

## **The morphological process of slang words used by teenagers in Jakarta and its negative effects in their academic qualifications (a sociolinguistic study)**

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**Abstract** – The use of slang words in teenagers' life is a common in every country in the world. But in every country, each language is different in its words' formation. The sources as well as the formations of such words are different from each country. The objectives of this study are 1) to find out the lists of slang words including abusive words used by Jakarta's teenagers; 2) to analyze the morphological features of such slang words, and 3) to find out the negative impacts of using such slang words based on parents as well as school teachers' opinions. The collected data in this research was analyzed and reported descriptively. The data are encrypted from the audio-recorders, questionnaires, and also taken from the interview session. The conclusion of this research is that there are ten word-formations of slang words used by Jakarta's teenagers in their speaking with others daily. The researcher found out 558 slang words which are usually used by Jakarta's teenagers in their daily speaking with their peers. The 558 words are grouped into 10 word formation; they are reduplication (0.4%), clipping (3.9 %), onomatopoeia (4.5%), borrowing (4.8 %), other formation - backward letters and backward syllables (5.9 %), inflection (8.1 %), acronym (11.8 %), mixes / multiple processes (12.2 %), coinage (17.4 %), and blending (31 %). Out of 150 respondents – 100 school-teachers and 50 lecturers – there are 129 respondents (86%) who stated that there are negative impacts of using slang words by the students in their academic qualification in the learning process in the class they are teaching. This research is expected to be useful for all people around the world especially for the knowledge of linguists, lecturers, teachers as well as parents in order to know and understand the meaning of slang words used by teenagers in their speaking with their peers in their communication with others daily.

**Keywords:** slang words, Jakarta's teenagers, word formation, sociolinguistic study

## 1. Introduction

The use of vocabulary items in speaking to other people in daily intercourse reflects the culture of the speakers of that language. The usage of slang words especially that contains abusive words tends to become a bad communication. Nowadays, the use of slang words by teenagers with their peers in the daily conversation grows fast in Jakarta. Using slang words especially in formal conversation is not polite; in addition the speakers who use the slang words which contains abusive or rude words can also reflect a bad image of the nation or the environment where the speakers live. The use or the style of good language in communicating with others will reflect a good culture and vice versa. If people are accustomed to saying slang words, they will reflect a bad culture within their group's community. To distinguish a good and a bad language style, Gorys Keraf (2006) explained that there are three elements in the style of good language: honesty, courtesy, and interestedness.

The rapid development of human society has a great influence on the most important tool of the communication – the language. The modern way of living goes faster and the new trends are also reflected in the development of language in a form of various new words and expressions. The vocabulary as well as new expressions in language grow so rapidly caused by the modern trends in human life now days. Slang seems to be one of the most important language formations having a great influence on the development of language. Slang words are characterized by various linguistic features which reflect the speakers' way of living and using the language with emphasis on belonging to a particular group of language users.

Mulyana (2008) says that slang is the number of words or terms that have special meaning, unique, distorted or even contrary to common sense when used by people of a particular subculture. Sarwono (2004) said that slang is a typical language of the younger generation. It can be understood by almost all of the younger generation in the country that were covered by the mass media, whereas term that develop, change and grow almost daily. Hubáček<sup>3</sup> (1988) says that slang is an independent part of the national language characterised by specific denominations of non-literary strata realised in a common communication act (half-informal or informal) of people linked with identical occupational environment or interests; and used as a medium for specific communication usage, as a medium expressing a belonging to that environment or interests.” Chloupek (1974) notes a distinction between the slang and professional language<sup>4</sup> in the use of words based on expressive character; language play on words, denomination based on similarity (metaphor), words shortening or reducing compound words are common features for slang and professional language.

Eble (1996) cites McKnight (1923) and says that word slang referred to the specialized vocabulary of underworld groups and was used fairly interchangeably with the terms cant, flash, and argot. Eble stresses novelty and ephemerality as principal characteristics of slang. Comparing to general vocabulary, slang words seem to exist for a shorter time because they are either replaced by another term or provide a synonym for a word already existing in slang ... Eble also points out that a slang word can be extended to a new area of meaning referring to man's interests inventing the slang. ... Green (2002), as well as Eble, tackled the same problem about the comings and goings of the slang. “Perhaps the most formidable problem is that slang changes rapidly, so it is virtually impossible to give an accurate account of current slang items.”

Kridalaksana in Chaer (2003) stated that language is an arbitrary sound symbol system used by social groups to cooperate, communicate and to identify them. While Brown and Yule (1983) which states that the language is not just a means of communication. The two linguists claim that language in use is part of the message in a communication, which, according to Brown and Yule, is called 'transactional' and 'interpersonal'. It means that there are customs and cultures in using language as a medium or communication tool. Nababan (2013) mentioned that there are 4 classes of language functions, they are: (1) cultural function, (2) communal function, (3) individual function, and (4) educational function. The function of language in culture is as a means of cultural development, the path of cultural success, and the inventory of cultural traits. Language is a part of culture and language that enables the development of the culture itself. We learn to live in society through and with the help of language.

Sugono (2009) explained that the criteria used to observe the correct use of language is by the rules/structure of the language itself. Meanwhile, the criterion of good language use is the accuracy of choosing the language styles that suit to the communication needs (Wajdi et al., 2018 and 2019). Suryadi (2009) states that a language is a product from the language user's culture. Sapir and Whorf in Chaer (2003) states "The way of thought and culture of a society is determined or influenced by its language structure". Chomsky in Chaer (2003) argues that language studies have a close relation to culture.

Pitiria Sorokin (1928) in his book titled "*Contemporary Sociological Theories*" describes the branches of sociology quoted from the American Sociological Society, including the study of behavior and culture (*Personality and Culture*) and collective behavior. C. Kluckhohn (1953) in his book entitled '*Universal Categories of Culture*' published in Soekanto's book (2013), states that there are 7 elements of culture that are considered as an universal culture, they are 1) The tools and equipments of human life; 2) The livelihood of life; 3) Community System; 4) Language (oral and written); 5) Art; 6) Knowledge System; and 7) Religion. In those seven elements of culture mentioned above, there is a point of '*spoken and written language*' which the author chose as a topic of discussion in this study. Oral language in this case is a verbal communication tool that is directly spoken through the mouth and sound.

Morphology as a part of linguistic study has a lot of definitions from some experts. According to Katamba, morphology is the study of the internal structure of words (1993). While Indonesian linguist, Ramlan, defines morphology as another level of studying or analyzing the expression system of language which is concerned with the identification of morphemes and the ways in which they are distributed or combined into longer utterances (1992). Another definition came from Nida (1962), she explained that morphology is the study of morphemes and their arrangements in forming words. Some definitions above have the same point that is morphology is a sub discipline study from linguistics that concerns in the process of word formation. The main point of studying morphology is on how to identify morphemes and their distributions and combinations in forming words.

O'Grady and Guzman (1997) explained, "Of all units of linguistic analysis, the word is the most familiar. The most reliable defining property of words is that they are smallest free forms found in language". Many linguists agree that word is a linguistic form which may, at the same time, also be a morpheme like bed; table, go, John, will,

to; but they also be linguistic form larger than one morpheme like boyish, walked, books, slowly. The ‘word’ can also be seen as a presentation of a lexeme that is associated with certain morpho-syntactic properties such as noun, adjective, verb, adverb, pronoun, proposition, conjunction and partly syntactic properties such as tense aspect, mood, gender, number, etc. (Katamba, 1993).

According to Marchand (1992) word formation is “*The branch of the science of language which studies the pattern on which a language forms new lexical units, i.e. words*”. In addition, O’Grady and Guzman (1997) stated “*Human language makes use of a variety of operations or processes that can modify the structure of a word, either by adding some element to it or by making an internal change in order to express a new meaning or to mark a grammatical contrast (such as past versus non-past, N versus V, and so on)*”

The study of word formation is a part of Morphology. O’Grady and Guzman (1996) mentioned that the term of *Morphology* is the study of word formation and its analysis which has system of class and rules involves in it. There are different types of word formation processes of Jakartan teenagers’ slang words. Yule (1985) stated that word formation processes are the processes of forming new words or terms from the use of the old words to the new uses through some processes. Some examples of these processes are *coinage, borrowing, compounding, blending, clipping, acronyms, derivation* (prefixes, suffixes, infixes), and *multiple processes*. In addition to word formation processes, Potter (1975) mentioned one of such word processes is *back formation*. *Onomatopoeia* is also stated by O’Grady and Guzman (1996) as one of such word processes. In addition, *reduplication* is a form of word process stated by Gerber (1968).

Those word formation processes stated by the experts above are included to the processes of word formations to complete the theories of this research.

1. Coinage. Yule (1985) stated that *coinage* is the invention of totally new terms and they tend to become everyday words in the language. For example: Kleenex (facial tissue), Teflon (frying pan), etc. (Yule, 2006:53)
2. Borrowing. Yule (1985) stated that *borrowing* is the taking over of words from other languages. Throughout history, the English language has adopted a vast number of loan-words from other languages. For example: tycoon (Japanese), dope (Dutch), etc. (Yule, 2006:54)
3. Compounding. Compounding is the process of joining two separate words to produce a single form (Yule, 2006:54). For example: a) Fast food → fast (Adjective) + food (Noun). b) Textbook → text (Noun)+ book (Noun). From the examples above, the elements making up a compound can all typically occur as independent words elsewhere in the language.
4. Blending. Blending is similar to compounding. This process combines two separate forms to produce a single new term (Yule, 2006:55). It takes only the beginning of one word and joins it to the end of the other word that is typically blending.
5. Clipping. Clipping is a process of reducing some elements in a word, which occurs when a word of more than one syllable is reduced to a shorter form (Yule, 2006:55). There are two types of shortening; they are aphaesis and apocope. *Aphaesis* is new words by deleting consonant or vowel at the first syllable. Moreover, *apocope* is new words by deleting consonant or vowel at the last syllable (Potter, 1975). Clipping is a process where a polysyllabic word is eliminated its one or more syllable so that it becomes shorter (O’Grady and Guzman, 1996: 157).

6. Back Formation. Potter (1975) states that back formation is a process of revising the order of the word. Back Formation is a process that reduces a word of one type becomes a word of another type for example: donate is from donation, worker is from work (Yule, 2006:56). To make a new word by deleting actual affix from other word in a language is called *backformation* (O'Grady and Guzman, 1996:158). Here are some examples of back formation: housekeep from housekeeper, biograph from biography.
7. Abbreviation (Acronym and Initialization). Initialization is another reduction process where each letter on the word is pronounced (Hatch and Brown, 1995:210). For example: FBI (The Federal Bureau of Investigation) and NTID (National Technical Institute of the Deaf). Meanwhile, *acronym* is a word made up abbreviation, too, but the result is pronounced as a word, not as list of letters. For example: UNICEF (The United Nations Children's Fund) and NAFTA (The North American Free Trade Agreement).
8. Derivation. O'Grady and Guzman (1996) stated that *derivation* is a process which forms a word by adding an affix and has the distinct meaning and category from the base. There are four kinds of affixes found in the study, such as prefixes, suffixes, infixes, and the combination of prefixes and suffixes. Derivation is the accomplished process by means of a large number of affixes of English language which are not usually given separate listings in dictionaries (Yule, 2006:57). A few example are the elements *un-*, *mis-*, *-ful*, *-less* which appear in unhappy, misrepresent, joyful, careless.
9. Multiple Processes. Yule (2006) stated that *multiple processes* are forming some new words from old words through more than one word formation process. It is necessary for the language users to make their own innovative words by using two or more formation processes.
10. Onomatopoeia. O'Grady and Guzman (1996) stated that *onomatopoeia* is a word that has a sound that represents an aspect of the thing.
11. Reduplication. Gerber (1968) stated that *reduplication* is a duplication of sounds or words. Reduplication duplicates all or part of the base to which it applies to mark a grammatical or semantic contrast. Furthermore, there are two kinds of this kind word formation process, full reduplication and partial one. Full reduplication is the repetition of the entire word while partial reduplication copies only part of the word.

## 2. Method

### Research Design

This research uses a descriptive approach. This is in line with the opinion of Arikunto (1990) that states that descriptive research is not intended to test a particular hypothesis, but only describes slightly about a variable, a symptom or a state. In this study, the data were collected in the form of words and not in the form of numbers. Therefore, this study uses a qualitative approach. The collected data in this research will be analyzed and reported descriptively. The data are encrypted from the audio-recorders, questionnaires, and also taken from the interview session.

### Participants

The respondents are the teenagers who are living in *DKI Jakarta* province. The respondents, 200 teenagers, were selected randomly. To get more information for completing the data, the researcher also used questionnaires given to 100 respondents,

50 lecturers and school teachers and also 50 parents to get data about negative impacts of using slang words by teenagers.

#### Data Collection

This study focuses on the use of slang words in everyday communication of teenagers in Jakarta. The researcher visited several most-well known shopping centers, schools, entertainment venues, restaurants, coffee shops located in Jakarta. Researcher also conducted depth-interviews to all the respondents. The data were collected from the records of teenagers' speaking while they were speaking to their friends in their community.

#### Data Analysis

While listening to the records and from the interview session, the researcher took notes and wrote the the list of the rude-words spoken by the respondents. After writing all the list of slang words, the researcher will analyze the data by first grouping the list of the rude-words. The reseacher grouped the list of the rude-words according to the English word formation. For enriching the analysis of the data, the researcher tried to find the basic Indonesian formal words of the slang words by looking up from KBBI online (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia) and also translate those Indonesian slang words into equivalent English slang words. In this stage, the reseacher used introspective study – giving solution to a problem which is translating the Indonesian slang words into English by himself. "Introspective study is a study which investigates one's own thought and feeling, look into one self, ask oneself in which part the researcher had difficulty and what the solutions are (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2000)."

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### A. The List of Slang Words Used by Jakartans' Teenager

The researcher found out 558 slang words which are usually used by Jakartan's teenagers in their daily speaking with their peers. For all the words found in this research, please see appendixes (table 1-10) attached in this research. The researcher analyzes the 558 words' formation. See Table 1 and Graph 1 below.

Table 1 The percentage of slang words' formation used by Jakartan's teenagers

No.	Kinds of Word Formation	Word amount	%
1	Reduplication	2	0.4
2	Clipping	22	3.9
3	Onomatopoeia	25	4.5
4	Borrowing	27	4.8
5	Other Formations (Backward Letter & Backward Syllable)	33	5.9
6	Inflection	45	8.1
7	Acronym	66	11.8
8	Multiple Process/Mixed	68	12.2
9	Coinage	97	17.4
10	Blending	173	31.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>885</b>	<b>100</b>



Graph 1 The percentage of slang words' formation used by Jakartan's teenager

## B. The Morphological Process (Word Formation) of Slang Words Used by Jakartans' Teenagers

The analysis for each word formation of slang words used by Jakartan's teenagers in their daily conversation are as follows:

### 1. Reduplication (2 words)

Analysis:

No	Slang Words	Indonesian Basic Words	Equivalent Slang words in English
1	<i>Beng Beng</i>	<i>Banget</i>	Very much
2	<i>Cem-ceman</i>	<i>Cem-ceman</i>	close friend

### 2. Clipping (22 words)

Analysis:

No	Slang Words	Indonesian Basic Words	Equivalent Slang words in English
1	<i>Agan</i>	<i>Juragan</i>	Boss (the seller/the buyer)
2	<i>Dah</i>	<i>sudah</i>	finished/done
3	<i>Leh</i>	<i>boleh</i>	You may/please
4	<i>Muna</i>	<i>Munafik</i>	hypocrite/liar
5	<i>Sob</i>	<i>Sobat/sahabat</i>	best friend

### 3. Onomatopoeia (25 words)

Analysis:

No	Slang Words	Indonesian Basic Words	*Note	Equivalent Slang words in English
1	<i>A6</i>	<i>Asik</i>	English sound of number '6' /slks/	Cool!
2	<i>Beibh</i>	<i>Sayang</i>	English sound of the word 'baby' /beIbI/	Baby/dearling

3	<i>Brader</i>	<i>Brother</i>	English sound of the word 'brother' /brAdr/	Brother/bro!
4	<i>Saiko</i>	<i>Gila/maniak</i>	English sound of the word 'psycho' /sAIko/	crazy, maniac
5	<i>Cekidot</i>	<i>Silahkan dilihat</i>	English sound of the phrase 'check it out'	Check It Out!

#### 4. Borrowing (27 words)

Analysis:

No	Slang Words	Indonesian Basic Words	*Note	Equivalent Slang words in English
1	<i>Absurd</i>	<i>konyol; aneh</i>	English word	Silly/ridiculous
2	<i>Asu</i>	<i>Anjing</i>	Javanness word	Dog (*fuck/asshole/oh my...)
3	<i>Bagen</i>	<i>Biarkan saja/terserah</i>	Betawiness word	Whatever!
4	<i>Jomblo</i>	<i>Sendiri (tidak punya kekasih)</i>	Sundaness word	Single person
5	<i>Hepeng</i>	<i>Uang/duit</i>	Batakness word	money

#### 5. Other Formation - Backward letters & Backward Syllables (33 words)

Analysis:

No	Slang Words	Indonesian Basic Words	*Note	Equivalent Slang words in English
1	<i>Abru</i>	<i>Baru</i>	<i>Ba-ru</i> → <i>ab-ru</i>	new
2	<i>Agit</i>	<i>Tiga</i>	<i>Ti-ga</i> → <i>a-git</i>	three
3	<i>Eteb</i>	<i>Bete</i>	<i>Bê-te</i> → <i>e-teb</i>	bored
4	<i>Tocab</i>	<i>Bacot</i>	<i>Ba-cot</i> → <i>to-cab</i>	big mouth
5	<i>Ucul</i>	<i>Lucu</i>	<i>Lu-cu</i> → <i>u-cul</i>	funny

#### 6. Inflection (45 words)

Analysis:

No	Slang Words	Indonesian Basic Words	Equivalent Slang words in English
1	<i>Akoh/Akooh/akyu</i>	<i>Aku</i>	Me/I/myself
2	<i>Begicu</i>	<i>Begitu</i>	like that/sort of
3	<i>Buanyak</i>	<i>Banyak</i>	so many/so much
4	<i>Cuco/cucok</i>	<i>Cocok; Cakep</i>	Fit in (*handsome/beautiful)
5	<i>Dimans</i>	<i>Dimana?</i>	where?

#### 7. Acronym - (66 words)

Analysis:



No	Slang Words	Indonesian Basic Words	Equivalent Slang words in English
1	<i>ABG</i>	<i>Anak Baru Gede</i>	Schoolboy/girl; unstabled-mind kid
2	<i>BT</i>	<i>Bete</i>	Bored
3	<i>EGP</i>	<i>Emang gua pikirin</i>	I don't give a shit; I don't give a fuck; I don't give a damn care
4	<i>TBC</i>	<i>Tekanan batin cinta</i>	love pressure
5	<i>PIL</i>	<i>Pria idaman lain</i>	another secret boyfriend

#### 8. Multiple Processes/Mixed (68 words)

Analysis:

No	Slang Words	Indonesian Basic Words	*Note	Equivalent Slang words in English
1	<i>Aa Gym Gtl</i>	<i>Agak-agak Gimana Gitu Loh</i>	Blending + Derivation 'gim'	Weird
2	<i>Aida</i>	<i>I Udah</i>	Borrowing 'I' /ai/ + Clipping 'dah' dari kata dasar 'udah'	I'm done/I'm finished
3	<i>Kepo</i>	<i>Ingin Tau Segala Sesuatu</i>	Acronym + Borrowing	What a curious person! ; Knowing Every Particular Object
4	<i>Sa Ae</i>	<i>Bisa saja</i>	Clipping + derivation 'ae'	You're something else!
5	<i>amacca</i>	<i>Ah! Masa?</i>	Blending + Derivation 'cc'	really?

#### 9. Coinage (97 words)

Analysis:

No	Slang Words	Indonesian Basic Words	Equivalent Slang words in English
1	<i>Afgan</i>	<i>Afgan</i> (Singer's name from Indonesia who sings a song titled 'sadis')	Sadists
2	<i>Ajib</i>	<i>Bagus/enak</i>	Excellent; cool; awesome
3	<i>Jekpot</i>	<i>Muntah</i>	throw up/vomit
4	<i>Letoy</i>	<i>Lemah atau lemas</i>	Weak
5	<i>Unyu</i>	<i>Lucu</i>	Funny

#### 10. Blending (173 words)

Analysis:

No	Slang Words	Indonesian Basic Words	Equivalent Slang words in English
1	<i>Camen</i>	<i>Cacat Mental</i>	psycho person
2	<i>Jones</i>	<i>Jomblo Ngenes</i>	unhappy single person

3	<i>Lemot</i>	<i>Lemah Otak</i>	Stupid/retarded
4	<i>Mupeng</i>	<i>Muka pengen</i>	filthy face
5	<i>Omdo</i>	<i>Omong Doang</i>	what a liar!

C. The Negative Impacts of using slang words by the students in their academic qualification in the learning process at school and colleges.

Based on the questions given by the researcher to the lecturers and teachers as the respondents to a questioner about teachers as well as lecturers' opinions to the impact of students' usage of slang words, the researcher found out that:

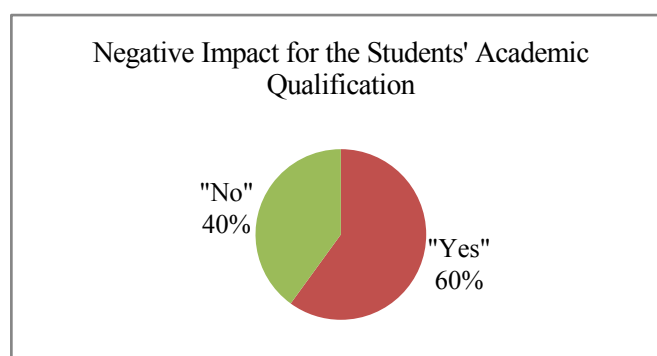
- a) Out of 150 respondents – 100 school teachers and 50 lecturers – there are 129 respondents (86%) who stated that there are negative impacts of using slang words by the students in their academic qualification in the learning process in the class they are teaching. See table below for further information;

Repondents		%
Yes	129	86
No	21	14
	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>

2) The examples of the negative impacts of using slang words, used by the students in their academic qualification in the learning process, are as follows:

- a) The students use slang words in their speaking while they are presenting materials in front of the class.
- b) The students write their assignments/report papers by using informal language. This is related to slang words because slang words are informal language. Some of the students are accustomed to using ASAP instead of write down the whole words 'as soon as possible'. Some of them use abbreviation such as 'thx' instead of writing 'thank you'. To write 'tempat' most of the students use informal writings 't4' by using the number '4' instead of 'empat' for the word 'tempat'.

The percentage of respondents' opinions about negative impacts of using slang words, used by the students in their academic qualification in the learning process, can be seen in the following graph.



Graph 2 Negative impacts for the Students' Academic Qualifications

#### 4. Conclusion

The conclusion of this research is that there are ten-word formations of slang words used by Jakartan's teenagers in their speaking with others daily. The researcher found out 558 slang words which are usually used by Jakartan's teenagers in their daily speaking with their peers. The 558 words are grouped into 10 word-formation; they are reduplication (0.4%), clipping (3.9%), onomatopoeia (4.5%), borrowing (4.8%), other formation - backward letters and backward syllables (5.9%), inflection (8.1%), acronym (11.8%), mixes/multiple processes (12.2%), coinage (17.4%), and blending (31%).

In this study of language and culture, the authors examined the use of slang words which have negative effects. Those words are often used by young people or teenagers of Indonesian people especially in Jakarta city.

This research is expected to be useful for all people around the world especially for the knowledge of linguists, lecturers, teachers as well as parents in order to know and understand the meaning of slang words used by teenagers in their speaking with their peers in their communication with others daily. This study is also expected to be useful for foreign people who come to Indonesian for their knowledge in understanding the language culture of Indonesian people especially when they come to visit Jakarta city, the capital city of Indonesia. The writer hopes that the results of this study can be used as an understanding for other countries' people and especially for Indonesia to suggest young people in using formal meaning-words in their formal speaking with others. At last, this research is highly recommended to the future researchers for continuing this study in other countries to get a deep understanding about other slang words, the characteristics, and the word formation of slang words in our society.

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