Gender Influence on Slang Used by Teenagers in Their Daily Conversation at School

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ABSTRACT

The research entitled "Gender Influence on Slang Used by Teenagers in their Daily Conversation at School" aims to investigate types of slang and gender influence on the use of slang among teenagers. Data were collected from observation, questionnaire, and interview. To analyze the data, the theories proposed by Potter (1975) and Kahn & Illson (1985) were implemented to identify the types of slang among teenagers, whereas Diekman and Eagly's (2000) theory was applied to investigate the gender influence on the use of slang among them.

The findings show that there were 12 types of slang used by male and female teenagers, such as *back, centre, clipping or shortening, blending, compounding, nonsense reduplication, acronyms, loan or borrowing, onomatopoeia, substitution, and two types of slang categorized by Willis (1964)*. The results of analysis also reveal that gender may affect the use of slang. It can be seen from the total number that slang used by male teenagers (54,3%) tend to be higher than females (45,7%). Therefore, it can be concluded that male teenagers use slang more than females and it can also be understood that the tendency of males to use standard language is to show their machismo.

Keywords: *Teenagers, Language, Slang, Gender, Sociolinguistics.*

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INTRODUCTION

The development of technology and entering foreign cultures nowadays in Indonesia brings a strong influence on the life of teenagers'. It not only change the way they get dressed, but also the way they interact to others in their daily communication. Therefore, it is assumed that such situation may influence their language style. The example of language style that is spread among teenagers does not form a new language, but it develops into slang. Teenagers use slang in order to make sentences shorter, faster, and easier to say.

The research purposes to investigate teenage language specifically teenage slang words in junior high school group. Particularly to identify types of slang words used by male and female early teenagers in one of Islamic boarding schools, Lembang and to investigate whether gender may influence on the use of slang among them. Early teenagers defined for those who are in the earliest stage of teenagers' in the age of eleven, twelve, and thirteen years (Douvan and Andelson, 1979).

To analyze the data, the theories proposed by Potter (1975) and Kahn & Illson (1985) were implemented to identify the type of slang words. Those slang words were categorised into ten types, namely *cockney rhyming, back, centre, clipping or shortening, blending, compounding, acronym/abbreviation, loan or borrowing, onomatopoeia*, and *nonsense reduplication*.

According to Kahn and Illson (1985: 144) *acronym* is a word formed by taking the initial sounds or letter of the words of a phrase and uniting them into a combination which is itself pronounceable as a separate word". While, *substitution* is when a part of letter was removed and replaced with another word that has the same rhymes (Wells, 2010: 16). Another type of slang words is *loan or borrowing*. According to Kahn & Illson (1985: 144) *loan or borrowing* is the process of taking

over words from other dialects or other foreign languages.

To investigate gender influence the theory proposed by Diekman and Eagly (2000) were applied. They argue that males have typical characteristics of authoritarian and socialistic behave while female are pious, submissive, and domesticity (Diekman and Eagly, 2000).

Moreover, the research applied a descriptive qualitative method to analyse the data because it gives description of a problem (Vredenbregt, 1984 in TiraSyam, 2009). Alwasilah (2003: 92) states that qualitative research gives value

toward descriptive data objectively. He also says that the descriptive method requires natural behavior or event to observe the subject. The instruments used in the research are observations, questionnaire, and interview.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the data analysis result, it shows that there were 73 slang words found among teenagers in their communication. Those slang words were distributed according to types of slang categorised by Potter (1975) and Kahn & Illson (1985) in the following table:

Table 4.1 Distribution of the Types of Slang

No	Type of Slang	Total of Slang words
1.	Cockney Rhyming slang	0
2.	Back slang	3
3.	Centre slang	1
4.	Clipping/ shortening	5
5.	Blending	4
6.	Compounding	2
7.	Nonsense reduplication	3
8.	Acronym	22
9.	Loan/ borrowing	12
10.	Onomatopoeia	1
11.	Substitution	14

12.	Comes from or gives new meaning to a standard words	2
13.	New inventions to the establish words	4
	Total	**73**

Regarding to the slang type distributions presented in the table above, there was no *cockney rhyming* found, but there were other types of slang found in the research outside the categories proposed above, they are *substitution* (Wells, 2010), *slang which comes from or gives new meaning to a standard words,* and *new inventions to the establish words* (Willis, 1964:195, as cited in Wahyuni, 2006:11).

However, findings of this study presented in Table 4.2 gained from questionnaires and interviews to the 36 respondents which consist of 18 male and female teenagers as follow:

Table 4.2 Findings of the Data

Type of Slang	M	F
1. Cockney Rhyming Slang	0	0
2. Back	4	8
3. Centre	1	0
4. Clipping/ Shortening	1	1
5. Blending	4	3
6. Compounding	21	15
7. Nonsense Reduplication	19	17
8. Acronym	195	162
9. Loan/Borrowing	124	96
10. Onomatopoeia	10	9
11. Substitution	53	59
12. Comes from or gives meaning to a standard words	29	20
13. New inventions to the establish words	24	17
Total	**488**	**410**

Relating to the frequency in using slang words, the table above refers that the number of slang words used frequently by males is 488 occurances while the number of slang words used by females is 410 occurances. The data also reveal that the most frequent slang words that were used among teenagers are *acronym*, *loan or borrowing, and substitution*. The example of *acronym* is the word *DL* from the original words *Derita Lo* which is created by taking the first letter at every beginning word. Meanwhile, the example of *substitution* can be seen from the phrase *slow kaya di Moscow*. The word *Moscow* is taken since it has the same rhyme with the word *slow*. The last slang word used frequently by teenagers is *loan or borrowing*. The example of *loan or borrowing* is the word *haqqon* which is taken from Arabic and it is used to swear something.

The percentage list of the slang types used by male and female teenagers are presented in the following table:

Table 4.3 Percentage List of the Types of Slang

No	Type of Slang	M	F	Total	Percentage
1.	Cockney Rhyming	0	0	0	0%
2.	Back	4	8	12	1,3%
3.	Centre	1	0	1	0,1%
4.	Clipping/ Shortening	1	1	2	0,2%
5.	Blending	4	3	7	0,8%
6.	Compounding	21	15	36	4%
7.	Nonsense Reduplication	19	17	36	4%
8.	Acronym	195	162	357	39,8%
9.	Loan/Borrowing	124	96	250	24,5%
10.	Onomatopoeia	10	9	19	2,1%
11.	Substitution	53	59	112	12,5%
12.	Comes from or gives meaning to a standard words	29	20	49	5,5%

13.	New inventions to the establish words	24	17	41	4,6%
	Total	**488**	**410**	**898**	**-**
	Percentage	**54,3%**	**45,7%**	**-**	**100%**

The data above present the percentage of performing slang words by males is 488 occurances or 54,3%, while females is 410 occurances or 45,7%. From the results of the interview, it can also be seen that male teenagers, indeed, tend to be more aware of the use of slang. They collected 18 slang words in the interview session; while females are only 6 slang words.

CONCLUSIONS

The research focuses on the slang words used by male and female teenagers in their daily conversation at the school. It particularly emphasizes on the types of slang which were analyzed based on the theory of Potter (1975) and Khan and Illson (1985). It also investigates the gender influence on the use of slang by the teenagers.

The data analysis results reveal that there were twelve types of slang among male and female

From the result, it can be said that gender gives influence on the use of slang words by male and female teenagers. It is supported by the theory proposed by Diekman and Eagly (2000) who are argued that males have typical characteristics of authoritarian and socialistic behave while female are pious, submissive, and domesticity.

teenagers; namely *back slang, centre slang, clipping/shortening, blending, compounding, nonsense reduplication, acronyms /abreviations, loan/ borrowing, onomatopoeia, coinage slang, and subtitution slang* (Potter, 1975, and Kahn & Illson, 1985).

In addition, the findings also show that gender may influence the use of slang words which indicates that male teenagers tend to use slang words more than females. This is in line with the theories of Diekman

and Eagly (2000) who argued that, "males have typical characteristics of authoritarian and socialistic behaviour while female are pious, submissive, and domesticity".

Deals with types of slang words, there are different types of slang used by male and female teenagers, as suggested by Tannen (1990) "women and men use language differently; they are speaking different dialect, or named as genderlect". In case of that, they are also early teenagers who like to create and innovate words to be performed in their daily conversations especially in the area of Islamic boarding school, Lembang.

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