Entitled "At The Travel Agent". https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/145345-EN-spoken-text-principles-analysis-found-in.pdf

¹⁰ Trask, R. L. (2007). Language and Linguistics: The Key Concepts (2nd edition). Routledge. 270 Madison Avenuew. New York.

¹¹ Nordquist. R (2019) Definition and Examples of English Morphology: Morphology Over Time https://www.thoughtco.com/morphology-words-term-1691407

¹² Toke. N (2023) Linguistic Diversity: What Is It, How to Encourage It, and Why Is It Important. https://diversity.social/linguistic-diversity/

contextual differences in the ways that a particular language is used".¹³ Pidgins, creoles, jargon, slang, and taboo language are examples of language varieties.¹⁴ "Slang word is sound or combination of sound that expresses meaning and form and independent unit grammar or vocabulary of language".¹⁵ According to Allan and Burridge, "slang is a language that cannot be used in formal contexts".¹⁶

Since many years ago, young people have been using slang for their internal communication. They used slang to keep their messages out of reach of people outside their groups or communities. According to Pei and Gaynor; slang results from an adaptation to preexisting words and is redefined into new ones without adhering to the linguistic rules that are valid in linguistics. Slang has evolved and is now commonly used in poetry, books, songs, films, and social media platforms such as Instagram and Twitter. Song is one of the most popular means for the young people to expand their vocabulary. Slang words can be found in many English songs that the young people like to play. Many well-known western singers or artists in this era like Eminem, Migos, Post Malone, Ariana Grande, Niki, and Logic have slang words in their songs. All these singers and the songs they sung stand out amid many other songs accessible and played by young people, including many Unklab students. This what drives the researchers to conduct this kind of research.¹⁷

According to Allan and Burridge, "slang is a language that cannot be used in formal contexts." The use of slang words has long been identified as a mean to express particular intention of specific group of people within their community, so that other people from different group of community will remain unaware of the points discussed by them. However, there are also many groups of people uses slang words in their works like songs, poetries, plays, etc., that are published for public consumption and business purposes that results in the creation of new atmospheres and stances among its listeners or spectators to finally act, do, and speak like what they have seen in the aforementioned works. As a consequence, people from outside the slang words speaking community will learn and start to use slangs in their communication and interaction, including young people and teenagers in Indonesia, in general, and in Unklab, in particular. Since slang words are not something easy to understand, people in general only use them in casual communication. According to Debora, I (2013), casual communication style is "a style used in informal situation and using informal language". 18

According to Alwasilah, "slang results from an adaptation to preexisting words and is redefined into new ones without adhering to the linguistic rules that are valid in linguistics." Slang is frequently used as a result of the practice that many people create after spending their life

Barzan, P., and Heydari. B (2019) Language Variation: a Presentation. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337499049 LANGUAGE VARIATION

¹⁴ Akmajian, A., Demers, A. R., & Harnish, M. R. (1985). *Linguistics: An introduction to language and Communication* (2nd ed.). The MIT Press.

¹⁵ Hidayati., Asbah., and Agung, A. (2018) The Semantics Study of English Slang Used in the Co lumn Cosmo Magazine. file:///C:/Users/AcerUser/Downloads/45-76-1-SM.pdf

¹⁶ Allan, K., & Burridge, K. (2009). Forbidden words: Taboo and the censoring of language. Cambridge Univ. Press.

¹⁷ Alwasilah, A. C. (1985). *Sosiologi Bahasa*. Universitas Indonesia. Angkasa Bandung 1985. URI: https://lib.ui.ac.id/detail.jsp?id=20280183

¹⁸ Debora, I. (2013) The Using of Casual Style in ELT for Young Learners (Sociolinguistics Perspective). https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1129719.pdf

mingling with various groups. "Slang is a category of vocabulary that indicates an individual's age". ¹⁹ The inference is that slang is a vocabulary that is not authorized in regular forums, or, to put it another way, that some communities find objectionable since it is considered excessively harsh. The only people who can utilize this language are those who can fully comprehend slang or a certain set of folks.

Slang has recently grown in popularity among language users worldwide, particularly in some American states such as New York, California, Atlanta, and Michigan. Teenagers and adults in America frequently use slang. They use slang to make it easier to say any phrase they find difficult, even words they believed to be unnecessarily long. Teenagers and adults commonly misinterpret the meaning of slang phrases in music when they are used in conjunction with non-English speakers, including in Indonesia.

R&B is one of the music genres that is mostly played by teenagers who desired to enhance their slang vocabulary, which include the subjects of this research, who are the students of Universitas Klabat. R&B is a kind of music genres that combines jazz, gospel, and blues. This type of genre was first introduced by African-American musicians. This term was first used as a marketing term in music in the United States of America after the World War II, exactly in 1947 by Jerry Wexler who worked for billboard magazine. The term R&B replaced the term racial music and the Billboard Harlem Hit Parade category in June 1949. In 1948, RCA Victor marketed black music under the name of Blues and Rhythm. The phrase was reversed by Wexler at Atlantic Records, which became the leading record company in the R&B field in its early years. And now this type of music genre has become the most popular one throughout the world, especially among the young people. Aside from the popular rhythm of the music, the words of the songs convey a message of freedom and behavior for young people. The meaning contained in the song lyrics is usually one that bring happiness to the young people that resulted in gaining more popularity year after year. For some young people in Indonesian, they will first translate the songs before sing them, but some other will just sing them without making the translation first. As a result, many young people, teenagers, and even adults will sing the songs, even if they do not fully know the lyrics.

According to researchers' preliminary observations, some people at UNKLAB, including students, especially English majors' students, do not understand the slang words. To begin with, when studying slang, English majors frequently come across extensive terms reduced to a single syllable. The researchers also frequently encounter difficulty when translating slang words; this is due to a lack of slang phrase vocabulary that is not thoroughly mastered or not readily available. Hopefully, this research will contribute in the solution of this specific situation.

In a larger sense, a study on "Slang Words Found in Chris Brown's Songs" is expected to improve and provide helpful and significant sources of knowledge for listeners, fans, and people who wanted to know more about slang in Chris Brown's songs. To be more specific, this research is intended to assist the English major students in overcoming hurdles such as misinterpretation of the meaning of slang phrases. To begin, listening to music with slang terminology can assist English

¹⁹ Holmes, J. (2001). An Introduction to Sociolinguistics (Second Edition). London: Longman.

majors to broaden and strengthen their vocabularies. Second, the researchers can refine slang vocabulary and determine the meaning of translated slang. Third, this study can be used as a reference and guideline by other researchers in conducting the similar research. This research will try to discover the kinds of common slang terms in Chris Brown's songs and analyze their meanings.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to delve into the intricate world of slang usage, particularly within the context of Chris Brown's songs: Look at Me, Gimmie That, Loyal, Nightmares, and Ayo. Slang, as elucidated by Elissa Mattielo (2008), reflects localized expressions characteristic of various societal subgroups. It encompasses a diverse range of linguistic phenomena, which the researchers classified into various types based on Mattielo's classification, including compounding, prefixes, suffixes, final combining, infixes, conversion, back-formation, acronyms, blending, clipping, and reduplicatives.²⁰

The data for this investigation were sourced from the lyrics of Chris Brown's songs, readily accessible through online platforms such as e-books, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram. The analysis process, guided by Krippendorff's (2004) framework, unfolded through several systematic steps. Initially, the selection of specific songs by Chris Brown provided a focal point for the inquiry. Subsequently, the research questions were refined to target specific gaps in understanding. The collected data were meticulously categorized and analyzed, with thorough discussions to ensure accuracy and depth of interpretation. Drawing from Matiello's theory of word-formation processes, the researchers elucidated the nuances of slang usage within the songs, encapsulating the richness and diversity of linguistic creativity.

In conclusion, this research contributes to the broader understanding of slang usage within contemporary music, shedding light on its multifaceted nature and its significance in reflecting societal dynamics and cultural identity. Through a rigorous analytical process, the study unveils the intricacies of language formation and usage, offering insights into the complex interplay between language, identity, and expression in the realm of popular music.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the researchers will present the results of the study, entitled An Analysis of Common Slang Words in Chris Brown Song Lyrics. The researchers have investigated the types of slang terminology used in Chris Brown's songs and their meanings by implementing Matiello's theory, specifically word-formation processes to analyze the slang words in the lyrics of the song Chris Brown. There are 11 word-formation processes, each having its own description. Based on the 11 words formation processes proposed by Matiello's Theory, researchers only discovered three types of slang phrases in the lyrics of Chris Brown songs, which are clipping, copy reduplicative, and coinage with 19 slang words data. The 19 slang words that have been successfully collected, in alphabetically order, are as follows:

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²⁰ Mattiello, E. 2008. An Introduction to English Slang: A Description of its Morphology, Semantic and Sociology. English Library: The Linguistics Bookshelf. Polymetrica.

- 1. Ain't
- 2. A's
- 3. Bougie
- 4. Chillin
- 5. Cuff
- 6. Faggots
- 7. Glock
- 8. Homie
- 9. Lil'
- 10. Momma
- 11. Nuisance
- 12. Poppin'
- 13. Redbone
- 14. Sassy
- 15. Skrrt
- 16. Stooges
- 17. Tatted
- 18. Teenies
- 19. Womp womp

Based on the data collected from the Chris Brown song lyrics, a general classification of slang words are as follows:

Blending:

1. Ain't

Copy Reduplicative:

- 1. Womp womp
- 2. Skrrt

Clipping:

- 1. Poppin'
- 2. Lil'
- 3. Chillin'
- 4. Frontin'

Coinage:

- 1. Cuff
- 2. Homie
- 3. Stooges
- 4. Faggots
- 5. Nuisance
- 6. Sassy
- 7. Teenies
- 8. A's

- 9. Redbone
- 10. Glock
- 11. Bougie
- 12. Tetted

By applying Matiello's theory, the table of word formation can be drawn as follows:

Figure 1. Word Formation of Slang Process by Matiello

No	Blending	Copy reduplicative	Clipping	Coinage
1	Ain't	Womp womp	Poppin'	Cuff
2		Skrrt	Lil'	Homie
3			Chillin'	Stooges
4			Frontin'	Faggots
5				Nuisance
6				Sassy
7				Teenies
8				A's
9				Redbone
10				Glock
11				Bougie
12				Tatted
13				Momma

Discussion

Blending

A slang term called "blending" refers to the merging of two words into one new word without taking down or losing its original meaning. After examining the lyrics of Chris Brown songs, researchers discovered that there was only one slang word categorized as word formation of blending; it is the "ain't". Ain't is a slang word that has been widely used by many slang users. This kind of slang can be heard all the time and in many occasions in song lyrics on Twitter, Youtube, Tik Tik, etc. The terms of "is not", "are not", "am not", "do not", "does not", "has not", and "have not" are all contracted into the phrase called "ain't". The steps are displayed below: "is / am / are / have / has + not = ain't." For example: " if I ain't with you, give it all away just to get."

Copy Reduplicative

Copy reduplicative is a linguistic phenomenon in which a portion of a word is repeated identically or with minor changes to produce a new word or a new form. This procedure occurred commonly in many languages and serves variety of goals, including intensifying the meaning, indicating plurality, creating diminutives, and emphasizing a specific trait.

1. Womp womp: it means mocking somebody who has experienced something terrible or inconvenient. For example: "oh my God, I really hate the boy who is standing over there!" "Womp womp."

2. Skkrttt: it is a term that is mostly applied as a replacement in song lyrics, especially in rap song when we can't think of.

Clipping

Clipping is a kind of word construction in which the first or last letter of words are clipped or eliminated to produce shorter terms that are easier for language users to use. Based on the collected data, there are 5 types of clipping slang in the lyric of Chris Brown songs.

1. Poppin': it is obtained from the word of Popping which has the meaning of "to get started something."

Popping – Poppin' + (') = Poppin'.

For example: "let's get poppin'."

2. Lil': it is a slang word that has a meaning of "a little". In general, people utilized it for their stage or performance name.

Little – Lil' + (') = Lil'.

For example: Lil Uzi Vert and Lil Pump.

3. Chillin': it is a slang word that has a meaning of "relaxing doing nothing special".

Chilling – Chillin' + (') = Chillin'.

For example: "Chillin' Bro, relax."

4. Frontin': it is a slang word that has a meaning of "an action in which a person is lying or using false evidence".

Fronting – frontin' + (') = Frontin'.

For example: "I just hit him!" "Stop frontin' homie that will never happen."

Coinage

Coinage is a slang word that combines several fundamental terms to create new phrases from various sources, including commerce, technology, entertainment, and products. After studying this type of slang word, researchers discovered 27 data points from the lyrics of Chris Brown. Some of the them are presented here and became the research object, while some others are left untouched for having bad or impolite meaning according to the eastern culture and tradition. They are;

Cuff: it has the meaning of "you will make the person be your girlfriend/boyfriend and not let anyone else date them".

- 1. For example: "Hey, are you gonna cuff Zoe?" "Or I will cuff her, she's mine."
- 2. Homie: it has the meaning of "a good friend".
- 3. For example: "hey homie, what's up?"
- 4. Stooges: it has the meaning of "moron or better than everyone else".
- 5. For example: "When the professor in our class asked him to find meaning of "bunga" in English. He doesn't know the word mean. What a stooge!"
- 6. Faggots: it has the meaning of "a gay".
- 7. For example: "did you hear John came out as gay?" "I knew that was a faggot."
- 8. Nuisance: it has the meaning of "someone is annoying.
- 9. For example: "You're such a nuisance! I can't keep this up!"

- 10. Sassy: it has the meaning of "someone that is just the coolest person ever or mostly sassy people are very lovable".
- 11. For example: "You are super sassy"
- 12. Teenie: it has the meaning of "a teenage girl".
- 13. For example: "look at the teenie one, over there."
- 14. A's: it has the meaning of "really or very".
- 15. For example: "oh yeah, that's heaps good! That's funny as!"
- 16. Redbone: it has meaning of light skinned female/male mixed with black and another race.
- 17. For example: "she doesn't look full black, she must be a redbone"
- 18. Glock: it has the meaning of "pistols".
- 19. For example: "the robbers pulled out Glocks and pointed them at the bank employees."
- 20. Bogie: it has the meaning of "cigarette", which is commonly used in southern Ontario of Canada and the eastern of United States.
- 21. For example: "Yo, you have an extra bogie?"
- 22. Tatted: it has the meaning of "getting a tattoo".
- 23. For example: "His getting' all tatted up."
- 24. Momma: it has the meaning of mother.

According to the above figures, coinage is the most dominating slang words that appeared and successfully detected in Chris Brown song lyrics. This discussion proposed that the slang used in Chris Brown's song "Look at me, Gimme that, Loyal, Nightmares and Ayo" did not alter the original meaning of the word, but just changed their forms. The second rank was clipping, the third was copy reduplicative, and the fourth was blending.

Understanding the type and meaning of slang words are not easy to do. Therefore, the obvious implications of this research are: teachers' ability to understand the types of slang and their meanings, and teachers' ability to explain their definitions and types to the students are highly necessary. This is to avoid misconceptions during communication between students, and between students and teachers. Meanwhile, the benefits for students include: enhanced intimacy, inventiveness, and comfort when communicating and interacting between one and another by using slang words. In terms of the possible advantages as revealed here, slangs can be used in education if an in-depth explanation of the slangs' characteristics and meanings were provided to avoid misconceptions among students and teachers. Furthermore, the findings of this study were matched using Matiello's word formation theory, which resulted that not all slangs in this study have the same meaning.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of Chris Brown's song lyrics, including "Look at Me," "Gimme That," "Loyal," "Nightmares," and "Ayo," revealed the presence of four main types of slang: copy reduplicative (2 slangs), clipping (4 slangs), coinage (12 slangs), and blending (1 slang). Each of these slang words carries a distinct meaning tailored to the messages Chris Brown conveys to his audience. Importantly, the research suggests that these slang words possess a degree of flexibility, allowing for modifications without compromising their intended meanings.

Moving forward, there are several suggestions stemming from this study. Firstly, recognizing its imperfections, the research welcomes constructive criticism and recommendations for improvement. Secondly, it aspires to benefit English learners, particularly as a second or foreign language, by aiding in the understanding of polite and impolite English terms, especially those pertaining to slang. Lastly, the study advocates for further exploration into slang usage across different contexts or subjects, considering the dynamic evolution of language, particularly among younger demographics.

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