



The use of slang words in online learning context of EFL class

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ABSTRACT

During Covid-19 pandemic teachers and students in Indonesia adapt to continue learning by implementing online learning. Online learning creates a new way of communication between teacher and students in online classroom context. This way of communication makes both teacher and students employ new strategy in communication, one of which is by using slang words in online class. This study aimed at investigating the use of slang words by 34 EFL students in Translation online class during 1 semester. This study employed descriptive qualitative in which the source of data is the transcript of students' chat in WhatsApp Group (WAG) during 6 months. Additionally, questionnaire was used to collect the data about students' attitudes toward the use of slang words. It is found that students used 32 slang words from both English and Indonesian, most slang words used were influenced by popular slang words used in social media. Students mostly used slang words when (1) chatting with friends in discussing informal topic such as holiday, make up class, and connection problem; (2) expressing feeling; (3) addressing their friends' names; (4) discussing lesson; (5) responding teacher's question, and (6) greeting the teacher. Students' attitude toward the use of slang was positive, they explained that they used slang words in online class to make learning atmosphere more alive and relaxed and those make them easier to understand the lesson. However, students limit the use of slang words when chatting with teacher, most students consider impolite to use slang words as freely as when they chatted with their classmates.

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1. Introduction

Covid-19 outbreak brings a new way of communication between teacher and students in class since learning mostly cannot be done face-to-face in a classroom. In this case, learning can be done either synchronous or asynchronous using online platform such as Google Classroom (Okmawati, 2020), Zoom (Fitria, 2020), Edmodo (Siahaan, 2020), schoology (Muhtia et al., 2018), or moodle or LMS (Sari & Setiawan, 2018). However, based on this situation, communication between teacher and students cannot be done as close and free as in face-to-face classroom. In online classroom setting, communication between teacher and student is restricted, most communication is done verbally

which is lack of clue of intonations. Besides, teacher and students are also cannot do non-verbal communication such as (gesture, head movement and posture, eye contact, facial expression, haptic, proxemics). This phenomenon made students difficult to catch the teacher's teaching style and personality (Dickinson, 2017) thus, communication in online class is dull.

In online learning communication, especially which is done in an asynchronous way, learning is full of interpretations since it heavily lays on emoticon and words use by students, especially slang words. This may present challenge for both teacher and student in communication during online learning, the teacher found it difficult in delivering the material since students mostly remain silent when they did not understand. From the perspective of students, they tended not to be open in expressing their idea because they were in the same chat room with the teacher and other students. Alawamleh et al., (2020) stated that during online learning teacher and students felt isolated thus communication levels between them is decreasing.

Regardless that issues, communication between teacher and students needs to be carried out to keep the learning atmosphere exists in online class. In face-to-face classroom communication, students mostly used formal language to talk with teacher since teacher is considered to be in the higher social status. Conversely, students mostly use informal language to talk with their classmates in a class (Aitchison & Wardaugh, 1987). Slang word is one of the types of informal language use by students when they talk in a classroom.

Recently, with the rapid use of internet and social media, slang words are growing. There are many slang words which are formed because the influence of social media (Zhang et al., 2016), such as in Indonesia there are the word "gabut". it is possible that students may introduce slang words into their online classroom when they speaking either with their classmates or teacher. The description of what slang words, the context, and the function will be revealed on this study.

Several studies have done to investigate the use of slang words in different context, but small number researchers investigated the use of slang word in education, especially in the context of online learning. Firstly, in the context of social media, (Trimastuti, 2017) analysed the use of slang Indonesian slang words in social media, those are BlackBerry messenger, twitter, Instagram, path, line and Facebook. In order to collect the data, writer used the method of observation. It is found that the slang words used mostly were Alay language, Indonesian slang language that was formed by non-standard alphabetical writing that consisted the combination between letter and number.

With the similar context as Trismatuti (2017) but with different types of social media, (Saputra & Marlina, 2019) Investigated the use of slang word in social media, namely Instagram. They analysed the types and the meaning of slang words used by Plesbol, Instagram account for football lovers using Elissa Mattiello's theories (2008). It is found out that there are more than fifty percent of Mattiello's Slang words found in Plesbol, those are acronym (16.15%), blending (27.43%), clipping (3.89%), compounding (27.71%), prefixation (0.13%), reduplicative (7.52%), reversed form (0.27%), variation (10.16%), and word manufacture and fanciful formation (6.68%). Compounding is the dominant slang with 27.71%. This finding of the study means more than fifty percent of Mattiello's Slang words found in Plesbol.

Additionally, related to social context, (Namvar, 2014) examined the use of slang words in educational context, that is in Malaysian University. The main aim of the research is to investigate how familiar Malaysian college students with slang, and what kinds of slang that were mostly used by students to communicate in class. The subject of the research was 60 students majoring in ELT at UPM. It is found that abbreviations slang, movie slang, and the internet slang were types of slang words that were frequently used. It is indicated that students were familiar with slang. the use of slang is influenced by the used of internet and media.

Finally with different context, (Rizky, 2018) examined the use of slang words in comic book *Mad about Millie Vol. 1 and Deadpool vs Old Man Logan*. The objective of the research was to investigate the contextual meaning of slang words and the function of slang words. The source of data was utterance spoken by the characters. In collecting the data, the researcher applied purposive sampling method in which she found 16 slang words. The findings were the slang words used by the character in the movie had different meaning based on the context. The functions of slang words were to initiate politeness and to express feelings.

Review of previous studies denote the fact that different setting employs different types of slang words used. Thus, the study about the use of slang in the new context of today's teaching and learning is worth conducting. In addition, different from the previous studies, this present study examines the students' attitude towards the use of slang words in online class. Moreover, it is also interesting to notice that the subject of the research came from different cultural background. The way they used slang words would be significant to be investigated.

2. Method

This study employed descriptive qualitative research with the purpose is to investigate the use of slang words in online classroom setting. The subject of this research is 34 EFL students in Translation online class. The online class was carried out in both synchronous learning, using Zoom, and asynchronous, using Spada moddle LMS and WAG. the source of data is the transcript of students' chat in WhatsApp Group (WAG) during 6 months. In addition, questionnaire was used to collect the data about students' attitudes toward the use of slang words.

3. Findings and discussions

Slang Words Used by students

Slang words is one of the culturally specific words. It exists in almost country. Students were exposed by many types of slang words which origin from English, Indonesian, Javanese, and social media. Table 1 showed the percentage of slang words based on its origin. The slang words that were mostly used by students were Indonesian slang words (53%). It was formed when Students wrote the words with non-standard Indonesian spelling such as the word "mantap", "tewur", and "baeg". This indicated that students consider the conversation to be in informal situations, thus they would feel relaxed in expressing their feeling.

In addition, there were several words which were formed uniquely, such as the word “gaskeun” whis is formed by blending the Indonesian word “gas” and Sundanese word “keun”. It means... “carry on”. There were slang words which was formed by morphological variation in which the words were formed by modifying the spelling, such as the word “bor”, “gaes”, and “cuy”. Students used this to show their style in online communication.

Table 1. The Types of Slang Words Used by Students

No.	Slang words which origin from	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Indonesian	16	50%
2.	English	9	28%
3.	Social Media	5	15%
4.	Javanese	2	7%

Different from Indonesian slang words, English slang words used by students were words that were commonly used such as the word “so-so” and “kinda”. Students mostly used English slang words related to term of address for instance “sist” and “dude”. Additionally, there was one slang word which is formed by acronym in the word “lol”.

Moreover, some students were influenced by internet, especially social media and online games. Some students used popular slang words which origin is from social media such as the word “uwu”. UwU is slang word which is formed from the emoticon that is commonly used when chatting in social media, it symbolizes a cute face. Another slang word from the social that was used by students is “cmiiw”. “cmiiw” is acronym slang word which means “correct me if I’m wrong”.

Besides, there were two slang words which were formed from the term used in online game, namely “buff” and “bjerr”. “Buff” is slang word borrowing from English. It means to give power or to stabilize the performance. Bjierr is also slang word which origin from online game. Historically it is formed by the habit of gamers who made typo when he/she wanted to say something rude using swear word. It indicated that “bjerr” is soften swear word. Student used this word to express their feeling in quite polite way to safe face in formal situation. Moreover, there is slang word which origin from the social media that is used to address someone, namely “gan”. “Gan” is the term address to mention someone in “kaskus” (Indonesian popular social media). Besides, there were also Javanese slang words which were used to address someone by students, namely “lur” and “slur”. Those slang words were clipped from the word “dulur” “seduluran” which means “guys”.

The Contextual Use of Slang Words

Students mostly did not use slang words all the time, there were several situation and context they used the slang words. The first was (1) they used slang words when they chatted with their classmates in discussing informal topic such as holiday, make up class, and connection problem. Secondly, students used slang words to express feelings; the feeling of adored (uwu), confused, happy (lol), fascinated (gass, gaskeun), enthusiastic (semongko).

Third, slang words were also used to address a name, especially students’ classmates, such as the word “sist, gan, bro, bor, lur, slur, dude, and kak”. Students explained that the use of slang word for

addressing a name is indicated that they have closer relationship. This finding is also in line with (Wijaya, 2012)'s research which indicated that the use of slang words among youth is to show intimate relationship. Fourthly, students use slang words to discuss lesson, especially when the teacher give challenging question to be discussed with friends. Students who were in doubt about their answer, mostly use the slang word "cmiiw".

Next, in responding teacher questions that were not related with the lesson students used slang words, especially when teacher asking about their activity during holiday when opening the lesson. Finally in certain situation students used slang words to greet teacher, especially when expressing the weather in their region, they used the word "kinda".

The Function of Slang Words

There were many motives when students used slang words in communication during online class. It is found that the motives depend on the speaker, to whom they are speaking to. The used of slang words when speaking with the teacher was limited in terms of slang words choices and the situations. When communicating with teacher students used common slang words, for instance "kinda", "so-so", "baeq", "on the way" and "cmiiw" students assumed that when speaking with teacher they should use polite language, thus they tended to use common slang words.

The situation in which students initiate the use of slang words in online class is based on the function of slang words, to start relax conversation students responded and began conversation using slang words. Conversation 1 illustrated the example, students responded teacher explanation with slang words that changed the tone of conversation from serious to become relaxed.

Conversation 1

Teacher : translation is the application of many branches of disciplines including linguistics and ELT. So, in order to translate well you need to have strong background knowledge on reading comprehension skill, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, syntax, semantics, psycholinguistics etc. Jadi dalam kelas Translation ini kalian siap-siap banjir ilmu ya.

Students A : Ya Allah uwu banget Ma'am.

The second function of the use of slang words is to tell something when it is better using slang words. Slang words contained vocabulary that is not available in other language, such as "jomblo", "gaskeun", "uwu", and "buff". Besides, some slang words formed by abbreviation and it is very useful in chatting. Abbreviation slang word mostly comes from long phrase even clause. Using abbreviated slang words spends less time and energy, for instance the slang words "cmiiw" stands for "correct me if I'm wrong".

The third function of the use of slang words is to express feeling when the conversation is in informal context. Conversation 2 illustrated that student discussed their activity in holiday, and they explained that it was nothing special, the student used the slang word "so-so". Students used this slang word because it was familiar to them, they used it frequently in daily conversation with friends.

Conversation 2

Teacher : How was your holiday?

Students B : Just so-so Ma'am.

Moreover, when speaking with their friends, students used more varied slang words and used it more frequently rather than when speaking with the teacher. The first purpose of students using slang words when chatting with friend is to address someone by using certain term of address when they called their friend, such as “gan”, “sist”, “lur”, “slur”. In this case, the use of slang word to address someone is also to form intimate atmosphere with their close friends in online class.

Students also explained that using slang words in class also good for practising speaking like native, they felt the challenge to improve their speaking skill and to improve vocabulary mastery. students who did not know the meaning of certain slang words made them felt insecure in online class communication. This finding is in line with (Boylu & Karda°, 2020) that slang words Does not known the meaning of slang words may cause problem in social life.

In addition, students also used slang words to express feeling, especially when they swear, they assumed that swearing using slang words is more polite since it did not directly indicate that they swore, for instance they used the slang word “bjirr” it is another spelling for the word “anjing” (consider rude word in Indonesian). Besides, when students felt enthusiastic, they used the slang words “gas”, “gaskeun”, “Tarik sist”, and “semongko”.

Students Perception on the Use of Slang Words

Students' perception about the use of slang words is varied based on the situations. Based on the data findings derived from the questionnaire, 89% students agreed to use slang words in online class because it made learning situation alive and not boredom.

I'm very glad to use it because it makes me more “friendly”. (NG)

I feel more relaxed but at the same time take lessons seriously. (DA)

It makes the students' self-confidence more confident, because they are honing their skills. (BP)

However, 71% students disagree to used slang words when chatting or speaking with the teacher because it considered impolite. This indicated that students were more prefer to use slang words when chatting with friends rather than with teacher. Meanwhile 60% students agreed to use slang words when communicate with the teacher as long as it is polite. What student mean by polite here was not using dirty slang words (swear words and other words that were usually intended to use when speaking with younger people as the lecturer). However, students appreciated the lecturer who initiated to use slang words in online class.

if I use it when there is a lecturer, I think I will feel bad, but if I use it with my friends, I feel it's okay and fun to use it. (MN)

I think it's a bit rude, but if it's allowed it's not a big deal. (MM)

I feel so rude when I use it with my lecturer, but it is very useful for my friends. (FT)

It will be fun if it is done to friends, but it will feel impolite to the lecturer. (AF)

feel impolite for not using the official language during online class. (DA)

4. Conclusion and suggestion

To sum up, the slang words used by students were mostly Indonesian slang words (50%) and English slang words (28%). Indonesian slang words used by students mostly the slang words which was formed by the use of non-standard spelling, blending the Indonesian word with other word from other language, and modifying the word spelling. This suggested that students were influenced by the spelling style used when chatting in social media. English slang words used by students were the common slang words and slang words which was formed by acronym.

Students used slang words more frequently and freely when chatting with friends, especially when (1) chatted with friends discussing informal topic, (2) express feeling, (3) address a name. additionally, when speaking with teacher students used slang word when (4) discussing lesson, and (5) greeting the teacher. Students used limited and selected slang words when chatting with teacher. This finding is inline with the function of slang words in online class, that was students used less varied slang words for several functions when speaking with teacher. In contrast, when chatting with teacher students used more varied slang words for the same function.

In addition, students' perception about the use of slang words is varied based on the situations. Students' attitude toward the use of slang was positive, they explained that they used slang words in online class to make learning atmosphere more alive and relaxed and those make them easier to understand the lesson. However, students were not willing to use slang words when chatting with teacher as freely and more frequently as they chatted with friends because they believe that using slang words with teacher is consider impolite.

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