

An Analysis of Slang Words in The Weeknd's Song Lyrics

Silvina Berliana Putri¹, Rahmawati Sukmaningrum², Sri Wahyuni³

^{1,2,3} Universitas PGRI Semarang, Indonesia

*silvinaberliana4@gmail.com

Abstract

The aims of the study focused on analyzing the types and the meaning of slang in The Weeknd's song lyrics proposed by the theory of Allan and Burridge (2006), and to explain the contribution of the analysis of slang words in The Weeknd's song lyrics in teaching sociolinguistic. This study used a descriptive qualitative method. The data from this study were taken from the "Starboy" album by The Weeknd. The data were analyzed by identifying the slang words in the song lyrics into five types and classifying the word in each type of slang. The writer classified words into slang words by reading all the lyrics in detail and analyzing the word by trying to find the correct word or the real meaning, then the writer can decide the word was called as a slang word. In theory, Allan and Burridge divide slang words into five types, namely clipping, imitative, flippant, fresh and creative, and acronym. The writer found that 180 (37.7%) data types of clipping, 166 (34.7%) data types of imitative, 81 (16.9%) data types of flippant, 45 (9.4%) data types of fresh and creative, and 6 (1.3%) data types of acronym, and the most dominant type of slang is clipping. The writer suggest to future researchers to look for the contribution of slang learning in other aspects, for example in the linguistic course and in a wider scope.

Keywords: slang words, sociolinguistic, song lyrics

Introduction

Language is a tool for humans to communicate with others. Language always develops from time to time because of human needs and social conditions (Zhou et al., 2020). People may talk to someone in a formal or informal way. One type of language is non-formal language, which means language whose use is not specified in an organizational structure, for example, using slang words (Pohan & Fitria, 2021). Lighter identifies slang as a non-standard vocabulary consisting of words and senses that is characterized mainly by connotations of extreme informality. Slang consists of arbitrarily altered words, truncated or shortened forms, extravagant, forced, or witty figures of speech, or verbal novelties which experienced rapid popularity and a relatively rapid decline into disuse (Lighter, 2012). Slang words are often found in movies, short stories, and even in a song lyrics (Loka et al., 2017). Lyrics are the singer's media to convey the message of the song, while listeners do not understand the meaning of the slang words in the lyrics of the song. So listeners often do not get what message the singer conveys through the lyrics. We can find slang words in songs that sometimes enter into our daily lives. For example in the "Starboy" album by The Weeknd. The writer chose the Starboy album because the songs from the Starboy album are widely

The 3rd Undergraduate Conference on Applied Linguistics, Linguistics, and Literature (ALLURE)

Vol. 3(1), September, 2023

Online ISSN: 2807-8926

known, heard by many people, and go viral on every platform on the internet. The difference between this study with both of the studies above is the object of this study where the writer used the song lyrics by The Weeknd on the “Starboy” album. Therefore, the result of the study may be useful to get new findings in slang language.

Literature Review

Slang was widely studied by other writers or scholars ((Evadewi & Padang, 2018; Siringoringo & Marpaung, 2022; Situmorang, 2021). Those study concluded that the slang types dominantly used were creative data for the first study, the methapors for the second study, and for the last study is blending type as the most dominant type of slang. Though, those studies already classified the slang into its categories, they did not discuss about the meaning of those slang words. The writer in this study, classified the type of slang words and analyzd their meaning.

Sociolinguistic

According to Holmes, in his book entitled An introduce to Linguistics, sociolinguistics studies the relationship between language and society. They are interested in explaining why we speak differently in different social contexts, they are interested in identifying the social functions of language and how it is used to convey social meaning. In Holmes's explanation, it is clear that language and environment and speakers have a close relationship, so factors such as regional and cultural differences in the environment can produce differences in the way of speaking and these differences become obstacles in the delivery process. information. The way a person speaks and conveys information will be very different from other people, or it can be called the way of speaking or information from a speaker of a language that can identify his social class and social status. In addition, how to behave towards other people can identify their position in society (Holmes, 2012).

Slang Words

An understanding of slang according to Allan and Burrige is that the fact slang is colloquial, temporary, and even polite language, all of which are considered far lower than ordinary communication. Slang is informal language that is not part of the standard language and is usually used by certain social groups to communicate deep messages that are difficult for outsiders to understand. The term slang is the subject of the author's research because it is often used in today's conversations, especially in social media whose user base continues to grow as a result of the expansion of internet access (Allan & Burrige, 2006).

Meanwhile, according to Yule, slang is an informal language used in certain groups of people mainly used by millennials to communicate with each other in their activities. Yule Said that slang is more typically used among those who are outside established, higher-status groups. He also said that they created a new word in their communication, so that only their community could understand it, so many young people were interested in using Slang as their conversation (Yule, 2006).

Random House Historical Dictionary of American Slang and Slang books: “*Slang: Today and Yesterday*” by Partridge, there are five periods of slang history and each of them has different characteristics. It starts from sixteenth, seventieth, eightieth, ninetieth and twentieth century (Partridge, 1970). Below is the further explanation about the history of slang:

1) 16th century slang first appeared in society and became a foreign language. Slang is

The 3rd Undergraduate Conference on Applied Linguistics, Linguistics, and Literature (ALLURE)

Vol. 3(1), September, 2023

Online ISSN: 2807-8926

- only used in certain circles, e.g. beggars, crooks and thieves. For example: Patricos (walking), Doxie's (beggars), Priggers (thieves).
- 2) 17th century In this century, slang is rich in metaphor or figurative language and is associated with immoral acts. In addition, slang appeared in popular plays and brought slang to the stage for the first time, such as; The word hick appears in the comedy *Colt Crew* by Richard Brome and in a poem by William Shakespeare. For example: Clap (clap), Squeeze (card game), Buzzard (stupid).
 - 3) 18th century rhetoricians were the first to recognize slang as a key factor in the social contextualization of students and school leaders. In addition, slang is recognized as part of the English vocabulary. Example: Sula (spend), Tip (borrow), Whiter-Go-Ye (wife).
 - 4) 19th century slang thrived. It turns out that it was intellectuals who created the first slang dictionary. World War I and World War II also influenced slang, such as B.G.I., grumpy, brass. 12 examples: Bus (public train), Burra (good people), Burke (deadly).
 - 5) In the 20th century, slang became part of the spoken language and was used not only by thieves or criminals, but also by ordinary people. Slang is used in everyday conversation because it is simpler and easier to pronounce. Example: Drunk (drunk), Cheero (level), Birdcage (anyone).

The following are the types of slang words according to (Allan & Burrige, 2006), they divided them into five categories as explained in below:

1) Fresh and creative

This type shows that everyday words have a different vocabulary to describe something in a casual setting. Many terms that we unconsciously know may be slang words that we do not know. The reason these slang words are well known in our minds is because they have been around for a long time. For example, the term "mom" refers to a woman, especially an older woman.

2) Flippant

This form indicates that slang consists of two or more terms, where the written expression is not related to the identifying meaning. Its definition is "break a leg", which means "good luck". It is a theatrical superstition that sees good wishes as temptations of fate.

3) Imitative

That is, colloquial words come from English words; Using a standard English word with a different meaning or combining two different words. The example is "gonna". This is the slang word derived from the phrase words "going to".

4) Acronym

It is made up of word results formed by the first letters of each word in a phrase or made up by the initials of a group of words or syllables and is pronounced as a new word. The example is NATO which is the acronym of "North Atlantic Treaty Organization".

5) Clipping

This type means that colloquial words are formed by changing some parts of a longer word into a shorter form with the same meaning. The example is the word "till" which derives from "until". The words which commonly used can be clipped into shorter forms. In addition, clipping form is not appropriate to use in formal conversation.

a. Function of Slang

According to Allan & Burridge (2006), there are seven function of slang terms as follows:

1) To address

The word to address another speaker in order to maintain their close relationship. Someone who has a close relationship usually tends to use the 14 type of informal address because using a formal address to the speaker has a distant relationship or specific purpose with the other speaker. For example Man: Honey, I would go if I didn't have the most trustworthy man. Woman: Oh, no.

2) To initiate relax conversation

Sometimes the speaker prefer to use slang rather than standard vocabulary variants to make a relax conversation. Someone who has a close relationship with other tends to use certain vocabulary in order to make the conversation run more relax so they can feel more comfortable.

3) To humiliate

Speakers tend to express feeling of displeasure or dislike for someone or something by mocking them.

4) To form intimate atmosphere

To form an intimate atmosphere, people prefer to use slang word rather than formal word to show close relationship. Slang can be an alternative way to lighten the relationship between strangers, so that it can reduce association distance and more comfortable.

5) To express impression

When the speaker use slang word, they want someone remember and feel impressed in their conversation. It reflex their impression whether it is a good or a bad impression in order to give a clear image about something that they want to express. The use of slang gives impression.

6) To reveal anger

In using slang in order to reveal anger means make the anger sounds politely. The speakers who have close relationship use the slang words frequently to curse others rather than use regular words when they need to describe anger.

7) To show intimacy

They try to make their own conversation similar to the listener. They change the language that they believe the listeners would prefer to speak. Usually, the speakers use formal language with strangers during conversation but they prefer to use slang with friends to show the intimacy or solidarity of their social relationships

Every singer has a different style in writing their lyrics, one of the styles in the language of the lyrics is using slang. An example of a singer whose lyrics use slang is The Weeknd. In The Weeknd's songs, he uses a lot of slang words, for example in the song *Die For You* : findin', feelin', goin', gon', thinkin'. The songs "Starboy" and "Die for You" peaked at number one on the US Billboard Hot 100, as the top five single "I Feel It Coming".

Method

This study used a descriptive qualitative method. The writer applied the method in this paper because it was appropriate to describe the result of the study. In this study, the writer aims to find out the types and meanings of slang words for readers. The researcher collected the data by listening to the song, reading the lyrics, choosing words related to slang words, writing down the information, and labeling the slang words. The writer analyzed the data by browsing the lyrics from the internet website. Then, underlining the slang word which is found in the lyrics. After that, finding the type of slang word in the song lyric that has been underlined and the slang words will be tabulated in the tabulation data.

Finding and Discussion

In this research, the data were taken from The Weeknd's song lyrics on the "Starboy". The finding is about slang words were found in the song lyrics by The Weeknd. All the data of research findings were analyzed by using Allan & Burridge theory of slang words.

1. Types of Slang Words Used in The Weeknd's Song Lyrics

The types of slang words in The Weeknd's song lyrics were shown in the following table.

Table 1 The Distribution of the Use of Slang in Each Type.

Slang Types	Numbers of Data	Percentage (%)
Clipping	180	37.7%
Imitative	166	34.7%
Flippant	81	16.9%
Fresh and Creative	45	9.4%
Acronym	6	1.3%
Total	478	100%

From the table above shows that there were 5 types of slang words found in The Weeknd's song lyrics, namely clipping, imitative, fresh and creative, and acronym. From 478 utterances found, there were 180 (37.7%) clipping, 166 (34.7%) imitative, 81 (16.9%) flippant, 45 (9.4%) fresh and creative, and 6 (1.3%) acronym.

2. The Meaning of the slang words

The second formulation of the problem is regarding the meaning of slang words contained in The Weeknd's song lyrics on the Starboy album. The writer takes some examples from the data to be explained as follows:

a. Clipping

Clipping is a type of slang that is characterized by shortening a form of a word. The writer takes several examples to be discussed more clearly as follows:

1) Talkin

Talkin' is an example of clipping because of the simplified form of talking. The data is found in the first song, namely *Starboy* with the lyrics *you talkin' money needing hearing aid*. "Talkin" is a slang term that is short for "talking". It is often used in

The 3rd Undergraduate Conference on Applied Linguistics, Linguistics, and Literature (ALLURE)

Vol. 3(1), September, 2023

Online ISSN: 2807-8926

informal speech or text messages to refer to a conversation or discussion.

2) 'Bout

'Bout is a simplified form of the word "about" and is included in the clipping type because it is shortened. The word bout is found in the first song, namely *Starboy* with the lyric you talkin' 'bout me I don't see the shade, and in the third song *False Alarm* with the lyric 'Six inch long, 'bout three inch wide. It is often used in informal speech or text messages to indicate a topic or subject of discussion.

b. Imitative

Imitative slang types can be seen from the word imitates other words or it can also be formed from a combination of two words. The meaning of imitative type slang will explain further some examples as follows:

1) Tryna

The word tryna is an example of an imitative type of slang word. Because tryna is a combination of the words trying and to then it becomes tryna which has its own meaning. The word tryna is found in the 4th song, namely *Reminder* in the lyrics of 'eatin' all day, tryna lose weight'. It is often used in informal speech or text messages to express an intention or desire to do something.

2) Wanna

Wanna is another example of imitative slang because the word wanna contains 2 words, that is want and to which are then combined into 1. The word wanna is found in the 5th song, namely *Rockin'* with the lyrics "Why would you wanna take away from this moment?". It is often used in informal speech or text messages to express a desire or intention to do something.

c. Flippant

Words that are included in the flippant slang words consist of 2 or more words, and contain a denotative meaning or an incorrect meaning. The writer finds some data from the lyrics of The Weeknd's song. The writer takes several examples to be explained in more detail as follows:

1) Line 'em up

Line 'em up is included in the flippant type because it consists of 3 words and the meaning is not like the actual meaning. The word line em up which has the meaning of those who are queuing for something. Here Line 'em up can refer to the act of arranging objects or people in a line or queue, often in preparation for an event or activity. It can also refer to the act of lining up shots of alcohol or other substances in a row, often in preparation for consumption. The word line 'em up is found in the 9th song in the lyrics of 'I line 'em up'.

2) Don't give a fuck

The phrase "don't give a fuck" can be considered flippant slang because it consists of 2 words or more. Sometimes it is often used to convey a lack of concern or interest in something. It can be used in a sarcastic or humorous way to show that someone does not care about something that others may consider important. However, it can also be seen as disrespectful or offensive in certain contexts, so it is important to be mindful of how and when it is used. The word don't give a fuck is found in the 10th song, namely *Six Feet Under*, in the lyrics she don't give a fuck.

d. Fresh and Creative

Slang words that are categorized as fresh and creative types are slang words that have new, creative vocabulary and they can become updated words. Several types of fresh and

creative slang have been found and their meanings are also included, but the writer takes some data to explain further as follows:

1) **Lame**

Lame is included in the fresh and creative type because the word lame is a new way of expressing something that is uncool, boring, or uninteresting. It can also describe someone who is unimpressive or unappealing. The word lame is found in the 4th song, *Reminder*, in the lyrics of 'all these R&B niggas be so lame'.

2) **Don**

Don belongs to the fresh and creative type because don is a new way that has a new meaning. Don is often used to refer to a leader or a boss, especially in criminal organizations. It can also refer to a respected or influential person in a particular field or industry. The word Don can be found in the fourth song, *Reminder*, in the lyrics of 'work something for the Don'.

e. **Acronym**

The way we categorize slang types of acronyms is that they are built from the first letter of the words and forms into a group of words. The author found 6 slang data types of acronyms, but the author will explain 2 examples in more detail as follows:

1) **P1**

P1 is an example of an acronym type slang. Because P1 is built from the first letter of the word, and it is read as a word. P1 is found in the first song, namely *Starboy* in the lyrics 'P1 cleaner than your church shoes, ah'. P1 can refer to high-performance sports car made by the British automaker McLaren, which is called McLaren P1.

2) **XO**

XO is an example of acronym type slang because XO is also formed from the first letter and it is read as a word. XO is found in the fourth song, *Reminder*, in the lyrics of 'if it ain't XO then it gotta go'. XO is a term that is often associated with the Canadian singer The Weeknd. It is the name of his records label, which he founded in 2012. The letters "XO" are meant to represent the idea of hugs and kisses, as well as the concept of being intoxicated or under the influence of drugs.

3. The contribution of the study about slang to the sociolinguistic course

Learning slang can contribute to a sociolinguistic course by providing insight into the ways that language is used in different social contexts. Slang is often associated with particular social groups, and can reflect their values, beliefs, and experiences. By studying slang, students can gain a better understanding of the social dynamics that shape language use, as well as the ways that language can be used to express identity and build community. Additionally, studying slang can help students develop their language skills, as they learn to recognize and use different registers of language in different contexts. Overall, studying slang can provide a valuable window into the complex ways that language and society interact.

Conclusion

Based on data analysis and the result of the study in the previous chapter, there were five types of slang words in The Weeknd's song lyrics. There are 478 data found in The Weeknd's song lyrics, of which the data consist: namely clipping, imitative, fresh and creative, and acronym. From 478 utterances found, there were 180 (37.7%) clipping, 166 (34.7%) imitative, 81 (16.9%) flippant, 45 (9.4%) fresh and creative, and 6 (1.3%) acronym. The most

The 3rd Undergraduate Conference on Applied Linguistics, Linguistics, and Literature (ALLURE)

Vol. 3(1), September, 2023

Online ISSN: 2807-8926

dominant type of slang used by The Weeknd is clipping. It came with the highest percentage from 478 utterances, which is 37.7%.

References

- Allan, K., & Burridge, K. (2006). Forbidden words: Taboo and the censoring of language. *Forbidden Words: Taboo and the Censoring of Language*, 1–303.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/9780511617881>
- Evadewi, R., & Padang, U. N. (2018). *An Analysis of English Slang Word Used In Eminem's*. 7(1).
- Fasola, J. (2012). Slang and its history. *Proceedings of the 53rd International Scientific Conference of Daugavpils University*.
- Holmes, J. (2012). *An Introduce to Sociolinguistic Fourth Edition*.
- Khairunisa. (2018). BENTUK, FUNGSI, DAN MAKNA PENGGUNAAN BAHASA NONFORMAL DALAM NOVEL ANGAN KARYA SOPHIE MAYA. *Energies*, 6(1), 1–8.
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1120700020921110%0Ahttps://doi.org/10.1016/j.reuma.2018.06.001%0Ahttps://doi.org/10.1016/j.arth.2018.03.044%0Ahttps://reader.elsevier.com/reader/sd/pii/S1063458420300078?token=C039B8B13922A2079230DC9AF11A333E295FCD8>
- Lighter, J. (2012). *IS SLANG A WORD FOR LINGUISTS ?* 53(1), 5–17.
- Loka, W. P., Sumadja, W. A., & Resmi. (2017). SLANG DALAM LIRIK-LIRIK LAGU CHRIS BROWN. *Journal of Chemical Information and Modeling*, 21(2), 1689–1699.
[https://www.oecd.org/dac/accountable-effective-institutions/Governance Notebook 2.6 Smoke.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/dac/accountable-effective-institutions/Governance%20Notebook%202.6%20Smoke.pdf)
- Partridge, E. (1970). *Routledge revivals*.
- Pohan, D. D., & Fitria, U. S. (2021). Jenis Jenis Komunikasi. *Journal Educational Research and Social Studies*, 2, hal. 31.
- Siringoringo, R. M., & Marpaung, M. S. (2022). Analysis Of Slang Language In Song Lyric “Damn I Love You” By Agnes Monica. *Journal Scientia, Sean Institute*, 10(02), 150–154. <http://infor.seaninstitute.org/index.php/pendidikan/article/view/264>
- Situmorang, R. K. (2021). *AN ANALYSIS OF SLANG LANGUAGE STYLES USED IN CHARLIE 'S Submitted : 2020-08-26 Accepted : 2021-05-01*. 4(1), 21–29.
- Yule, G. (2006). *The Study of Language*.
- Zhou, Yang, & Wang. (2020). SLANG WORDS USED IN “THE SPONGEBOB MOVIE: SPONGE OUT OF WATER.”
File:///C:/Users/VERA/Downloads/ASKEP_AGREGAT_ANAK_and_REMAJA_PRINT.D

**The 3rd Undergraduate Conference on Applied Linguistics,
Linguistics, and Literature (ALLURE)**

Vol. 3(1), September, 2023

Online ISSN: 2807-8926

ocx, 21(1), 1–9.