

The Use of Slang in Expressing Opinions Among Malaysians in the World of Buzz Youtube Videos

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ABSTRACT

Slang is highlighted as a non-standard form of language, often used by specific social groups to convey social identity. The prevalence of slang on social media is linked to the growing online community's communication needs. The research adopted a qualitative approach, involving Malaysian respondents from 'World of Buzz' YouTube videos. Ten videos were analysed using Allan and Burridge's framework (2006), categorising slang into five distinct groups: fresh and creative, compounding, imitative, acronym, and clipping. Alan Bryman's analysis stages guided the coding process. The findings showed that Malaysians commonly use fresh and creative slang to express their opinions, adding expressiveness, enjoyment, or naming during communication. These findings are hoped to offer a better understanding of the meaning, types, and functions of slang words and phrases to avoid misunderstandings in communication among different people from different social groups.

Keywords—slang, world of buzz, youtube, acronym, fresh and creative

INTRODUCTION

There are many different forms of language, and slang is one common instance of a non-standard language (Suleiman, 2019). Slang, as defined by Namvar (2014), is a form of speech expression utilised exclusively by a specific speech community to demonstrate its allegiance to a certain social identity. The structure of slang, such as words and phrases, is considered distinct from the mainstream form of a particular language. In addition, several individuals employ slang as a means of humour and concealing the true meaning of words, while others use it to showcase their artistic ingenuity (Suleiman, 2019).

Slang is widely used among Malaysians today in their daily communication, and it has become their primary language when interacting with each other, generally on the internet through social media (Ghazali & Abdullah, 2021; Zulkifli & Tengku Mahadi, 2020). The use of slang on social media is encouraged by the growing numbers of social media users, which developed to cater to the communicative needs of the online community to communicate quickly and effectively (Sabri, Hamdan, Nadarajan, and Shing, 2020).

However, the use of slang in communication among internet users can lead to certain problems and issues. It will complicate communication when, in formal situations, internet users are required to use standard language with other people who need help understanding the use and meaning of slang (Suleiman, 2019). As a result, the use of correct and standard language in institutions such as schools and workplaces will be viewed negatively. This problem is supported by Maros and Taufek (2019), who stated that language educators were concerned about using non-standard language, such as slang, among teenagers.

In this study, the researcher will observe different types of slang Malaysians use and determine their

functions in real-life communication. The videos from World of Buzz on YouTube are selected to depict communication between the three primary races in Malaysia. In each of the videos, the viewers can observe the presence of the races interacting with each other. Therefore, this research aims to identify the types of slang and the purposes of the slang that Malaysians use in expressing their opinions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the sixteenth century, slang has been introduced to society. (Allan and Burridge, 2006). It was used to alter the inelegant statement of being associated with a group of people, such as foreigners or criminals (Suleiman, 2019)

In a study conducted by Ghazali and Abdullah (2021), Malaysian youths frequently use slang in their captions on social media, such as TikTok and Twitter, to express something quickly and creatively. The findings were supported by Sabri et al. (2020), who found that the rampant use of internet slang in social media is greatly influenced by the settings imposed by some social media websites. Due to the nature of Twitter, users must simplify their writing, which limits their ability to write complete sentences. As a result, Twitter users make the most of their ‘writing skills’ to be as creative as possible to ensure that their messages, thoughts, or emotions can reach the intended audience precisely the way they want them to without being misunderstood.

Slang is widely used across different social media platforms, as shown by studies from Saputra and Marlina (2019) and Trimastuti (2017). Additionally, researchers have looked into how slang appears in movies (Musofa, 2020), Sudyanti, Suarnajaya, and Swandana (2017), analysing its presence in popular films like ‘Jumanji’ and ‘Step Up: All In,’ respectively. Nur and Rosida (2020) analyse slang in the movie “Deadpool 2,” Arianti, Lestari, and Laily (2021) examine slang in the film “The Hangover,” while Sulaiman and Syafitri (2022) scrutinise the use of slang in the movie “Ralph Breaks the Internet.”

Additionally, Yeo and Ting (2017) noted in their study that Malay individuals often adopt slang terms from renowned TV shows, such as the viral term ‘chia chia chia’ introduced by the Malaysian comedian group Sepahtu. Conversely, Chinese speakers tend to incorporate slang words from their native language, such as ‘ma,’ ‘liao,’ and ‘gua,’ when communicating in other languages (Yeo & Ting, 2017).

Allan and Burridge’s framework (2006)

This study employed Allan and Burridge’s framework (2006) to analyse slang, categorising it into five groups: fresh and creative, compounding, imitative, acronym, and clipping.

TABLE I Types of Slang Adopted from Allan and Burridge’s (2006)

| Types of slang | Explanation |
|-----------------------|---|
| Fresh and creative | Fresh and creative slang words are made of new vocabularies, informal varieties, creativity, wit, and imagination, and they can also be up-to-date words. |
| Compounding | Compounding slang words are made of two words or more, and the words created have no relation to their literal meaning. |
| Imitative | Imitative slang words are imitated or derived from standard English words, using |
| | standard English words in different meanings, or combining two different words to become one word. |
| Acronym | An acronym is the type of slang that is constructed by the result of words from the |
| | first letters of each word in a phrase or by the initials of a group of words or syllables. |

| | |
|----------|--|
| Clipping | This type of slang is created by deleting some parts of a longer word to make it a shorter form while maintaining its meaning. |
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METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study is done to explore the types of slang used by Malaysians in expressing their opinions. Allan and Burrige’s (2006) framework, Types of Slang, was adopted. Data samples were collected from ten World of Buzz YouTube videos. The data would be tabulated according to the respective categories: fresh and creative, compounding, imitative, acronym, and clipping. Each category would be highlighted with different colours of ‘text liners’ to indicate different types of slang. The coding guideline is shown in Table II.

TABLE II Coding guidelines

| Types of Slang by Allan and Burrige’s Theory (2006) | Coding Schemes |
|---|----------------|
| Fresh and creative | S1 |
| Flippant | S2 |
| Imitative | S3 |
| Acronym | S4 |
| Clipping | S5 |

TABLE III PROCEDURE

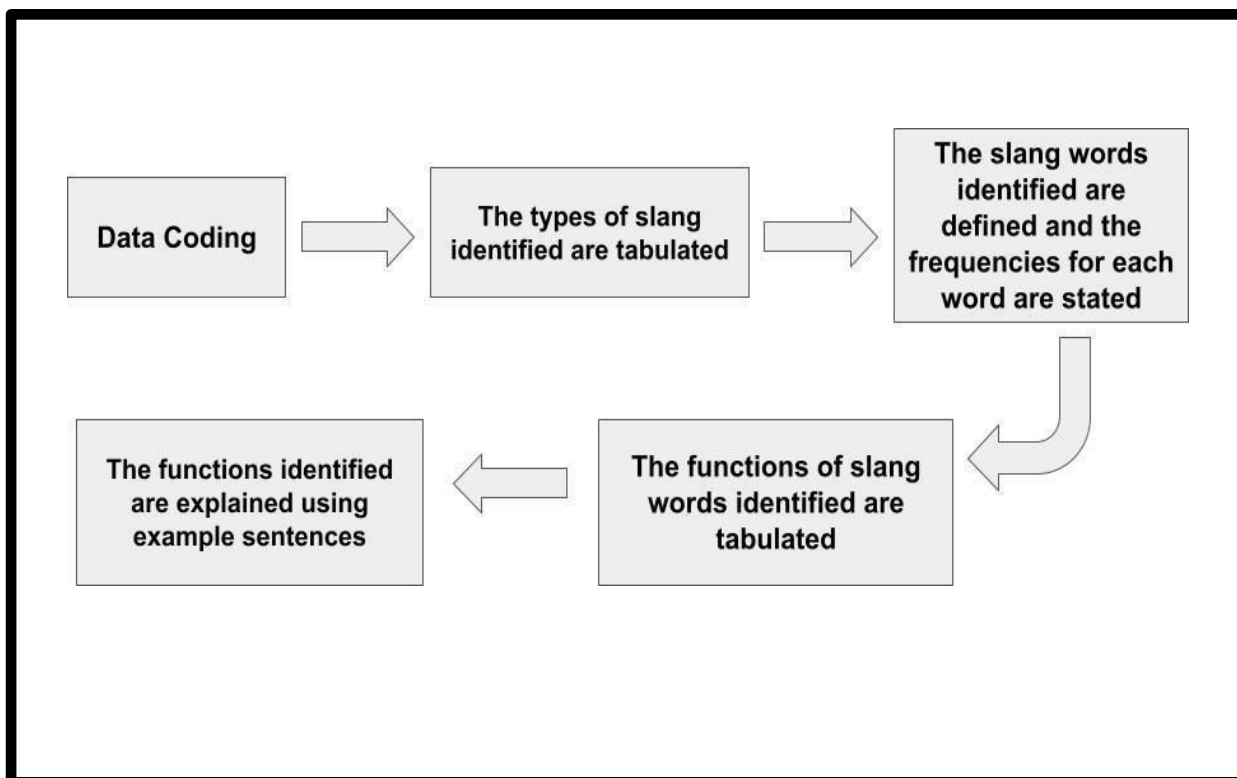


Table III shows the procedure for this study. The data analysis procedure is adopted from Alan Bryman’s four phases of analysis (Bryman, 2012). To extract the identified slang, a content analysis of the transcription is conducted, followed by the coding process of sorting the data into specific categories according to the respective types of slang.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

TABLE IV Data Analysis

| The Type of Slang | Number of Word | Frequency | % |
|-------------------------|----------------|------------|------------|
| Fresh and creative | 27 | 45 | 43.55 |
| Compounding or Flippant | 14 | 14 | 22.58 |
| Imitative | 11 | 27 | 17.74 |
| Acronym | 3 | 3 | 4.84 |
| Clipping | 7 | 12 | 9 |
| Total | 62 | 101 | 100 |

Following Allan and Burridge’s framework (2006), Table IV presents the distribution of each type of slang identified in the World of Buzz videos. The first category, “Fresh and creative,” comprises 27 unique words with a total frequency of 45 occurrences. The second category, “compounding or flippant,” consists of 14 distinct words, each appearing once. The third category, “Imitative,” includes 11 different words, totaling 27 instances. The fourth category, “Acronym,” encompasses three distinct words, each occurring once. Lastly, the “Clipping” category encompasses 7 unique words, with a total frequency of 12 occurrences.

The analysis reveals that the “Fresh and creative” category predominates among the slang types used by Malaysians in the World of Buzz videos, accounting for 43.55% of the total. Conversely, “Acronym” represents the least prevalent category, appearing in only 4.84% of the selected videos. As a result, Malaysians predominantly use fresh and creative types of slang, whereas acronym types of slang are the least frequent.

The “Fresh and creative” type of slang is derived from newly coined vocabularies, informal language variations, wit, creativity, and currently trending words. According to Table 5, the researcher identified twenty-seven instances of data that fall into this category.

TABLE V Fresh and Creative Slang Type

| No | Slang Word | Meaning | Frequency |
|----|------------|---|-----------|
| 1 | Millennial | A term to address a generation for people born between 1980 and 2000. Also, another way to insult the older generation for not keeping up with the times. | 1 |
| 2 | Gen Z | A term to address a generation for people born between 1995 and 2009. | 1 |
| 3 | Sheesh | Another word for oh my god or damn | 2 |
| 4 | Cool | Good, great | 2 |
| 5 | Bussin | It is used to express that the food is good. | 1 |
| 6 | Skrrt! | To move away or get away from somebody. | 1 |
| 7 | Ghosting | When a person cuts off all communication with their friends or the person they’re dating, with zero warning or notice beforehand. | 1 |
| 8 | Yeah | Another way to say yes | 7 |
| 9 | Banana | The other way to call penis | 1 |
| 10 | What for | The correct phrase is for what but youngsters usually switch the words in order to make it sound more fun and trendy. | 1 |
| 11 | Horny | To address people who are desperately wanting to have sex. | 1 |

| | | | |
|----|-----------|--|---|
| 12 | Boobs | Woman's breasts | 1 |
| 13 | Dude | A man | 3 |
| 14 | Oh boy! | An exclamation of joy or shock | 1 |
| 15 | Memes | Images or videos or arts that are humorous and witty. | 1 |
| 16 | Shit | Nonsense, bad | 1 |
| 17 | Man | An exclamation of disappointment | 3 |
| 18 | Roast | To humorously mock or humiliate someone | 1 |
| 19 | Boujee | Luxurious in lifestyle yet humble in character – came from hip hop slang | 1 |
| 20 | Hell yeah | Expression of a great joy | 3 |
| 21 | Fellas | Fellow, man, boy | 2 |
| 22 | Thingy | It can mean absolutely anything and can be used every time you can't find a word or something or forgot the word | 2 |
| 23 | Guys | everyone, all of you | 3 |
| 24 | Noob | Newbie | 1 |
| 25 | Somemore | Also, too, as well | 1 |
| 26 | Buddy | Friend | 1 |
| 27 | Hell no | An exclamation of no but stronger | 1 |

The data presented in Table V indicates that Malaysians primarily employ fresh and creative slang to convey their opinions about the discussed YouTube channel. This discovery aligns with the findings by Sulaiman and Syafitri (2022) in “Ralph Breaks the Internet.” This preference can be attributed to the dynamic nature of fresh and creative slang, which consists of trendy and contemporary words and phrases. In the movie “Hangover,” the use of fresh and creative slang ranked second, just after the “flippant” type, occurring 14 times compared to the latter’s 15 instances. (Arianti, Lestari, & Laily, 2021). Fresh and creative slang consists of trendy, up-to-date words and phrases continuously created by youngsters and community members, reflecting the prevalent use of social media among the younger generation (Ghazali & Abdullah, 2021; Zulkifli & Tengku Mahadi, 2020). With the rapid rise of social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, new expressions are being coined by Malaysian youths, injecting a trendy and captivating vibe into their language. They also use fresh and creative slang words to infuse a sense of fun and memorability to articulate their thoughts, viewpoints, and emotions more effectively and quickly adapt to emerging trends.

Slang serves various functions, including providing novelty effects, sarcasm, expressiveness, naming people, things, or phenomena, and making language more enjoyable to use. The function most frequently associated with slang usage among Malaysians is to make language more fun to use. Additionally, the use of slang in sarcasm is common in Malaysia due to its face-saving culture (Musofa, 2020). Furthermore, Yeo and Ting (2017) observed that individuals of Malay descent frequently adopt slang phrases popularised in prominent TV programmes, while those of Chinese descent often incorporate slang from their native language when communicating in foreign languages. Slang, which is informal and often specific to certain groups or situations, is widely used on social media platforms and in movies. (Saputra & Marlina, 2019; Musofa, 2020; and Trimastuti, 2017). Young people in today’s generation are always quick to catch up to the new trends, and they hate to not be able to keep up and be left behind.

In contrast, the use of acronym slang was infrequent and relatively rare in the collected data. This finding is consistent with Musofa’s (2020) research on the films “Jumanji” and the study by Arianti, Lestari, and Laily (2021) on the movie “Hangover,” where acronyms were noted as the least used form of slang by the characters. The sparse occurrence of acronymic slang in the collected data can be attributed to its characteristic reliance on initials or syllables, which are not typically employed in spoken communication.

Acronyms are typically employed in written communication within the community. They involve combining the initial letters of words in a phrase to create a shorthand form. While acronyms facilitate concise expression, they are less common in spoken communication and more prevalent in written formats. Social media platforms impose word limits on posts, prompting users to utilise acronyms to convey more information efficiently. However, individuals tend to avoid using alphabetic abbreviations in speech, as they find it awkward to pronounce only the initial letters of words when complete phrases are pronounceable.

CONCLUSIONS

Malaysians use slang not only to enhance their creative and effective communication by enriching their thoughts, feelings, and opinions, but also to add a playful twist to language use, which is particularly evident in informal interactions. Moreover, this linguistic phenomenon is closely intertwined with the diverse cultural fabric of Malaysia.

Future researchers might explore alternative online platforms, such as Discord, Litmatch, live videos, or short-form videos (e.g., reels, Instagram stories, Snapchat), to observe more genuine and authentic interactions. These platforms offer opportunities for in-depth discussions on the widespread use of slang among Malaysians in expressing their opinions.

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