AN ANALYSIS OF SLANG WORDS ABBREVIATION IN AMERICAN CAPTION ON INSTAGRAM: A SOCIOLINGUISTICS APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

This research is a study of language phenomena that occurs in social media. Instagram users often take action to upload pictures, videos, and memes by adding text and in English called 'Caption'. The caption implies a youth style that is abbreviated and practical. The language style is researched and there is the use of slang. The purpose of this study was to find out the construction and meaning of slang.The reason for using slang language found in the caption used by American on Instagram. Regarding this phenomenon, the researcher is interested discussing the phenomenon of abbreviated slang words found in the caption on Instagram social media. Furthermore, this study is a study qualitative descriptive method. The data is taken from Instagram accounts in a certain period of time. Data was collected by researchers for two months from middle of March to middle of May. The data collected is qualitative data. The data collection method used in this research is the Record method. The data analysis method used in this research is the method of matching and Agih. The data presentation method used in this research is an informal method. Referring to the three methods, the researcher used the Sudaryanto theory.

Keywords: Abbreviation, Caption, Slang

INTRODUCTION

In everyday life, communication cannot be separated from the formal and informal language. Slang is an informal language (words or phrases) that can be considered as a stylish language to create a style of a group or community. This opinion is inspired by Chaer and Agustina (1995:) stated that slang is a secret language held by community or groups that are not owned by other group. In other words, slang is a social variation that is privileged and confidential (p. 87-88). Slang words invade and dominate the language of young people nowadays quickly. Some slang words are not updated and some are updated for long periods. Before the mass media, slang words (terms of words and phrases) invaded the language slowly and largely by word of mouth.

Lately, there is a new fact that the use of slang words has become an abbreviation. According to Merriam Webster (1991) Abbreviation is a shortened form of a written word or phrase used in place of the whole word or phrase (p. 19). For example, '*ACC*' abbreviated from the word '*account*' and '*ASDFGHJKL*' abbreviated from a sentence '*i am bored*'. Those examples are indicated as a new language and they have their own style. Those examples are equated into acronym but actually, an acronym is part of the abbreviation. In other words, an abbreviation is used to refer to a shortened form of a word or phrase and become a most shortened form. Based on those examples, slang words in an abbreviation form are used to save space and time. Slang words in abbreviation form also avoid repetition of long words and phrases.

In connection to the examples above, slang words in abbreviation form can be found on Instagram as a caption. The researcher found that the American captions have many variations. Sandra Grauschorf (2016) said that caption is a type of metadata tag used on social network and services which make it easier for users to find messages with a specific content and theme. Caption becomes mark of non-standard language that is used on informal style is slang language (p. 01). A caption is more complex and instantaneous for Instagram users to make their words and they also can enjoy photos, videos, memes or any shares on Instagram. In fact, sometimes those shares are not relatable with their captions.

Slang words phenomenon has previously been studied by several experts. Kolowich (2014) in *Slangs and Gender: A Sociolinguistic Perspective.* The second journal is Egistiliani, R, Wahya (2015) with *P Language Wordplay by teenagers on Twitter in 2011-2013; A Sociolinguistics Study*. Slang has also conducted in a thesis by Suwarsih (2012) with thesis titled *Slang word used in 'Brooklyn Finest' Movie by Antoine Fuqua; A Sociolinguistics Analysis* (2012). The other research conducted by Sri Wahyuni (2008) with thesis titled *An Interpretation of slang language in Ocean Eleven movie*.

In contrast to previous research, that more widespread from Twitter, movies, and daily conversations, this research is more focused on Instagram. This research is concentrated on explaining the construction and meaning of the abbreviated slang words in American caption. The researcher tried to explain how American language is various that can be proved with their caption. According to Finegan (2008) stated that language varies from one social group to another social group, from one situation to another situation, and from one place to another place (p. 330). These facts and the consequences are the reason of the researcher more emphasize on how the effect of slang on written language using the perspective of sociolinguistics approach as a benchmark.

Furthermore, the popularity of slang is important to be an observation due to America (USA) is a big country. American can be the most influential as community or group in developing the scope of slang language. Slang words in abbreviation form break the rules of language which have been used and preserved. Instagram users which are not American realized that American captions are harder to be understood. The meaning of American captions has to be learned by the other users from a different country. In fact, slang words abbreviation on American's caption can be a boomerang due to lack of knowledge about the variation of slang. The researcher has saved and explained some list of American captions from Instagram pictures as consideration:

As an example from the owner of an American Instagram that uploaded selfie picture with a somber face and the caption is *"Don't disturb! ASDFGHJKL."* The data is identified the use of slang words. This data type consist of A-S-D-F-G-H-J-K-L is nine letters that stand for I'm Bored. These nine letters of data are composed of only two words that the meaning is she/he is bored at that time. This type is used to show the feeling.

The example comes from the owner of an American Instagram uploaded his togetherness picture with family and the caption is *"Go home ASAP for XOXO"*. The data is identified the use of slang words. This data type consists of A-S-A-P is four letters. These letters same as the data which are composed of four words that stand for As Soon As Possible. Similar to previous data X-O-X-O is four letters, although composed of four letters but only stand for Hugs and Kisses.

From those examples and pictures, the researcher found that the meaning of the data is relatable with the phenomenon. The reader cannot understand what is the meaning of that abbreviation without seeing the uploaded picture and looking for the meaning from other sources. Kinds of abbreviation words such as ASAP refer to abbreviation. The Abbreviation is words derived from the initials of several words. But on the other side, sometimes slang words can be identified in a new form derived from the initials such as ASDFGHJKL and XOXO. In this example, slang words abbreviation is coming from the creation of the users of slang words.

Based on the case, the facts, and those data, the researcher interested with the problems through on this phenomenon to review the problems about how is the construction and the meaning of slang words in abbreviation form that appears in American captions on Instagram. As detailed discussion and deeper understanding, the researcher is needed conducting more through on this phenomenon to review the types of slang words.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Sociolinguistics

The meaning of sociolinguistics according to (Holmes, 2000) is a term that refers to the study of the relationship between language and society, and how language is used in multilingual speech communities (p. 05). The relation of slang and sociolinguistic in the use of informal words and that are not considered standard in language but may be considered more acceptable when used socially. The focuses of Sociolinguistics such as investigating the relationship of language and society, focus on language use, social context such as topic, people interacted, and social background.

Sociolinguists approach language as an open system interacting with a variety of factors in a group or community. Wardhaugh (2006) stated that 'the sociolinguists' aim is to move towards a theory which provides a motivational account of the way language used in a community, and the choice of people make when they use language (p. 16). Therefore, people language is influenced by the social norms and cultural patterns in a community or group. Community or group considers factors such as the social background of both the addresser and the addressee; age, gender, social class, ethnic background and the context and manner of the communication.

Slang

After reading some materials and references from any source, the researcher took a conclusion about slang. Slang is the use of informal words and expressions that are not considered standard in a given language but may be considered more acceptable when used socially. This opinion supported by many experts that are defined the essential of slang.

Definition of Slang

Here, Partridge (1979) stated that slang language comes from Norway, '*Slenja-ord'*, which means the language of insult or as unofficial language varieties, and not raw seasonal nature (p. 02).

Regarding experts definitions, Adams (2009) said that the speaker uses slang in order to achieve social dynamics with people to whom he/she is speaking and slang outlines social spaces, and attitudes towards slang helps identify and construct social groups and identity (p. 57). Slang describes words or phrases that used instead of more everyday terms among younger speakers and other groups with special interests. It is often used to identify with one's peers and, although it may be common among young people, it is used by people of all ages and social groups. The use of slang begins when we first learn English.

Additional opinion, Adams (2009) also stated that slang is not slang until someone recognizes it to be slang (p. 62). It means that he addressee must be able to recognize the speaker's intent and to determine that what are hearing is slang. That is it did not have to be understood by other community. The words of slang always change and temporal. In related with Holmes, stated that people in a society may speak some varieties of language in accordance to different social climates they meet. People should understand well about situation around. It is important in choosing appropriate language that will be used, formal style or non-formal one. The use of slang language can be affected by some social factors such as age, gender, status, etc. Slang is another area of vocabulary which reflected a person's age.

However, those are the sociolinguistics tool that can help us take command of any conversation or understand any publication. Today, slang words are very popular in social media. But, how do we use slang effectively and intelligently? Firstly, we must be extremely cautious when we use any slang, though it is accepted by all users of social media. Therefore, slang words must be known and understood, but only used carefully. Due to globalization, there is no sharp divide between slang expressions in most English-speaking countries. Slang words variation has many types that can be discussed.

History of Slang

This research used assumes from other source that the first time of appearing of slang in 16th century in British. It was created a new kind of speech used by criminals that mostly in saloons and gabling houses. It only used by a particular groups such us criminals, thieves, gabling, etc. in the 17th century slang is fill of figurative language. In this century the differences of American Culture had begun to influence the English-speaking population and slang started to expand. During the 18th century slang was thought as incorrect usage of English and was considered forbidden. Then, in the 19th century slang was grown up. The first slang dictionary has produced in this century.

Internet and Society Slang

Slang can be divided into some types. They are Internet Slang, Cockney Slang, Public House Slang, Workmen Slang, Tradesmen slang, Commerce Slang, Publicity Slang, Medical Slang, The Church, Public School and Universities, Society Slang, Art Slang, the Theatre, Circus Live, Soldiers, Yiddish, and Cant. Every social community and group use some types of slang, and by association, slang words become property of the community and group, something that defines them in certain way. Even though internet and society slang usually has a big impact but group or community that use these slang types do not realize that the way they speak differs from the way that their predecessors spoke.

Based on Partridge (1979) slang develops most freely in groups with a strong realization of group activity and interest. The group which slang mostly can be found in social media is Internet and Society slang (p. 148). Internet slang (shorthand-speak, net-speak, or chat-speak) refers to various types of slang used by different people on the internet. In other opinion, according to Partridge (1979) about society slang that refers to slang in society and in all close corporations, groups, and sections, society slang tends to develop in proportion to the degree of its own exclusiveness (p. 214). In here, internet and society slang are commonly used in daily speaking or texting and socially connected.

Further, explaining more about internet slang that have relation with abbreviated slang words phenomenon. Shortening

(abbreviation) is the most productive way of word-building in internet especially social media. These slang words are whole phrases and words. Of course, there are abbreviations of special Internet terms. As the explained before, according to Merrriem Webster (1991) Abbreviation is a shortened form of a written word or phrase used in place of the whole word or phrase (p. 19). The abbreviation is often equated with acronym but actually, the acronym is part of the abbreviation. In other words, abbreviation is used to refer to a shortened form of a word or phrase and become initial letters.

Part of abbreviation is acronym. Both abbreviation and acronym are used to refer to a shortened form, but an acronym is a shortened form of a phrase and made up from existing words. According to Merriam Webster, an acronym is a word formed from the initial letter or letters of each of the successive parts or major parts of a compound term. This component may be individual letters or parts of words. In English and most other languages, such acronym historically had limited use, but they became much more common in the 20th century.

Abbreviations are a type of word formation in the process, and they are viewed as a sub-type of blending. The online practice or the user of social media is to refer to shorthand, initial or abbreviations as acronyms. The users of social media think that shorthand terms are in fact called acronyms, but this is incorrect. There are hundreds of abbreviations and their research is a hard task because of multiple definitions. According to Kroeger (2005) stated that in order to analyze the structure of a word or sentence, we need to identify the smaller parts from which it is formed and the patterns that determine how these parts should be arranged (p. 07). In addition, the analysis of the structure is sometimes subjective because of the changing material and endless field for research.

Characteristics of Abbreviated Slang

After the researcher found some materials or references from books and internet that have a relation to slang language, the assumption can be concluded that slang appears in the sixteenth century in Britain. At that time, slang did not extend as widely through society then as it does today, but those early slang collection, have more glossaries, concentrate purely on the villain's vocabulary (bad words). First time appeared, slang used by a group or company that only that group that know the meaning of slang that they used. Nowadays, slang is used by all of people in the world freely.

The phenomenon of slang words are not according to the age if they are teenager, adult, company or other. Any writer used slang freely to created movie, drama, and song lyric.

The Previous Study

After explained about sociolinguistics and slang, this part discusses about the previous study. Here, researcher proves the originality of the study and shows the relation between this research to another researches and international journals. There are some international journals and previous researches taken during this research. These journals and researches helped the researcher to do research in a better understanding.

In her first journal, Kolowich (2014) in *Slangs and Gender: A Sociolinguistic Perspective.* She analyzed about slang words and gender with sociolinguistics approach. How slang words and gender influence the way teenager speak their language identity and also their gender identity in their group or community. She explained that English is effectively two languages: formal and informal. On the formal side, we don't know the person. In addition, she shows that sociolinguistics covers a very broad area of research. It also provides a better understanding of the nature of the relationship between language and society.

The second journal, Egistiliani, R, Wahya (2015) *P Language Wordplay by teenagers on Twitter in 2011-2013; A Sociolinguistics Study*. They explained how one of slang's type which is internet slang influence teenager in the way using social media such as Twitter. She called the changing of language phenomenon as an evolution of language that can be happened to the users of internet. The result of this international

journal is wordplay patterns in teenagers' writing in social media especially Twitter.

Slang has also conducted in a thesis by Suwarsih (2012) with title *Slang word used in 'Brooklyn Finest' Movie by Antoine Fuqua; A Sociolinguistics Analysis*. She has conducted slang word in Brooklyn Finest movie. She found slang word by using word formation. They are six slang words formed by affixation process, two slang words by compounding process, thirty one slang words by abbreviation process, three slang words by reduplication process, forty two slang words by existing word, eight slang words by borrowing process, two slangs word by invention process, and one slang words by Eponyms process. In this movie the writer found 95 words as slang word. This research helped the researcher to analyzed abbreviation process of abbreviated slang words.

The other research of slang words had been conducted by Sri Wahyuni (2008) with title *An Interpretation of slang language in Ocean Eleven movie*. She found that there are number of type slang language used in the Ocean's Eleven' Movie. In this research, the researcher has been finding slang language in this movie. She concluded that slang language in the movie can be classified into the society slang, workmen's slang, and public house slang. The research problem is type of slang language are utilized in the Ocean's Eleven movie and interpret the slang language into the Standard English whereas in this study tries to determine the kinds of slang.

Based on two previous researches and two previous journals above, the researcher found some similarities and differences. There are four similarities. The first similarity is the previous researches and this research used slang words as the main object of the research. The second similarity, the previous researches and this research used sociolinguistics as approach. The third similarity is the previous researches and this research used qualitative method to do the research. And the last similarity, the previous researches and this research decided that the type of slang words is internet slang and society slang.

Otherwise, the difference is the previous researches above used movie as the media to take the data but this research used social media Instagram as the media. Nevertheless, the researcher found some similarities and difference but those are the key that the researcher interested to use both of these previous researches as guide.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

Research Design
The research started from researcher's interest in the use of slang words found in American captions on Instagram. During the researcher conducted the research, researcher explored the phenomenon of slang words widely from books from some experts, journals, and information from internet. The researcher used descriptive designs on the development of this research. The data source obtained by the researcher is from Instagram account. The selection of the account is random and currently widely used by American. Researcher selected the account without realized by the owner of the account. Then, the researcher collected the data used observation non-participant method and analyzed the data through some steps such as collected all data that related to slang words which is the caption is in abbreviation form, then classified according to characteristics of the abbreviation's construction, and the last concluded the results of the research that has been analyzed.

The design of this study was chosen to describe the phenomenon that occurs naturally. As part of the subject in this study, the researcher concluded that this research is a qualitative research as the type of the research.

Object of the Research
Referring to the previous explanation above, it can be concluded that the object of this research is about the phenomenon of slang words. The researcher found that slang words in abbreviation form in the American caption on Instagram. This research is conducted with a broad understanding based on books, articles, and journals. The researcher presented the results this research of informal and detailed explanations.

The selection of participants is based on several reasons, such as the participants are those with Instagram account. The second one, the participant is an American citizen, and the last participant whose account has uploaded the image with some information. Typically, the researcher divided the age of the participants ranged from adolescent to adult because this age range is based on the focus of this research relating to the often used slang words of this age.

Method of Collecting Data

In process of collecting data in this research, researcher used Non-participant Observation Method. The method of collecting data by Sudaryanto (2015) *Metode Simak* (203) and *Teknik Catat* (203). In relation to the process of this research there are several steps, as follows:

1. First, the researcher searching the American accounts on Instagram. The researcher chooses unlock accounts to get the data easily. Then, scroll down all the posts and read the captions until found the captions which are containing slang words.
2. Second, the researcher identifying slang words from those American captions.
3. Third, the researcher finding out all the meaning slang of American captions from other sources, but this step is the most taking time.
4. The last, the researcher writing the information (note taking). For all the steps were conducted during 7 months starting from July 2017 until January 2018.

Method of Analyzing Data

In the process of analyzing data, the data will be analyzed with qualitative descriptive method. The method of analysis data is *Metode Padan* by Sudaryanto (2015). In relation to the process researcher took some steps, such as:

1. Reading and understanding American captions. This is about general information of slang and to reflect on its overall meaning.

2. Classifying American captions. This is about the types of slang that found on Instagram.
3. Describing American captions. This is about interpretation of slang and the factor the use of slang.
4. Concluding all information. This is about conclusion of data interpretation.

Method of Presenting Research Result

Furthermore to emphasize in terms of presenting research data, researcher presented the data in Informal Method by Sudaryanto (2015). It can be seen in the data shown in amount of examples and a theoretical framework. Then, the method of presenting research data can be done widely depending on the research context and the researcher as the main subject that presents the data.

Construction of Abbreviated Slang in Quantity

The researcher arranged abbreviated slang words construction in quantity into a few of examples based on finding in result of the research, as follows: quantity of one, two, three, four, five, and many letters/ numbers.

1. Quantity of One Letter or Number
   Data 1
   "*Back at met w/@virgilabloh*"

The following is an example data from an American Instagram uploaded a picture of her togetherness with her friend. This data is identified as abbreviated slang words. The construction of this type data is consisted of one word and this stands for one word. The origin word is "*With*". *W/* is an informal way to show togetherness with someone or something.

2. Quantity of two Letter or Numbers
   Data 2
   "*Sugar crush.. DM me for the recipe*"

The following is an example data from an American Instagram uploaded of a picture of coffee. The data is identified the use of abbreviated slang words. The construction of this type data is consisted of DM is two letters. *DM in English is internet phrase with*

its origin "*Direct Message*". *Direct message* is Formal way and *DM* is Informal way that used on Instagram for a private communication with someone. Each user of Instagram has a 'messages' page where they can read and send direct messages.

3. Quantity of three Letters or Numbers
   Data 3
   "*Today is Thursday, Ya'll... Got my TBT for sure*"

The following is an example data from an American Instagram that uploads of her childhood. The data is identified the use of abbreviated slang words. The construction of this type data is consisted of three letters but stands for two words. *TBT* is usually about Americans post photos in their past on Thursday. *TB (Throwback) or TBT (Throwback Thursday),* both of themcan be anytime. *TB (Throwback) or TBT (Throwback Thursday) are the informal ways for having an* opportunity to share pictures or video that is a past time to an earlier time.

4. Quantity of four Letters or Numbers
   Data 4
   "Go home ASAP for XOXO".

The following is an example data comes from an American Instagram uploaded his togetherness picture with family. The data is identified the use of slang words. The construction of *ASAP* is consisted of four letters and stands for four words. *XOXO* is similar to previous data that consisted of four letter but stands for three words. *ASAP* isslang word with its origin *"As Soon As Possible"* and *XOXO* isslang word with its origin "*Hugs and Kisses*". *ASAP* is informal way for expressing the urgency. *XOXO* is informal way for showing two activities when missing someone.

5. Quantity of five Letters or Numbers
   Data 5
   "*Middle fingers up cuz #IDGAF!!! LINK IN BIO*"

The following is an example data comes from an American Instagram uploaded his perform at stage. The data is identified the use of slang words. The construction of this type data is consisted of five letters and stands for five words. *IDGAF* is internet slang word with its origin *"I don't give a F*ck"* and in the English refers as "*I Don't Care*" or "*Careless for anything*". *IDGAF* is informal way for expressing careless feeling.

6. Quantity of Many Letters/ Numbers
   Data 6
   "*Don't disturb! ASDFGHJKL*"

The following is an example from the owner of an American Instagram that uploads selfie picture with a somber face. The data is identified using of slang word. The construction of this type data is consisted of nine letters that stand three words. *ASDFGHJKL* isslang word with its origin "*Bored in a condition or something is boring*" .In English the meaning is she/he is bored at that time. *ASDFGHJKL* is informal way for expressing the feeling.

Construction of Abbreviated Slang in Combination

There are five combinations found as characteristics abbreviated slang in American captions, such as combination of capital letters, combination of letters and numbers, combination of numbers, combination of letters and punctuations, combinations numbers or letters in pronounce.

1. Combination of capital letters
   Data 1
   "*AYKMWT??? On way to get car appraised all 4 tires low thanks to 14 degrees. #itdangcold.*

The following is an example data comes from an American Instagram uploaded a steering wheel and the caption is mixed with hashtag. The construction of this type data is consisted of six letters and stands for six words. *AYKMWT* is internet slang word with its origin *"Are you kidding me with this?"* same as "*Seriously?*" and in English the meaning is "*Reaction of something funny or sad*" *AYKMWT* is informal way for showing a feeling about something happened.

2. Combination of Letters and Numbers

Data 2
"Self Explanatory #cheer #hair #poof #2F4U"

The following is an example data from an American Instagram uploaded a picture about her selfie in the mirror with messy hair. This data is identified as abbreviated slang word. The construction of this type data is consisted of two letters with two numbers and stand for four words. *2F4U* is internet slang word with its origin *"Too Fast for You"* or "*Need for speed*" and in the English refer to player concerning games activity. *2F4U* is informal way for showing someone's skill or talent.

3. Combination of numbers
   Data 3
   "Dear Salsa, I used to love you but ur 2 salty 4 me".

The following is an example data from an American Instagram uploaded a picture of a food. This data is identified as abbreviated slang words. The construction of this type data is consisted of numbers but this stands for two words. 2 and 4 are internet slang words with its origins 2 (Too) and 4 (For). There are substituting letters for these slang words "*2 (Two as Too)* and *4 (Four as for)*". *2 & 4* are informal ways to showing adjective and preposition.

4. Combination of letters or numbers and punctuation
   Data 4
   "Sending love to my barbellas! I hope u'r having an amazing day!!"

The following is an example data from an American Instagram uploaded a picture about her picture in beach. This data is identified as abbreviated slang words. The construction of this type data is consisted of two letters and stand for two words. *U and R* is internet slang word with its origin *"You Are"* and in the English refer to Present Continuous Tense in English Grammar as "*Is doing something*". *U R* is informal way and *You Are* is formal way for showing activity in Present Continuous Tense.

5. Combinations numbers or letters in pronounce
   Data 5
   "Two weeks left! Just one lab report, a research paper and four finals to go! #Nobiggie"

The following is an example data comes from an American Instagram uploaded a steering wheel and the caption is mixed with hashtag. The data is identified the use of slang words. The construction of this type data is consisted of two words and stands for five words. *No Biggie* is internet slang word with its origin *"Not something to worry about"* same as "*No big deal*". *No Biggie* is informal way for showing a feeling about something that happened or will be happened.

Based on the result of data analysis, researcher found that the type of abbreviated slang words in American captions is Internet slang.

CONCLUSION

Researcher concluded there are two elements. Quantity includes the quantity of one letters or numbers is 2 data, the quantity of two letters or numbers is 6 data, the quantity of three letters or numbers is 6 data, the quantity of four letters or numbers is 7 data, the quantity of five letters or numbers is 5 data, and the last the quantity of many letters or numbers is 4 data. Then, combinations include the combinations of capital letters is 12 data, the combinations of letters and numbers is 4 data, combinations of numbers is 7 data, combinations of letters or numbers with punctuations is 5 data, and the last the combinations of numbers or letters in pronounce is 5 data.

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