

An Analysis of Slang Words Used in Social Media (Instagram)

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An Analysis of Slang Words Used in Social Media (Instagram)

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Abstract-The research titled "An Analysis of Slang Words Used in Social Media (Instagram)" investigates the use of slang in Instagram captions and comments. The study aims to describe the types and functions of slang words used by Instagram users and to understand the sociolinguistic factors influencing their usage. Through qualitative descriptive analysis, data were collected from various Instagram accounts, focusing on the frequency and context of slang word usage. The findings indicate that slang is prevalent on Instagram, serving to create a sense of community and belonging among users, while also reflecting cultural and social dynamics. This study provides valuable insights into the evolving nature of language in digital communication and highlights the importance of understanding slang as a linguistic phenomenon in social media interactions.

Keywords: Slang, Instagram, Sociolinguistics, Digital Communication.

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of expressing and conveying intentions to others (F. Nasution & Tambunan, 2022). The speaker's intended message can be understood by both the speaker and the listener through the language used. Language is the identity of a nation, serving as a means of communication and interaction, allowing people to express ideas and opinions and build social relationships (Alshehri, 2023). It has become an inseparable part of human life with a variety of uses. The dynamic and evolving nature of language demonstrates its importance in human society (Scott-Phillips, 2007).

The fact that slang words can make it difficult for certain audiences to understand the intended message, as the language used by the speaker differs from that of the listener, has piqued researchers' interest in studying this phenomenon. This led to the research titled "Use

of Slang on Instagram Social Media in Captions and Comments."

Based on the background of the research, the following problems were identified: Instagram users have difficulties understanding slang words used in captions and comments. The use of abbreviated slang words can backfire due to a lack of knowledge about their meanings. Instagram users from various age groups often use abbreviated slang words in their captions and comments.

The study focuses on the use of slang on Instagram, specifically in captions and comments. Sociolinguistics, a branch of linguistics, studies the relationship between language and societal factors. The research problem formulated is: Why do people use slang on Instagram in captions and comments?

The objectives of this research are to describe the use of slang on Instagram in captions

and comments. The researcher hypothesizes that slang is commonly used on Instagram's homepage and in the comments section, prompting an examination of this usage. The significance of this research is expected to provide the following benefits: It serves as a source of knowledge for writers in the field of linguistics. It aims to inform about the use of language and emphasize the importance of proper language usage as a form of preserving and protecting the English language. It seeks to educate the public about the importance of using correct English in both formal and informal interactions. It could serve as a useful guide for future researchers interested in the use and transformation of grammar.

There are some important keywords that relevant with this research, they are: first is analysis. Analysis is the process of observing and breaking down a complex topic or substance into smaller parts to gain a better understanding of it (Killeen, 2018). Second is slang. Slang is a variety of Indonesian used in everyday social interactions to make conversations warmer and more familiar (Kandiawan, 2022). And the third is Instagram. An American photo and video sharing social networking service that allows users to shoot, edit, and post photos or videos to Instagram's main page and other social networks. It is available as a mobile application on iOS, Android, and Windows Phone platforms.

Slang has existed since the 16th century, originally used by specific groups to distinguish themselves from outsiders and to prevent others from understanding their conversations (Lighter, 2001). In the 18th century, slang was initially considered a low-class language, but over time it became more widely used in everyday life due to its catchy and easy-to-use nature.

Slang is a part of sociolinguistics, which studies the relationship between language and society. According to Nasution in J. S. Nasution, Rahmadeny, & Jazzawi (2019), sociolinguistics examines the use of language in specific societal contexts and is also known as the sociology of language or language in society. Slang is a language variation, as Zhou & Fan (2013) describe it, a type of speech variety or language variety.

Social media serves as a means of communication and information exchange. It has become an essential part of everyday activities for all levels of society. According to Chang & Chang (2023), the internet has created a new generation raised in an interactive digital media

environment. Instagram, as one of the social media platforms, has become a new lifestyle, especially among young people who use it daily. Instagram is a photo-sharing application that allows users to take photos, apply digital filters, and share them. It was founded in 2010 by Mike Krieger and Kevin Systrom, who are computer programmers and internet entrepreneurs.

II. METHODS

This research employs the scientific method to systematically address existing issues related to the usage of slang words in social media, particularly on Instagram. It falls under the umbrella of qualitative research, employing a qualitative descriptive analysis method to provide detailed insights. This method allows for a comprehensive examination of the phenomenon under study. By focusing on specific cases, this research method enables a meticulous observation, analysis, and resolution of the identified issues.

The data for this study consists of words, phrases, and clauses incorporating slang language observed during interactions on social media platforms, primarily Instagram. The data collection process involved systematic observation and documentation of language usage in captions and comments posted on Instagram.

The collected data underwent rigorous analysis to identify patterns, trends, and underlying meanings associated with the use of slang words. This analysis involved categorizing and organizing the data, examining frequency and context of usage, and identifying any cultural or contextual influences on language choice. Additionally, qualitative techniques such as thematic analysis may have been employed to uncover deeper insights into the motivations behind the use of specific slang terms.

The interpretation phase involved making sense of the analyzed data to draw meaningful conclusions and insights. Researchers may have explored the implications of the identified slang usage patterns in terms of social dynamics, cultural influences, and communication norms within the Instagram community. Furthermore, interpretations may have addressed the evolution of slang over time, its role in identity construction, and its impact on digital communication practices.

The primary data source for this research comprised captions and comments posted on Instagram. The researcher served as the primary

instrument, utilizing observation tools such as digital devices to systematically document instances of slang usage in social media interactions. This approach ensured the collection of rich and diverse data reflecting the contemporary language practices prevalent on Instagram.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Language is the identity of a nation, serving as a means to communicate and interact with others, express ideas and opinions, and build social relationships (Altun, 2023). Language has become an inseparable part of human life. The interest in and attachment to language makes it neither static nor purely dynamic. This study examines the use of slang on social media, specifically in Instagram comments.

The research results indicate that various forms of slang words are commonly used in Instagram comments. The data obtained will be presented as evidence of the research findings directly from Instagram. This study will discuss the findings based on the slang terms identified in Instagram comments.

The research observations are based on data from social media users, particularly Instagram, who use slang terms. These observations serve as evidence for the research findings. Below are the observations from several slang users found on Instagram.

Figure 1. Pict-001... @iamzu



OMG = Oh my God

The comment above includes a slang term commonly seen on Instagram: "OMG," which stands for "Oh my God." This term is frequently used in everyday life to express surprise and worry.

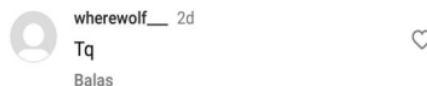
Figure 2. Pict-002...@m.milos99



Idk = I don't know

In the comments above, a slang term was identified from observations on Instagram, specifically the word "idk." This abbreviation stands for "I don't know" and is used to express someone's uncertainty or lack of knowledge about a particular topic.

Figure 3. Pict-003...@wherewolf__



Tq = Thank You

The comment above includes a slang term observed on Instagram. The term "Tq" is an abbreviation of "Thank you," which is used to express gratitude towards someone.

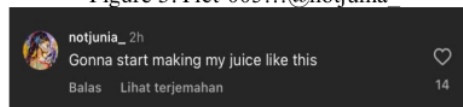
Figure 4. Pict-004...@michael_oppenheimer_



Rip = Rest in Peace

The comment mentioned above is a slang term often seen on Instagram, specifically "Rip," which stands for "Rest in Peace." This phrase is used to express hope or to pray for someone who has passed away.

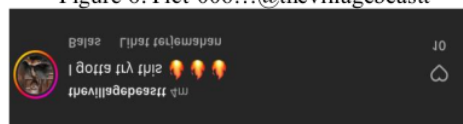
Figure 5. Pict-005...@notjunia



Gonna = Going to

The comment above uses a slang term commonly observed on Instagram, specifically "gonna," which is a colloquial contraction of "going to." This expression is used to indicate that something will be or is in the process of being done.

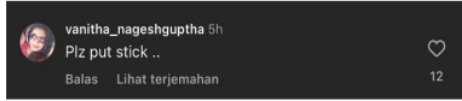
Figure 6. Pict-006...@thevillagebeastt



Gotta = Got to

The comment above features a slang term commonly observed on Instagram, specifically "Gotta." This term is a linguistic contraction of "Got to," which is used to express the necessity for someone to leave immediately.

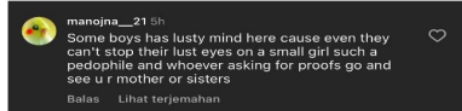
Figure 7. Pict-007...@vanitha_nagesguptha



Plz = Please

The comment above is a slang abbreviation commonly found on Instagram. The term "Plz," which linguistically means "Please," is used to express a request for help.

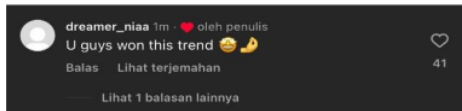
Figure 8. Pict-008...@manojna__21



U r = Your

The comment mentioned above is a slang abbreviation commonly seen on the social media platform Instagram. It reads as "U r," which linguistically stands for "Your," representing the second person singular.

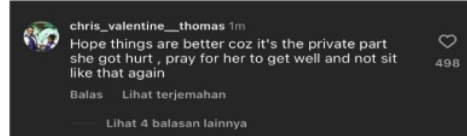
Figure 9. Pict-009...@dreamer_niaa



U = You

The preceding comment abbreviates a slang term often encountered on Instagram: "U" stands for "You" and is commonly used to address someone. This expression reflects informal communication habits prevalent on social media platforms.

Figure 10. Pict-010...@chris_valentine_thomas



Coz = Because

The comment above abbreviates a slang term commonly seen on Instagram: "Coz," a shortened form of "Because". This indicates the reasoning behind an event or action.

Discussion

Based on the data presented, it appears that the English language frequently experiences deviations from standard spelling rules, including the use of abbreviations and slang. Slang is often replaced with acronyms that are deemed to adequately represent a word. Furthermore, not only is slang shortened, but it is also substituted with even shorter forms. This phenomenon illustrates the dynamic and evolving nature of language use in contemporary contexts.

Table 1. Table of Research Results/Discussion of Slang in Instagram Comments.

No.	Instagram Comments	Meaning	Name of Account
1	OMG	(OMG) Oh my God	Iamzu
2	Idk I didn't even laugh..poor guy didn't deserve it	(Idk) I don't know	m. milos99
3	Tq	(Tq) Thanks	Wherewolf__
4	Rip	(Rip) Rest in Peace	Michael_oppeneheimer_
5	Gonna start making my juice like this	(Gonna) Going to	Notjunia_
6	I gotta try this	(Gotta) Got to	Thevillagebeastt
7	Plz put stick	(Plz) Please	Vanitha_nagestha
8	Some boys have lusty minds here cause even they can't stop their lustful eyes on a small girl such as a pedophile and whoever asks for proofs go and see ur mother or sisters	(U r) Your	Manojna_21

9	U guys won this trend	(U) You	Dreamer_niaa
10	Hope things are better coz it's the private part she got hurt, pray for her to get well and not sit like that again	(Coz) Because	Chris_valentine_thomas

Based on the results of observations conducted by researchers on Instagram, it is evident that social media users, particularly on Instagram, frequently use slang terms in almost every comment when communicating with others. The use of slang by these users has become increasingly uncontrolled.

After reviewing the data, it is clear that slang can create difficulties in communication. Most people do not understand the meaning of slang or find it challenging to read slang writing. This lack of understanding can cause recipients to fail to grasp the intended message. Additionally, creating and translating slang is often time-consuming and inefficient.

The primary goal of communicating via social media intended to be fast, easy, and practical has been compromised. Those who habitually write in slang may forget or become unaccustomed to using proper English. The prevalence of slang is not limited to teenagers; adults and children are also frequently heard using it. Its unique, funny, and intriguing nature attracts people, leading them to adopt slang in their communication.

However, the widespread use of slang can disrupt the communication process. Not everyone is familiar with slang terms, especially those who are not highly active on social media. This lack of understanding can result in miscommunication. One major issue is that the meaning of words and sentences can become distorted, leading to ambiguity or multiple interpretations. In some cases, the recipient may not understand the message at all.

On Instagram, the average user employs slang in nearly every comment, which can create communication barriers for those unfamiliar with these terms. This is often due to numerous errors in abbreviated language and the additional use of foreign jargon.

Researchers chose social media networks such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Line for their study because these platforms are highly popular among millennials. Millennials frequently update their slang usage to maintain their presence among social media users. On these platforms, language use is unrestricted, allowing teenagers to get creative with language and generate various linguistic varieties.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study of slang words used in social media, particularly Instagram, reveals significant insights into the dynamic nature of contemporary language use. The analysis shows that Instagram users frequently employ slang terms and abbreviations in their comments and captions, reflecting a trend towards more informal and efficient communication styles. This pervasive use of slang not only demonstrates the adaptability and evolution of language in digital contexts but also highlights several implications for communication.

Firstly, the use of slang on social media platforms like Instagram is widespread among various age groups, indicating its acceptance and integration into everyday online interactions. Slang terms such as "OMG" (Oh My God), "idk" (I don't know), and "plz" (please) are commonly used to convey messages more succinctly and casually.

However, this study also identifies several challenges associated with the use of slang. One of the primary issues is the potential for miscommunication, as not all users may be familiar with the slang terms used. This can lead to misunderstandings and difficulty in comprehending the intended message, particularly for individuals who are not as active on social media or who are from different linguistic backgrounds.

Moreover, the habitual use of slang can impact the user's ability to use formal language correctly. Frequent reliance on abbreviated forms and informal language structures may lead to a decline in proper language skills, which is particularly concerning in educational and professional contexts.

Despite these challenges, the study underscores the role of social media in shaping language trends and influencing linguistic practices. Social media platforms provide a space for creativity and linguistic innovation, allowing users to play with language and develop new forms of expression.

In conclusion, while the use of slang on Instagram and other social media platforms presents certain communication barriers, it also exemplifies the fluid and adaptive nature of language. Understanding these trends is crucial

for appreciating how digital communication influences language use and for developing strategies to address the associated challenges. Future research could further explore the impact of social media slang on language development and its implications for effective communication in diverse contexts.

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