

## The Impact of Social Media on the Use of English Slang

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### ABSTRAK

Pertumbuhan media sosial telah mempengaruhi penggunaan bahasa gaul Inggris di kalangan anak muda secara signifikan, terlepas dari latar belakang pendidikan mereka. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana media sosial memfasilitasi penyebaran bahasa gaul dengan cepat, menjadikannya tren yang umum di kalangan remaja. Metode yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dalam bentuk wawancara, di mana dua peserta dari latar belakang yang berbeda diambil. Peserta pertama adalah seorang mahasiswa jurusan Bahasa Inggris, sedangkan peserta kedua adalah orang biasa yang tidak memiliki latar belakang Bahasa Inggris. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa meskipun kedua peserta mengenali singkatan umum seperti "btw," "otw," "lol," "omg," dan "fyp," pemahaman dan penggunaan bahasa gaul mereka berbeda. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa bahasa gaul Inggris digunakan tidak hanya di media sosial tetapi juga di lingkungan tempat tinggal, sekolah, dan perguruan tinggi. Orang dengan latar belakang Bahasa Inggris dianggap berpengetahuan, sementara yang lain mungkin dianggap terlalu terpengaruh oleh gaya Barat. Meskipun ada perbedaan ini, bahasa gaul Inggris tetap menjadi bagian penting dari penggunaan bahasa kontemporer, dihargai karena inklusivitas dan fleksibilitasnya..

**Kata kunci : Social media, slang, teknologi**

### ABSTRACT

The proliferation of social media has significantly influenced the use of British slang among young people, regardless of their educational background. This study examines how social media facilitates the rapid spread of slang, making it a prevalent trend among teenagers. The method used is descriptive qualitative in the form of interviews where 2 participants from different backgrounds are taken. The first participant is someone who is an English student, while the second participant is an ordinary person who has no basic English. The findings showed that, although both participants recognized common acronyms such as "btw," "otw," "lol," "omg," and "fyp," their understanding and use of slang differed. The study shows that English slang is used not only on social media but also in residences, schools and colleges. People with an English background are considered knowledgeable, while others may be considered too influenced by Western styles. Despite these differences, British slang is still an important part of contemporary linguistic usage, valued for its inclusiveness and flexibility.

**Keywords : Social media, slang, technology**

### INTRODUCTION

Language is so embedded in human life that it is an essential tool for communication that allows people to speak in a variety of ways. Language plays an important role in facilitating these interactions, be it to entertain, ask for something, convey or seek information, or fulfill various other needs (Istiqomah, 2019). Sociolinguistics is a field that studies how language functions in society. It studies how people interact

with each other through spoken and nonverbal language. Interpreting language in this context is crucial, (Yuniar et al., 2023) argues, because language helps humans navigate their social world, bridge distances, and build relationships in different places and situations.

The growth of social media, especially English slang, has changed language quite drastically. Slang is informal speech that is specific to a group of people and is particularly used by teens to communicate with one another (Evadewi

& Jufrizal, 2023). According to Sherefetdinova, slang is presenting shoptalk terms can be considered a response to necessity. Established words are used too often and lose their meaning, while new and vivid words appear as replacements (Sherefetdinova, 2023.). The use of informal English or slang on social media is one very visible aspect of this phenomenon as platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok become increasingly important in daily communication. According to Budiasa et al. (2021) in his journal titled "Slang in Indonesian Social Media," social media has played an important role in spreading slang among teenagers. Budiasa et al.'s research shows that slang has become a trend among Indonesian youths and one of the factors contributing to its spread is the use of social media. By enabling the rapid and real-time exchange of information, these platforms allow slang to spread quickly and widely. Linguists who want to know how digital communication shapes language patterns have been interested in this phenomenon.

People who don't study linguistics might think that words are the smallest part of language, words themselves undergo certain processes before becoming words (Hafiza & Rosa, 2020). From a linguistic point of view, the influence of social media on English slang is significant. Various diverse voices can contribute to vocabulary through social media, which has democratized language development. It increases the inclusion and representation of slang from different communities and subcultures. In fact, the interactive nature of social media encourages rapid acceptance and development of new slang as users are involved in the process of creation, use and adaptation. Linguists study these trends to understand language change and know the social factors that drive language innovation. Social media not only preserves slang temporarily, but also provides an important archive for linguistic research, providing a picture of a changing language in real time.

Building upon Budiasa et al.'s findings, this research aims to explore the perspectives on English slang among individuals with an English education background compared to ordinary people. The goal is to understand how these different groups perceive and use slang, and how their educational backgrounds influence their understanding and attitudes towards slang in social media. By comparing the knowledge and

perceptions of English department students with those of ordinary social media users, this study seeks to shed light on the broader implications of slang usage in digital communication and its impact on language evolution.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The researcher collected data through interviews and provided a qualitative perspective on how social media influences English slang. The researcher interviewed two participants from different environments and backgrounds to ensure a variety of perspectives. The first participant was an English major, specifically from the class of 2022. As part of an academic environment that focuses on English. In contrast, the second participant did not come from an academic environment and was not very good at English. Their experiences and exposure to social media slang will provide a different perspective on how non-academic people interact with and integrate slang into their language.

The interview instrument was created by the researcher itself through close observation. There were five questions asked to the participants:

1. What do you know about English slang?
2. What English slang do you often use and hear?
3. What makes English slang on social media so interesting and fun?
4. Other than on social media, where do you usually use English slang?
5. How does using English slang on social media affect the way you communicate with your friends?

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### *Findings*

The following are the interview results of the two participants who have provided answers to 5 questions relating to the knowledge and perceptions between students and ordinary people regarding the use of English slang on social media.

1. Participants' understanding of English slang.

The first thing the researchers asked was what they knew about English slang.

*"I know a little about English slang and sometimes don't realize that the things I often say and hear are actually English slang."*

According to the first participant (P1) who is a student of the English department, she knows a little about English slang and sometimes does not realize that the things she often says and hears include English slang.

*"I know about English slang, but often don't realize that it includes English slang."*

while the second participant (P2) who is an ordinary person said that, if she just knows about English slang but often does not realize that it includes English slang.

From these two participants it can be concluded that, they know enough about what English slang is and they sometimes do not realize that what they say and hear everyday is included in English slang.

slang in the realm of social media is very impactful for young people now whether they are a student from an English education background or just an ordinary person who is active in current trends and social media. This is in accordance with the journal (Budiasa et al., 2021) entitled slang language in Indonesian social media, that Slang has become a trend among teenagers and one of the factors that has contributed to spreading this out is social media.

Meanwhile based on Tursunovich's article where he provides important insights into the complexities of linguistic evolution, social dynamics, and identity construction in the context of contemporary society (Tursunovich, 2024.). Moreover, his journal concludes that slang is a multifaceted and growing aspect of contemporary English usage, reflecting a variety of sociolinguistic roles and broader cultural dynamics. Understanding the significance of slang expands our understanding of language dynamics and offers a perspective for analyzing the complex relationship between language, culture, and society.

2. The participants identify the English slang they frequently use and hear.

The researcher asked the participants to mention any English slang that they often use and hear and asked them to explain the meaning of the word.

*"Sure. Some that I often use are "Lol" laugh out loud that's mean laughing out loud, "btw" by the*

*way that's mean by the way, "otw" on the way, that's mean you are really on your way but now many people misuse it, "idk" I don't know that's mean don't know anything the topic, and "fyp" for your information, but I only know the mention without knowing the meaning."*

P1 mentioned some English slang words that she often uses, namely Lol, btw, otw, idk, fyp. Lol stands for laugh out loud which means laugh out loud. "btw" stands for by the way which means by the way when we want to express something. "Otw" stands for on the way which means on the way, according to her now many people blame the meaning. Many people call otw when they just want to take a shower or just woke up, even though the actual use of otw is when we are heading for a trip. "Idk" stands for I don't know which means don't know, some people already know the meaning. "Fyp" stands for for your information but she only knows the mention without knowing the meaning.

*"Sure. Some that I know are "btw" by the way it's mean by the way, "lol" laugh out loud it's mean laughing out loud, "idk" I don't know it's mean just don't know, "omg" oh my god it's mean oh my god or oh my gosh, and "otw" on the way but I often use it when I'm just getting ready or about to take a shower. "*

Meanwhile, P2 mentioned some English slang that she knew, namely btw, lol, idk, omg, otw and some more but she did not know whether it was English slang or not. "Btw" is a word that she often uses in everyday life such as, "uh btw today..." she also knows the extension of btw which is by the way which means by the way. She uses the word "idk" a lot when chatting. She knows the word idk as I don't know, which means I don't know. As for "lol", she doesn't actually know what it stands for but she knows that it means laughing out loud. "Omg" stands for oh my god which means oh my god or oh my gosh. "Otw" stands for on the way but in the sense that she uses it when she is just getting ready or going to take a shower.

In this case, it can be concluded that, from the two participants, the English slang they know on average is an acronym form. English slang itself they actually know but they are less aware of the use of the word. When they want to mention slang, they think of acronyms like btw, otw, lol, omg, fyp and so on. Though English slang is not just an acronym but can be from expressions or basic English such as introductions. The first participant

although did not know much about English slang but she could explain the meaning and purpose of the English slang used appropriately. While the second participant, she knew English slang but only knew and did not know the real meaning. According to the article written by Marhamah (2024) said that slang also showed a change in how language had become less formal but more communicative for digital needs through social media such as Instagram (Indra, 2024). Slang: For example, many users use slang words like "LOL", "BTW", "OTW", "IDK", and OMG etc but they do not even know the meaning of such or why it is used. While slang can assist in interaction, issues like potential misinterpretations and damaging impacts on formal language skills are there. But again, both journals note that social media is an important influencer of language change and linguistic innovation another signifier of the ever-evolving nature of communication across time as we hurdle through this digital age.

This study also related to the results of Gorica's research, which emphasized various patterns in the formation of modern English slang blends like "LOL", "BTW", "OTW""IDK", and OMG (Tomić, 2019) . This research found that many slang blends are created by combining word-initial parts with word-final parts, a pattern that contributes to the diversity of slang formation. These blends often violate traditional morphological grammatical rules, causing morphotactic vagueness that corresponds to the communicative function of slang, especially when outsiders cannot understand the language of a particular group. The complexity and ambiguity in slang blends supports the idea that slang, including acronyms and other forms, can be a tool for creating communication within unusual groups.

3. The reason why English slang on social media so interesting and fun.

The researcher asked what makes English slang on social media interesting and fun.

*"It's very interesting and fun because the way of expressing it is unique and doesn't require using a long sentence. For example, we don't need to say "I don't know," just "idk" and people already understand what it means."*

P1 mentioned that of course it is very interesting and fun because the way of expressing it is very unique and does not use a short acronym, like we don't need to say i don't know just idk people already know what it means and understand.

*"I was initially interested because one of the influencers I like often uses words that include English slang. I followed their habit and it eventually became my habit too."*

Meanwhile, P2 revealed that she was initially interested because one of the influencers she liked often used words that included English slang and she followed it and eventually became a habit. This habit is what she ended up using in her daily life. In conclusion, English slang is very interesting and fun for its users.

Slang can appear in any language, especially when it comes to informal conversation (Mulyanti et al., 2023). Influenced by surrounding cultures, societies, and generations, the language is often found in casual speech. Slang not only makes complementary language lively and creative, but it can also make it fall flat - in this case, it would be meaningless to those who don't know the meaning of many of its constructions. It is important to remember that sometimes it is impossible to forget what needs to be said normally, and slang will remain the only answer. In fact, in the latter case, it can be the basis for a solid shared lingua. Often, it is difficult for a person to "switch" from one to another simply because he does not understand from what state he was taught what language is currently taught. We can say that slang shows its own evolution within itself; it is its cause, and it is in its interest to change it.

4. Other than on social media, Participants typically use English slang in certain situations.

The researcher asked them where else they use English slang other than on social media.

*"Besides social media, I use it when hanging out with friends. As an English major student, I feel we should at least use a little English in our social circles."*

P1 stated that apart from social media, she uses it when she is hanging out with her friends. Besides that, according to her, as a student majoring in English, we should at least use English even a little bit in our friendship circle.

*"I usually use it in my neighborhood and sometimes when talking to friends."*

Meanwhile, P2 said that she usually uses it in the neighborhood and sometimes when talking to her friends. Therefore, English slang can not only

be used on social media but can also be used outside of it such as the home environment, school, campus.

According to the May's journal (Derioh et al., 2023) that English slang is not only used on social media but also in informal environments such as homes and schools. The study found that acronyms and misspellings are the most frequently used characteristics of urban English slang in verbal and written communication. Many respondents continue to use slang to communicate with friends, family and colleagues, despite concerns that slang use can have a negative impact on one's English proficiency. The results demonstrate the use of slang beyond social media and emphasize that English slang is often used in informal daily life, as reported by the first and second participants of the study.

Ruba's journal also entitled "Strategies Subtitlers Use in Rendering English Slang Expressions Into Arabic" shows that slang is not only used on social media but also in wider contexts, such as at home, school, and campus, she emphasizes the complexity of subtitling slang because it is often considered a low language and often has no direct equivalent in other languages (Hashish, 2022). This shows that slang is not only used on social media but also in wider contexts, reflecting the wider challenges of conveying slang. Therefore, the use of English slang in different environments reflects the difficulties faced in translating and understanding slang in various contexts.

5. The effect the way they communicate with friends by using English slang on social media.

The researcher asked the use of English slang on social media affect the way they communicate with their friends.

*"The influence is that we get new vocabulary. Using these words makes us look more trendy and cool, especially as an English major student. People will think we are smart because we know the meaning and purpose of these words."*

P1 explained that of course from this influence we get new vocabulary. When using these words, it looks more trendy and cool, especially as one of the students majoring in English because in the eyes of people, they will look smart because they know the meaning and purpose.

*"The impact depends on each person's response. Some people I meet think it's normal or even ask what the words mean. However, some judge it negatively, like too english or arrogant to use English."*

Meanwhile, P2 said that the impact will depend on each person who responds. Because there are some people she meets when using English slang even in jugde, "pretend English" and so on, but not all of them are so there are those who consider it normal or even ask what the meaning of her words is. It can be concluded that the use of English slang has a variety of different impacts.

The "publish or perish" principle in higher education, according to Fan's journal, suggests that responses to certain phenomena, such as Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), depending on individual viewpoints (kun, 2018). English slang on social media is the same. Slang, according to the first participant of the study, makes them look trendy and smart, especially to English students. The second participant, however, found that the impact of slang varies: some people appreciate it, others may find it excessive or pretentious. The use of slang in communication has also received mixed responses, such as SSCI, which is perceived differently by academics in different countries. This shows how certain practices are accepted and valued in various social contexts.

### **Discussion**

The findings suggest that slang on social media has a significant influence on young people today, regardless of their background in English schooling or their regular involvement in current events and social media. This is in line with the journal article (Budiasa et al., 2021) titled "Slang language in Indonesian social media," which claims that social media is one of the things that has helped slang become popular among youths. This is a result of teens' adoption of social media as a new way of life, where they may interact with groups that share their interests, jobs, hobbies, and other activities. They are less conscious of the word's use, although they do know English slang in general. Moreover, Azimov's thesis states that social media such as Instagram and TikTok, which operate as centers of language invention and creativity, have a revolutionary effect on the development of slang among young people (Shokhrukh, 2024). Through friendship relations, algorithmic distribution and visual culture, these platforms create changes that reflect larger

dynamics across society. In addition, Azimov also explored how these language changes will affect language policy, education and intergenerational communication. The discussion provided valuable insights into how language will evolve in the digital age.

They think of acronyms like btw, otw, lol, omg, fyp, and so on when they wish to discuss slang. This is According to article written by Winarto states that alphabetism is closely related to the process of creating acronyms and significant pronunciation differences (Winarto, 2019.). For example, "BTW" stands for "By The Way", and "FYI" stands for "For Your Information", each with the first letter of each word to form a single term that is pronounced as a phonetic unit. This practice is commonly used in writing and speaking. It shows how acronyms can make their way into everyday language beyond internet slang. On the contrary together, English slang encompasses more than only acronyms; it can also come from simple English phrases like introductions. When pressed to clarify the significance and intent behind utilizing the slang terms they previously described, there is yet another distinction. Naturally, non-native English speakers simply adopt the trend and use it in their daily lives without understanding its true significance. Unlike others who are fluent in English, she naturally understands the meaning behind the slang word because she has learnt it and it is appropriate. English slang can also be used outside of social media, such as at home or during get togethers with friends. The way that English slang is received differs depending on who is hearing it. Of course, the fact that she speaks English means that he must be intelligent for those with an English background. Even though they merely follow the current trends, it will be claimed of ordinary people that they are excessively English or conceited, but there are also individuals who receive appreciation for it.

## CONCLUSION

The use of English slang on social media is very significant for today's generation of young people; this influence extends beyond educational backgrounds and reaches everyone who actively follows trends. slang has become a common style among teenagers and is heavily promoted through social media. Young people may be familiar with English slang, which they recognize by acronyms such as "btw", "otw", "lol", "omg", and "fyp", but

they may not understand its wider usage, which includes everyday phrases and expressions. Interesting and fun English slang has spread to environments such as homes, schools and campuses, beyond online interactions. Those who speak English are considered knowledgeable, while casual users may be considered too westernized or just following trends. The impact is varied. English slang is still valued and used in everyday communication, demonstrating its important role in modern linguistics.

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