

SLANG IN THE EFL CLASSROOM INTERACTION

ST. Marhana Rullu
 Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan
 Universitas Muhammadiyah Luwuk
 Email: sitimarhanarullu1991@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Slang is one of language variation. It consists of word, phrase and sentence that related to informal interaction and used in informal situation. The aim of this study are to find out the types of slang used by the lecturer and the students, the factors causing the use of slang, and the reasons of using slang. This study used qualitative descriptive method to collect the data from the lecturer and the students of English Education Department in University of Muhammadiyah Luwuk. To collect the data, the researcher observed and recorded all conversation in the classroom and also used interview for getting the data from the lecturer and the students. The findings show that the lecturer and the students employed fresh and creative type, compounding type, imitative type, and clipping type in communicating in the classroom. The result of the analysis also shows that social status, age, social distance or familiarity and situation are the factors that affecting the use of slang in the classroom. Moreover, the participants also revealed the reasons of using slang, they are to reduce seriousness, to induce either friendliness, for ease social interaction, to enrich the language, to be different, for the delight, to imitate and joke.

Keywords: *slang, types of slang, factors influencing and the reasons of using slang.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is the people's device to interact to other people. People use language to interact with other people to express their feeling, ideas, and opinion. Furthermore, the interaction should seem in teaching and learning process in classroom. Interaction in the classroom is an essential part in teaching and learning process. Icbay (2008) stated that through interaction in the classroom, the participants share what they know, how they do what they know, what they feel, what they think and what they plan to do. The interaction in the classroom is supported by language variant, to make communication more effective, interesting and enable students enjoy the conversation.

Holmes (2001) argues that slang belong to vocabulary part. As the common instruction, slang does not use in the formal spoken language or writing because it is rude, humorous or shocking. However, we can face one condition which may happen is that the use of slang in communication especially in classroom. Sometimes the lecturer and the students use slang in formal situation. It would be potentially occur even though they have a good communicative competence. It would be a matter to keep using, as long as they have the reason to use the slang well, there would be new information for them.

Some research has been conducted on slang, for instance Ritcher (2006) in India, Firooz and Ibrahim (2014) in Malaysia, and Shahraki (2010) in Iran. Ritcher conducted the research in India toward the Indian's student in using slang. She has been classified the slang expression according to their etymological origin and to the situational context in which the students are used. Meanwhile, Firooz and Ibrahim investigated the

Malaysian youth use slang in their language. They examined what kind of slang they use more in communication. And, Shahraki presented his study to investigate the effect of age and sex on variability of slang use. All of the research have the same aspect to be focused. Some problem related with what type or kind the slang that usually used by the participants. That is why this research conduct to reach any aspects in slang. In addition, the factors causing the use of slang and also the reasons behind the use of slang will be the concern of this research.

In this modern area, we can find the use of slang everywhere. In application, slang can be found in the conversation of the lecturer and the student in the classroom. They give the great contribution of the forming of slang. In other words, with such a variety of language, it creates more fluent in conversation, more intimate, and it agrees with an informal situation. Considering how slang are used in EFL classroom, the researcher intends to conduct this research project to see the types of slang that the lecturer and students of English Education Department in University of Muhammadiyah Luwuk usually use in informal communication. Moreover, this research also elaborates the factors causing the use of slang, and to investigate the reasons behind they use of slang.

Allan and Burrige (2006) confirm that there are five different slang types. The explanation of slang type will be explained as follows:

Fresh and creative mean that slang language has totally new vocabulary, informal variety, cleverness, imagination, and it also can be an up to date words. Some words which are already familiar out mind possibly will be slang as we do not realize

it. The reasons why those slang become familiar in our mind because those slang appear in long time ago since slang are already appeared. The example is the slang word *awesome*. *Awesome* (adj) used that we think something is wonderful or amazing.

Compounding means that slang language made by two words or more in which the words composed not correlated with denotative meaning. The example is *big gun*. It means a powerful person.

Imitative means that the slang word imitating or derived from the Standard English Word, using the Standard English words in different meaning or combining two different words. The example is *gonna*. This is the slang word that derived from the phrase words "going to". The slang word "gonna" is commonly used by almost all of the people in the world.

Acronym is the type of slang constructed by the result of words from the first letters of each word in a phrase or this type is made by the initials from a group of words or syllables. The example is LOL, used as internet shorthand to mean "laughing out loud", found in US around 1991.

Clipping type is one of variety of slang made by deleting of some parts of longer word become a shorter form in the same meaning. The example is the use of word "exam" to mean "examination". The words which commonly used can be clipped into shorter form. In addition, clipping form is not appropriate to use in formal conversation.

According to Mahmud (2013), there are some factors influencing style in communication, such as social status, age, gender, degree of familiarity and situation. The first factor is social status. Richard and Schmidt (2010) define status as higher, lower or equal position, particularly in regard to prestige, power, and social class. The status of people, when they are communicating in speech or writing is also important as it may affect the speech style they use to each other. In other words, the speech and treatment of people will be different between the people in same status with higher or lower status.

The second factor is age. Mizutani and Mizutani in Mahmud (2013) state that differences in age will influence the formality of speakers and hence the degree of politeness. It has become a rule in Japan that older people talk in a familiar way toward younger people, and younger people talk politely to older people. In contrast, people of the same age commonly use familiar speech style in conversation.

The third factor relating to differences in communicative styles is gender (Mahmud, 2013). Based on the idea that men and women are different in their speaking especially in politeness. Women talk more than men, talk too much, are more polite, are indecisive/hesitant, complain and

nag, ask more questions, support each other, are more cooperative than man.

Furthermore, the fourth aspect is social distance or degree of familiarity. Social distance as the extent to which individuals share beliefs, customs, practice, appearances, and other characteristics that define their identity (Akerlof in Suzila and Yusri, 2012). Moreover, the ways of people in speaking determined by how familiar a person to interlocutors. The more distant the interlocutors are, the more polite they are likely to talk. Conversely, the more familiar they are, the less polite they talk, marked by very familiar language and less polite expressions.

Finally, the last aspect is situation. In formal situation, people will talk politely whereas in informal situations. Speakers tend to use a more familiar style or less polite of speech. Furthermore, people also change their style of speech depending on the situation, even when talking with the same person but in different situation.

There are some reasons why people use slang in communicating. The slang usually accepted by young people, by the young in heart as well as by the young in years, just for fun of thing. According to the British lexicographer, Eric Partridge (1954) gives the reason why people use slang. such as: for delights in virtuosity, to be different, to be novel to be picturesque, this could be found from songs or poems, to be unmistakably arresting, even startling, to enrich the language by inventing new words, to lend an air of solidity, concreteness, to the abstracts of earthiness to the idealistic, of immediacy and oppositeness to the remote, to reduce seriousness of a conversation, to amuse superior public, this can be seen by the slang that children use towards their parents, for ease of social intercourse. to induce either friendliness, to shows that one belongs to a certain group, to show or prove that someone does not belong to a certain group. to be secret, not understand by those around one (children, students, lovers, member of political, are the chief exponents).

II. METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objective of this research, qualitative method was applied. This study was conducted in University of Muhammadiyah Luwuk at English Education Department. The study focused on one lecturer who teach speaking course and the students in fourth semester. To collect the data, the researcher did observation and interview the participants. To obtain spoken slang, the researcher observed and recorded all the conversation do by the lecturer and the students in the class using hand phone. The researcher also interview the participants for getting the data about slang.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The slang used by lecturer and the students in EFL classroom interaction

The following are the data presentation towards slang used by the lecturer and the students in EFL classroom interaction at English education department of University of Muhammadiyah Luwuk. The researcher classify slang data found in EFL Classroom based on Allan and Burridge's theory (2006) of types of slang as guideline in classifying the slang, they are: *Fresh and creative*, *Compounding*, *Imitative*, *Acronym*, and *Clipping*. To know what the meaning of slang that used by the lecturer and students in the classroom, the researcher used *NTC's Dictionary American Slang and Colloquial Expressions 3rd edition* by Spears (2000). The types of slang were identified through both observation and interview data showed in the following description:

A. Fresh and creative type

- *Guys*

Guys (n) means a fellow; a man or woman. The detail extraction can be seen as follows:

Extract 1

L : Okay..um well, **guys**, as the previous meeting we have some performances from you all and then we will continue the assignment. Because I said that I account it as the first assignment.

Extract 1 in line 7 above shows the lecturer used slang in communicating with his students. The lecturer preferred to use the word "*guys*" to talk to students in the classroom. The lecturer used slang to address his students in order to maintain their close relationship. The word used by lecturer in extract 1 above classified as fresh and creative type of slang.

- *Awesome*

Awesome (exclam.) means Great; Excellent! (Usually Awesome! Standard English, but used often in slang). The detail extraction can be seen as follows:

Extract 2

S₁ : I impress to Hillary Clinton because even though she fail in election but she gives support to Donald Trump

S₂ : I am impressing to Barack Obama's video, even though she, I mean he speech formally but he can make fun of audiences. For me it's **awesome**.

From the extract above shows how the S₁₀ used slang. The Utterance "*for me it's awesome*" produced by S₁₀ is one of fresh and creative type of slang. The utterance is addressed to Barack Obama and the S₁₀ was impressed by his speech.

B. Compounding type

- *Big man*

Big name (n) is American slang. This slang means a famous and important person. The description is illustrated in the following extraction:

Extract 3

L: Next, charismatic, I think depends on your innerbeauty, come from inside you. For Obama may be he is president *jadi kelihatankarismatik* (so he looks charismatic). Furthermore, he is **abig man** in America, *dia punya segalanya, dia pemimpin di Amerika* (he has got everything, he is the leader of America. Next ability, according to Heaton it consist offluency, accuracy, comprehensibility.

The extract 3 above presents how slang type by lecturer appears in the classroom interaction. By looking the extract in line 158, the lecturer tried to explain to his students about the figure of Barack Obama. He said that Barack Obama is a famous and important person in America. The lecturer mentioned Barack Obama is a "*big man*". The word "*big man*" can identified as compounding type of slang.

- *Drama Queen*

Drama queen (n) is American slang. The phrase means someone who gets overly emotional/sentimental about things; someone who thrives on the dramatic. The description is illustrated in the following extraction:

Extract 4

S: The strength just like I said before she is so calm, humble, and then even though he is fail, oops I mean she is fail but she can say the congratulation to Donald Trump the new president of US and the weakness is I think she is too emotional, when she talks about her failure, she just like this, one sentence that I remember, yah I know it so, I think she will crying and at the time I think she just like a **drama queen**, that's the weakness.

Utterance in line 78 of extract 4 above identified as compounding. The S₅ tried to describe the Hillary Clinton's condition to her friends in the class. The S₅ used word of "*drama queen*" to describe the Hillary Clinton's figure of the moment.

C. Imitative

- *Wassup*

Wassup (interog.) means what is up?. The detail extraction can be seen as follows:

Extract 5

L : Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatu

Ss : Wa alaikumsalam warahmarullahi wabarakatu

L : **What's up guys?**

Ss : Fine sir, how about you?

The lecturer used slang "wassup?" to ask their condition of his students. He used it to pull the students' attention and to create relax conversation. The bold word in extract 5 is categorized as imitative type of slang.

- *Sweet*

Sweet (*mod.*) means good; profitable; excellent. The description is illustrated in the following extraction:

Extract 6

S: Ok, Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatu. The speaker talk about education and women. So, she also talk about *hubungan* (relation) between education and society. And the strength she has good pronunciation, she gets attention of people and I think she is **sweet**. *Hehehe* (Laughing)

The word "sweet" in Standard English word means good; profitable; excellent. The student used slang word by saying "sweet". It can be seen in line 168 in extract 6 above. The word "sweet" to describe the figure of the speaker.

D. Clipping

- *Bro*

Bro (*n*) means brother (also a term of addressed). It is clearly shown in the following extraction:

Extract 7

S₁ : Sir this is the attendance list

L : Let me call. Ok the first performance is Wahyudin

S₂ : *Eh capat bro*. (Eh Hurry up, bro).

Clipping remark employed by the S₂ toward the other student is discussed in extract 7 above. The S₂ said "bro" to call his friend to come forward in front of class to present his material.

- *Exam*

Exam (*n*) means examination. The detail extraction can be seen as follows:

Extract 8

L : Oh I forget, about your **exam** I will ask you to create a video, *minimal berdurasi 5 menit* (at least about 5 minutes). So, you make a speech like the speech that you present before. The theme is about education.

The extract 8 showed the use of clipping type of slang in classroom interaction. The clipping type expressed by the lecturer can be seen in line 2017. The expression used in a form of shortening word of "examination" to be 'exam'. But it word was still has the same meaning.

From Allan and Burrige's theory there are five types of slang but in this research, the researcher

only found four types of slang used by the lecturer and the students' in the classroom, they are: fresh and creative, compounding, imitative, and clipping. While acronym is not used by the lecturer and the students in the classroom. To give better description, the result obtained from the analysis can be seen in the forms of table as follows:

Table 1. The Tabulated Data

No	Types of Slang	Utilized Slang	Meaning
1	Fresh and creative	Guys	Fellow or-friends
		Joke	To tease someone
		Hello? Do-you hear me?	Are you aware that I am talking to you?
		Yup	Yes
		Loser	An inept-person
		Awesome	Great, excellent
		Oops!	It said after a small mistakes
		Styling	Looking-good
		Ok/okay	Accepted, agreed
		Mate	Friends (informal used)
		Ex	Former spouse or lover
		Excellent	Fine (like awesome)
		Uptight	Anxious
		Wow	Indication of surprise
2	Compounding	By the way	Use in context where the speaker want to ask something.
		Darling	Person who is very much loved or liked.
2	Compounding	Big man	Famous or important person
		We are-listening	Keep talking
		All right	Okay
		Forget it	Never mind

		Come on Drop out Break it up Big thanks Drama queen My bad Shut up I'm not-kidding Big dream No way Hang out	Invitation Someone-who has dropped Stop it Pleased or grateful Someone who gets-overly emotional/sentimental. It is my fault To be quite I am telling the truth Something that we want to happen very much. No! To gather in a casual manner
3	Imitative	Gonna Wanna Wassup Cool Sweet	Going to Want to What is up? Relaxed, great, excellent Good, excellent
4	Clipping	Bro Exam	Brother Examination

3.2. Factors causing the use of slang in EFL classroom interaction

After observing the classroom interaction and interview both the teacher and students, the research reveals that social status, age, social distance or familiarity and situation are the factors causing the use of slang in the classroom. However, the gender is not the factors causing the use of slang in the classroom interaction. The following are the factors causing the use slang in EFL classroom interaction at English education department in University of Muhammadiyah Luwuk.

A. Social status

The interview below showed the difference of students' spoken style toward the teacher and the classmate.

- S1 : Yes, if I meet the lecturer, I feel comfort. But, if I have to talk to the lecturer, I have to think there is a limit between lecturer and students. Do not be like that, this is not our friend. I think so.
- S2 : So I am. I feel awkward and afraid to talk with the lecturer. We have to respect to older people and we have to be polite. So, must be respected.

The pieces of the interview above showed the power of the lecturer as a kind of social status that was a factor causing the use of slang in communicating in the classroom interaction. Regarding to the interview, the students argued that they spoke more politely to their lecturer. It means that the students did not use slang in talking with their lecturer because of the understanding of lecturer's status or position.

B. Age

The next factor causing the use of slang in the classroom interaction is age. Age is one of the factors influencing the use of slang in the classroom interaction based on the interview. This result derives from the students' statement in interview below:

- S1 : Depending on the words and the utilization. Sometimes, there are the slang words less polite for older people, especially the lecturer. So, we must selected the words.
- S2 : For me, I use the slang just with friends.

From the results of the interview above, it can be concluded that age is one of the factors influencing the use of slang in the classroom. The students stated that they used slang tended only to their friends which were in the same age. While they prefer not used slang in communicating with their lecturer. It means that the teacher has age power to be respected by the students.

C. Social distance or Familiarity

Based on the interview, the students agreed that social distance or familiarity influenced their way in interacting in the classroom. It proves by looking at the students' statement in interview below:

- S1 : If I do presentation, I prefer to use slang because it is more interesting.
- S2 : in my opinion, how often the slang employed in speaking class. Sometimes, I use the word *wanna*. *Hehehe* (laughing) so I often use slang especially with my friends even though the slang word has rude sounds.)

The extracts of the interview above proved that familiarity was factor why the students employed slang in classroom interaction. Similar with students' opinion, the lecturer also stated in interview:

L : Oh, I often use slang, especially to greet the students. Sometimes I utter those slang words when I explain the material. I use it to be closer or trying to be familiar with them. Next, what are the questions? *hahaha* (laughing).

From the extract of the lecturer's interview above, it can be seen that the lecturer employed slang to show his closeness to the students. The lecturer thought that the familiar of slang can make them to be more familiar and closer. Furthermore, from the result of interview above it can be determined that social distance or familiarity affects the interaction in classroom.

D. Situation

In this research, the last factor that affected the use of slang is situation. Based on the interview, situation is one of the factors influencing the use of slang in the classroom. This result came from the students' statement in the interview below:

S5 : Talking informally with the lecturer, depends on the situation and condition, and depends on the lecturer.

S2 : I also used slang but just with my friends. If I talk to the lecturer use slang, I think it depends on the situation.

From the result of the interview above, it can be concluded that situation is one of the factors influencing the use of slang in the classroom. The students revealed that they used slang depends on the situation and what condition they used them.

3.3. The reasons of using slang in the EFL Classroom Interaction

The reasons can be seen in following described:

A. To reduce seriousness

The first reason is to reduce seriousness. The participant revealed he used slang in the classroom because it was to reduce seriousness. He assumed that he used slang in interacting with his students for reducing the seriousness of students. So, the students will be relax during the lesson. It can be seen from the results of the interview below:

MR: The last question sir, what are your reasons for using slang in interacting with your students in the classroom?

L : Oh, what is.. actually it only reduces the seriousness of students in learning, relaxed but still serious. Next, it is for easy to interact with students, normally sometimes the students fell afraid to talk to their lecturer, right?

Another reason of reducing seriousness also found in relaxed utterance. This reason is exposed by the student using slang because just relaxed. It can be seen from interview below:

S : The first is to be nice to hear, the second we will be more comfortable to speak, message is better to read. Then it follows the time.

B. To induce either friendliness

Friendliness, this reason is most reasonable for a person to use slang. This reason expressed by participant in the interview, the quotation as follow:

S1 : I think when used the slang, it looks very friendliness. So if we used slang to talk with friends although the words mean rough, I think it does not matter.

The student argued that the friendliness was the reason why she employing slang in the classroom. Another student revealed that the same reason why the uttered slang in the classroom that is taken from interview. The interview as follows:

S2 : Same with my friends said. Slang can make confident, because when we speak we look cute, ee but if we speak an usual, sometimes look monotonous. So, if we use slang, it will be looking great. Then, sometimes i used slang to make it look familiar.

From the excerpt above, it can be concluded that friendliness/familiar is things that caused the use of slang by the students in the classroom interaction.

C. For ease of social interaction

The next reason of the use of slang is for ease of social interaction. Obviously, it in this case is making the other's comfort in communicating. It was expressed by students in interview 1 below:

S : I think if use slang it can be easier to interact with others.

D. To enrich the language by inventing new words

The next reason of the use of slang is to enrich the language by inventing new words. The student told that the use of slang because it looks good and impressed update. It means that the student found some new vocabulary of slang. The student's argument can be seen from the result of interview below:

S : if I use slang it can look cool, impressed update, we follow the time, if we are outdated, it is not good right? Anyway, we need to be up to date for looking good from the language that we used.

Although the intention of update reason in the interview above was unclear, but it can be assumed that the student use slang because she wanted to do so. The student argued that the use of

slang can lead them in inventing new words of slang.

E. To be different, to be novel

According to the participant the reason she used slang in the classroom during the learning process is to be different from the others people. This revealed by the student in the interview:

S1 : Yah, one of them also differentiates with friends. She/he just use it keep, I want to change, so be different from others. Then, if uses slang the confident exists.

From the excerpt above, it can be concluded that to be different or novel were the things that caused the use of slang in the classroom.

F. For delight

The subsequent reason of the use slang is for delight. The feeling of delight uttered by the students in the extract of interview below:

MR : Why do you use slang?

S1 : To make it looking great

S2 : Hahaha (laughing)

Another reason of delight also found in interview below. This reason revealed by the student employing slang because of delight. The extract of interview as follow:

S5 : If I, it is more interesting to use slang. Using slang can pull my friends to speak and it can make happy,

MR : *Hahaha* (laughing) Happy?

S5 : Yes sister. That is funny.

From the interview above, the student explicated clearly the reason why he used slang in the classroom. For delight was the reason why the students applied slang in the classroom interaction.

G. To imitate

The next reason of using slang in the classroom during the learning process is to imitate. The reasons were stated by the students in interview 2 below:

S1 : If I may be just following to look great. *Hehehe* (laughing)

S2 : I think, it is normal to use slang because there are many slangs. Slang has been popular, so automatically we are English Department also use slang.

S3 : In my opinion, the reason is just following too. *Hehehe* (laughing)

The entire of quotations above proved that the students use slang just following from the other people who use slang.

H. Joke

The last reason of the use slang in the classroom interaction is joke. The student assumed that she use slang in the classroom because it was only a joke. It can be seen from the result of interview 2 below:

S : I have listened and used slang because when we are singing, we use many slang and sometimes I used slang when interacting. But, I prefer to speak as usual. If I used slang is just a fad.

From the interview above, it can be concluded that the student spoke slang because fad or joke.

IV. CONCLUSION

Slang appeared in the classroom interaction and it has made the condition in the class become more intimate and relax in conversation between the lecturer and the students. The analysis of data shown that there were four types of slang that used by the lecturer and the students which are fresh and creative type, compounding type, imitative type and clipping type. There were four factors causing the use of slang uttered by the lecturer and the students, they are social status, age, social distance or familiarity and situation. There are some reasons of the lecturer and the students used slang in the classroom, which are to reduce seriousness, to induce either friendliness, for ease of social interaction, to enrich the language, to be different or to be novel, for delight, just following, and joke.

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