

## Slang Words Analysis Used in Little Simz's Song Lyrics entitled "*Venom*"

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**Abstract:** Slang words are often found in song lyrics, especially rap songs. This study analyzes the slang expressions used in Little Simz's song entitled "Venom". The method of analysis used in this research was descriptive qualitative. In analyzing the data, the researchers employed the framework by Kahn & Illson (1985). The results of this study show that the dominant type of slang in the song is new insight. In this song, slang is used to convey the meaning of the lyrics implicitly and explicitly to listeners, especially women. The purposes of using slang are for the singer, by using slang in the songs, she wants to express her strength and for the listeners, they can also have the same feelings with what the singer feels.

**Keywords:** little simz; rap song; slang; sociolinguistics

### RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Language is the most important tool for humans to interact with each other. Language can develop according to the times due to social situations. Language has an important role in social life because with language humans can convey goals, feelings, information and knowledge to each other. Language is a structured sound system or vowel sound sequence that is used or can be used in international communication by human groups and is fully used to express things, events, and processes that surround humans (Carol, 1961). According to Panjaitan (2017), language has a characteristic flexible and dynamic which will create new possibilities in communication, so it is impossible that language just can stop in one word and one meaning because language can change as fast as the growth of human life itself. Language in sociolinguistics is not only seen as a structure, but also as a social system, communication system and part of the culture of a particular society. Language variety is the variation of language use in a different society. In general, the function of sociolinguistics is to study the variety of languages, word choice, and use of words that are appropriate to the situation, conditions and various other factors of the interlocutor, in order to avoid inefficiencies, misunderstandings, and various other language problems. One of the sociolinguistic phenomena that we can encounter in social life is slang words. Where slang words are informal words used in certain situations by certain social groups. The purpose of using slang words is to make conversations more relaxed, intimate, and fun. According to A. Chaer and L. Agustina (2010: 67) explain that what is meant by slang is a social variation that is special and secret. This means that this variation is used by a very limited group of people, and should not be known by people outside the group. Therefore, the vocabulary used in slang is always changing. Slang is indeed more of a vocabulary field than a phonology or grammatical field.

Slang is temporal and is more commonly used by teenagers, although there are other people who use it.

Slang phenomena can be found in our social environment, such as when on campus, at home, on social media, in daily conversations, and in song lyrics. Slang can be found easily in our daily lives because slang is an informal form of a word that many people use to make conversations more fun. For example, when someone is in a hurry but her friend comes over and she says “I gotta go!”. From this example, it can be seen that the speaker uses the slang word 'gotta' which is a short form of 'have got to go'. These slang words can be used because the situation the speaker is facing is an informal situation. So that it can be said, the situation of an environment can affect language changes from formal to informal or vice versa.

Slang words can also be found in song lyrics. Usually, slang words are used to express the author's feelings. To express this, the song writer uses and chooses the right words to beautify the writing without compromising the author's goal to convey its meaning to the listeners. According to Allan and Burrige (2006) slang is colloquial and transient in nature, which is considered much inferior to informal speech, and even polite. Slang is defined as slang whose use is dominated by modern youth. Anis (2017) said that slang is an unofficial language and is not included in the standard language that is usually used by certain social groups to communicate in depth so that non-group members do not understand.

Based on the background of the problem above, this study focuses on analyzing the types, meanings, and purposes of slang words found in Little Simz songs entitled “Venom”. The researchers analyzed the types of slang words based on the theory proposed by Kahn & Illson (1985).

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Research on slang has been done previously. The first study by Putri and Zakrimal (2019) describes the types of slang words found in the song lyrics by an American singer, Mariah Carey. As a result, they found 11 types of slang words, namely etymology, coinage, borrowing, compounding, blending, clipping, backformation, conversion, acronyms, derivation, multiple processes. They concluded that the most frequently used interchangeable words in Mariah Carey's song lyrics are clipping. The second research was conducted by Yulia (2020). This research focused on the meaning of the interchangeable words found in a Canadian punk rock singer, Avril Lavigne's song lyrics on the album "Head Above Water". The findings show that she found 74 words in this selected Avril Lavigne song lyrics on “Head Above Water” album namely blending, coinage, clipping, and compounding. The third study was completed by Sudyanti, Suarnajaya, and Swandana (2018). The findings of this research include the types of slang words they find in “Step Up: All In” movie such as fresh and creative, flippant, imitative, clipping, and imitative curation. Different from the previous studies, this research focuses on a song by a British rapper, Little Simz, in terms of not only the types but also the meaning and the purposes of using slang in the song.

### 1. Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics is an interdisciplinary science between sociology and linguistics, two fields of empirical science that are very closely related. Sociolinguistics examines the relationship between language and society, which links two fields that can be studied separately, namely the formal structure of language by linguistics and the structure of society by sociology (Wardhaugh 1984: 4; Holmes 1993: 1; Hudson 1996: 2). According to Fishman (1971 in Alwasilah 2008, p. 56) sociolinguistics is the study of who speaks, what language is used, and

to whom and when he speaks. It can also be said that sociolinguistics is a science that specifically studies the problem of the relationship between language and its relation to society. Meanwhile, Kridalaksan stated, sociolinguistics is a science that studies the characteristics of various language variations, as well as the relationship between scholars and these language variations in a society (1978, p. 94). Dittmar (1976 in Chaer and Agustina 2014, p. 5) explains that in sociolinguistic research there are seven things that are the main problems in sociolinguistics, namely the social identity of the speaker, the social identity of the listeners involved in the communication process, the social environment in which the communication process takes place, analysis synchronic and diachronic of social dialects, different social judgments by speakers of the behavior of speech forms, the degree of variation in linguistic variety, and the practical application of sociolinguistic research.

## 2. Slang

Slang are words spoken in informal situations that are used generally in society. In essence, slang is not used in a particular group because the terms in slang can be known and understood by many people. Slang is used in everyday conversation in order to make the conversation more relaxed, intimate, and relaxed. According to Asri (2011: 16) the slang used is by changing a word by changing words to opposite words, looking for equivalent words, determining numbers, replacing phonemes, distributing phonemes, adding prefixes, insertions, and suffixes. The form of slang is also in the form of words, phrases, and sentences. According to González (1998:11) slang is an ever changing set of colloquial words and phrases that speakers use to establish or reinforce social identity or cohesiveness within a group or with a trend or fashion in society at large. This means that the language used in everyday conversations in groups forms an informal language that makes conversations closer. The kinds of slang are blend, acronym, new insight of the pre-existing word, and aphaeresis. The definition of these four slang words is as follows (Kahn & Illson, 1985; Salma, 2013; Zainuddin, 2017).

### a) Blending

Blend is similar to compound but parts of the words that are combined are deleted, for example, dice (dope + nice). So, blending is the process of blending two or more words by removing some letters to become a new word.

### b) Acronym

Acronyms are a combination of the initials of several syllables. For example, OMG means Oh My God, WTF means What The Fuck, LOL means Laugh Out Loud.

### c) New insight of Pre-existing words

Almost all slang consists of old words that have changed shape, or more generally, old words that have new meanings or shades of new meanings. In English, slang is not used by everyone who speaks Received Standards, or at less formal moments, slang that speaks colloquial English well. Standard slang is more flexible and picturesque than standard English. For example, fuck, shit, scatty, batty.

### d) Aphaeresis

Unlike syllable replacement and addition, syllable loss, known as aphaeresis, is not uncommon. In particular, the constraints on which it works are exactly the same as predicted by the voice error data. The abbreviation occurs at the beginning of the word and affects the stress-free syllables with reduced vowels. For example, comin' from word coming, givin' from

word giving, and nothin' from word nothing.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative method. According to Nazir (1988), descriptive method is a method in examining the status of a group of people, an object, a set of conditions, a system of thought or a class of events in the present. This study analyzes the slang found in “Venom” by means of descriptions instead of statistical procedures. To collect the data the researchers used the following steps: (1) searching the song on Spotify, (2) downloading the lyrics, (3) listening to the song and checking the lyrics carefully, and (4) coding the lyrics. Meanwhile, in analyzing the data, the researchers employed the following methods: (1) classifying the types of slang words in the song lyrics, (2) identifying the meaning of the slang words by using the Cambridge dictionary and the context of the song, (3) identifying the purposes of the song, and (4) concluding the data analysis.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the result of data analysis. The song lyrics contain 71 lines. The song tells about the resistance of women who were oppressed by the misogynist.

Table 1 The Types of Slang in “Venom”

No	Types of Slang Words	Quantity	Percentages (%)
1.	Blending	6	19,3%
2.	Acronym	1	3,2%
3.	New Insight of Pre-existing words	14	45,1%
4.	Aphaeresis	10	32,2%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100%</b>

It can be seen that the mostly used type of slang is new insight of Pre-existing words because this song is a rap genre where the use of slang words is widely used by rappers to make their songs not sound stiff or too formal and has a lot of new vocabulary that is more up-to-date to suit the listener's generation.

The next section describes the results of research related to slang words in “Venom” which include the types of slang words in the song and the meanings of slang words found in the song. Based on the types of slang words classification by Kahn & Illson (1985), the slang words in the song can be divided into blending, acronym, new insight of pre-existing words, and aphaeresis.

### Types of Slang Words

#### 1. Blending

Blend is similar to compound but parts of the words that are combined are deleted. So, blending is the process of blending two or more words by removing some letters to become a new word. Based on the analysis, blending can be found in words such as *wanna*, *tryna*, *gotta*, *ain't*,

*overseas, niggas.*

Excerpt 1

*I don't wanna ever come down from my high (line 6)*

The slang word found in the lyrics above is wanna. The word is a short form of want to.

Excerpt 2

*Mid waves and open seas, quit coastin' overseas (line 11)*

The slang word found in the lyrics above is foreign. The word is a short form of over + seas.

Excerpt 3

*Tryna get me out spot (line 25)*

The slang word found in the above lyrics is tryna. The word is a short form of trying to.

## 2. Acronym

Acronyms are a combination of the initials of several syllables. There is only one word that uses acronym. It will be described as follows.

Excerpt 4

*Here for, it's the day in the life of OG's (line 47)*

In this song, one form of acronym is found, namely OG which stands for Original Gangster.

## 3. New Insight of Pre-existing words

Almost all slang consists of old words that have changed shape, or more generally, old words that have new meanings or shades of new meanings. In English, slang is not used by everyone who speaks Received Standards, or at less formal moments, slang that speaks colloquial English well. Standard slang is more flexible and picturesque than standard English. In this category, there are words that belong this category, such as *fuck, pussy, shit, scatty, batty, prick, dunk, sucks, eratic, venom, flesh, mad, chill, insane.*

Excerpt 5

*don't fuck with the deadly (line 10)*

Fuck can be used for every word and every situation but generally it is used to express annoyance about something.

Excerpt 6

*Pussy, you sour (line 16)*

Pussy is a slang word meaning female genitalia or vagina.

Excerpt 7

*Some kind of trauma and shit (line 28)*

This word is used to express something great and cool but it can also be used to describe something ugly or bad.

#### 4. Aphaeresis

Unlike syllable replacement and addition, syllable loss, known as aphaeresis, is not uncommon. In particular, the constraints on which it works are exactly the same as predicted by the voice error data. The abbreviation occurs at the beginning of the word and affects the stress-free syllables with reduced vowels. From the analysis, aphaeresis is found in words as follows: *comin'*, *coastin'*, *givin'*, *feelin'*, *talkin'*, *dealin'*, *nothin'*, *goin'*, *'round*.

Excerpt 8

*If you comin', come at me directly (line 8)*

The slang word found in the above lyrics is *comin'*. This slang is taken from the word coming.

Excerpt 9

*quit coastin' overseas (line 11)*

The slang word found in the above lyrics is *coastin'*. This slang is taken from the word coasting.

Excerpt 10

*Never givin' credit (line 17)*

The slang word found in the above lyrics is *givin'*. This slang is taken from the word giving.

#### The Meaning of Slang Words

The following section describes the meanings of the slang words found in “Venom” song.

##### 1. Ain't

*Ain't* is usually used to abbreviate the auxiliary in the negative form, such as is *not*, *am not*, *are not*. Can also abbreviate *have not*, and *has not*. In *Venom* the word *ain't* can be found in the lyrics *"I ain't talkin' big amounts"*. In this sentence it can be interpreted that the singer uses the word to someone who gives a feeling of trauma and physical pain. The singer asks the person to pay what she feels by not using a large amount of money but with deeds.

##### 2. Fuck

*Fuck* in this song has the meaning of referring to someone and referring to something. For example, “Have sex with (someone)” and “ruin or damage (something)”. In the lyrics, the word *fuck* is often found, for example in the sentence *"Soul's in a place even I can't get to, don't fuck with the deadly"*. In that sentence, the word *fuck* has the meaning of 'don't play around', meaning that when acting one must consider all the risks that will be faced.

##### 3. Scatty

*Scatty* means someone who often forgets things or behaves in a silly way. In the lyric *"Moving scatty, all erratic and shit"* found in *Venom's* song, it means that the singer wants to do something to get a clue but all the efforts she does are chaotic and erratic.

#### 4. Pussy

*Pussy* is primarily used to talk about sex whether it's the sexual organ or the woman attached to it, or some conflated and generalized combination of the two. However, the lyric "*Never givin' credit where it's due 'cause you don't like pussy in power*" has the meaning of 'Girls power'. Because *pussy* is a slang word that refers to women, the sentence "*pussy in power*" can be called "Girls in power". The sentence is directed at the Misogyny because the previous sentence "*Never givin' credit where it's due 'cause you don't like pussy in power*" shows a dislike for women.

#### 5. Batty

The word *batty* found in the sentence "*Niggas pussy, lookin' batty and shit*" is aimed at the singer's opponent and it intends to provoke anger because the next sentence that appears is "*Oh, you mad? Then come at me, you prick*".

#### 6. Shit

*Shit* is a common variant in British and Irish English. As a slang term, *shit* has many meanings, including: nonsense, foolishness, something of little value or quality, trivial and usually boastful or inaccurate talk or a contemptible person. It could also be used to refer to any other noun in general or as an expression of annoyance, surprise or anger. Meanwhile, in this song, the lyric "*Niggas pussy, lookin' batty and shit*", *shit* means *damn*. The word is used by singers to represent the hate speech of the misogynist directed at singers or it can also be called bad words uttered by the oppressors.

#### 7. Flesh

The term *flesh* means food from the *meat*, *gross body*, or *body*. But the lyric "*I don't wanna dunk nobody in the flesh*" means that the singer will not get anyone into her troubles and she'll sort it out herself.

#### 8. Venom

Literally, "Venom" means "poison of a snake". However, in the lyrics of this song, the word *venom* is intended for losers who blaspheme Simbiatu, the singer and author of this song. She is often looked down because she comes from the black race who often gets discrimination and bad treatment. This lyric is related to the previous lyric "Never givin' credit where it's due 'cause you don't like pussy in power", which means snake venom is deadly poison. Snakes emit poison because they are attacked by enemies. It's the same with discriminatory treatment of singers, in the lyrics "'cause you don't like pussy in power" it means that the discriminatory actors don't like it if the black race has the same social position as them.

#### Purposes of Using Slang Words in "Venom" Song

The use of slang words in the song *Venom* has purposes. First, for the singer, by using slang in the songs, she wants to express her strength. She wants to prove that women are capable of being leaders and have the right to uphold equality between men and women. Women have the right to freedom in any way. In the lyrics many slang words are used, this aims to show closeness to fellow races. So, it can be concluded that the use of slang in this song is to show the similarity of status so that they can be more familiar with each other.

Second, for the listeners, they can also have the same feelings with what the singer feels. The

target of this song is women who feel oppressed by the misogynist. With this song listeners can be motivated to get equality.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the slang words used by Little Simz in the “Venom” song lyric, it was found that new insight of pre-existing words. The slang words have various meanings and these meanings depend on the context when the words are used in the song. Furthermore, the slang words are used to express the meaning of the lyrics implicitly and explicitly to listeners, especially women and black people who become minorities. The purposes of using slang can be related to the singer and the listener or the target of the song. For the singer, by using slang in the songs, she wants to express her strength. As for the listeners, the song is expected to make the listeners have the same feelings as what the singer feels.

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