

SLANGS REFLECTING MALE AND FEMALE RAPPERS' LEXICAL STYLE SEEN IN SONG LYRICS

Yustina Rosa
Sanata Dharma University
yustina.rosa96@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Slang is a kind of language variety which is also considered as colloquial language which changes continuously and used by people to strengthen the social identity in a group or a trend in a society (Eble, 1996, p. 11). Slang can be found in many language uses, one of them is in lyrics. This paper attempts at observing song lyrics in rap genre. Rap song is one of music genres which has poetry as its base and this base comes from hip hop cultural reality (Pate, 2010, pp. 25-27). The rap lyrics researched in this paper were created by the rappers themselves. The rappers were American rappers which consisted of 3 male rappers, Eminem, Jay-Z, and B.o.B, and 3 female rappers, Nicki Minaj, Lil' Kim, and Trina. There were 2 songs from each rapper that were observed. Thus, the amounts of the songs were 12 songs. The range of the year of the songs observed was around 2013-2017. This paper used purposive sampling in selecting the rap songs. The idea of purposive sampling aims to help the researchers in selecting the data that would best help them in understanding the research problem and research question (Creswell, 2014, p. 239). Those selected singers represented their gender. Thus, this paper observed how slang words were used by different gender to represent their lexical style. There are two purposes that are going to be achieved in this research. The first is to find out the form(s) and meaning(s) of the slang words used in song lyrics by male and female rappers. The second one is to find out the style(s) of male and female rappers in using slang words in their song lyrics. To answer the previous inquiries, the writer uses stylistic approach, focusing on lexical analysis. There are 3 outcomes which are expected from the use of slang in song lyrics. First is male rappers tend to use 3 kinds of slang forms, which are compounding, shortening, and affixation, while female rappers tend to use 4 kinds of slang forms, which are compounding, shortening, affixation, and functional shift. The second one is slang used by male rappers show some certain meanings, which are vulgarity, crime, and finance, while slang used by female rappers show only one meaning, which is vulgarity. The third outcome is the styles of male and female rappers in using slang, in which male rappers use less slang forms than female ones, but with various meaning, while female rappers use more slang forms than male ones, but consistently with one meaning.

Keywords: *lexical, slang, rap, style*

INTRODUCTION

Language is one of important tools in supporting human's life. Because of its importance, language has been defined by many linguists, one of them is Eble who defines language as the process where form and meaning exist or come together (1996:25). In process of language production, people do not realize when they are using their vocal organs (form) to produce or create sounds, simultaneously they are also producing the interpretation (meaning) of the sounds. As one of important tools in supporting human's life, language has many kinds of varieties, one of them is slang. Slang is a set of colloquial words and phrases that change continuously that are used by people to create or strengthen the social identity in a group or a trend in a society (Eble, 1996:11). Slang existing in a group of people or in a society will not be long lasting. It is because as the time goes by, people will always find new terms that they will use in their group or in their society. These new terms, then, are used to talk to one another to strengthen their relation and keep their intimacy. Although slang is used as colloquial words of phrases, it is differentiated from standard language in both morphology and semantics (Mattiello, 2008:33).

As mentioned in Endrawati, there are seven characteristics of slangs used by young people in a Stephen Crane's novel entitles *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*. The characteristics are arbitrariness, the use of existing words for interjections, the use of idiom, the use of metaphor, showing emotions, close meaning to the derived words, and abbreviation. Besides the characteristics of the slangs, the writer also finds that the use of slangs in the story is based on several reasons, which are to be considered up to dates, to be considered intelligent or brainy, to be brief, to be quick, to be secret, to have profound meanings, to express feeling, and to attract hearers or interlocutors. (2002:40-61)

In its use, slang is not only found in daily conversation, but also in creating song lyrics, one of them is in creating rap lyrics. Rap is one of music genres which has poetry as its base, in which this base comes from hip hop cultural reality (Pate, 2010:25-27). In creating rap lyrics, the rappers or the poets do not directly pay attention to the music or the beat of the rap, but they pay attention most to the words they write first as poems. Hence, it can be said that "when it comes to rap, the words are more important than

the music” (Pate, 2010:3). It is different from other music forms, in which the song writers pay attention both to the music and the words. In other words, both music and words equally have the same role, while in rap the most important aspect is the words and the music is the addition which supports this important aspect. The words they use consist of some language varieties, one of them is slang. The use of slang in rap is not restricted by gender. In other words, both male and female rappers use slang in creating the song lyrics. However, this similarity does not guarantee them having the same way in use slang.

METHODOLOGY

This paper analyzed 12 rap songs taken from 6 different rappers. These rappers were differentiated based on their gender. These rappers consisted of 3 male rappers and 3 female rappers. The male rappers were Eminem, Jay-Z, and B.o.B, while the female rappers were Nicki Minaj, Trina, and Lil’ Kim. All of them were American rappers. The rap songs analyzed were released around the late 5 years, or in other words around 2013-2017. Because this paper analyzed the song lyrics, a sample study was used. The writer used purposive sampling in choosing the rap songs from each determined year. The idea of choosing the objects based on purposive sampling was supported by Creswell who mentioned that the idea of purposefully select aimed to help the researchers in selecting the data that would best help them in understanding the research problem and research question (2014:239). The writer only limited the background of the rappers, which was American in order to get more specific data about slang.

ANALYSIS

This part discusses the analysis of slang expressions used by male and female rappers. The analysis is divided into three parts. The first one is analysis of slang forms, the second one is analysis of slang meanings, and the third one is analysis of style.

A. Analysis of Slang Forms

This part dicusses slang forms used by male and female rappers. The comparison of slang forms is explained by using Table 1.

Table 1. Form(s) of Slang Expressions by Male and Female Rappers

Forms	Male Rappers’ Slang Expressions	Female Rappers’ Slang Expressions
Analogy	<i>Fat, Dough, Bitches</i>	<i>Bitch, Weave, Bird</i>
Compounding	<i>Yackety-yack, Fucked up</i>	<i>Motherfucking, Lap dance</i>
Functional Shift	<i>Yackety-yack</i>	<i>Cum</i>
Coinage	<i>Fucked up, Shit</i>	<i>Fuck</i>
Shortening	<i>Butt, Grip</i>	<i>D</i>
Affixation	<i>Bitches, Hustlers, Fucked up, Bouncers</i>	<i>Motherfucking, Popping, Gunner</i>
Change in Spelling	<i>Nigga</i>	<i>Nigga</i>
Borrowing	-	<i>Kahuna</i>

In Table 1, it can be seen that both male and female rappers use the same forms of slang, which are Analogy, Compounding, Functional Shift, Coinage, Shortening, Affixation, and Change is Spelling. It is also found that some slang expressions can have more than one slang forms. Those terms are “bitches”, “yackety-yack”, “fucked-up”, and “motherfucking”. “Bitches” firstly undergoes a process of Analogy of bitch. After this process, the term undergoes the process of Affixation in which in this process, the word is composed by adding suffix –es to the word “bitch”. The next term is “Yackety-yack”. This term is composed by compounding the word “yackety” and the word “yack”. After the Compounding process, this term undergoes Functional Shift process from Noun into Verb. Another term is “Fucked-up”. This term undergoes three word processes starting from Coinage, which is the word “fuck”. After that, this term undergoes process of Compounding which compounds the word “fuck” and “up”. Then, the last process is Affixation, in which in this process, the word undergoes a process of adding suffix –ed to the word “fuck”. The last is the word “motherfucking”. This word is composed by compounding the word “mother” and “fuck”. After this process, the word undergoes process of Affixation by adding suffix –ing to the word “fuck”.

However, there is one difference between male and female rappers in using slang forms. The difference is in one of slang forms, which is Borrowing. Male rappers do not use this form in their song

lyrics, while female rappers use it in the word “kahuna”. The use of this form can be seen in the lyric below:

I'm the big kahuna, go let them whores know

This term is borrowed from Hawaiian term which is dedicated for priest or wise man. Besides, it is often used with the word ‘big’. However in the song lyric, the rapper does not use it for priest or even wise man such as what is used in Hawaiian, but the rapper uses it for herself.

B. Analysis of Slang Meanings

This part discusses the meanings of slang expressions used by male and female rappers. The slang expressions analyzed in this part are similar with slang expressions analyzed in the previous part. The meaning of each slang expression is analyzed by using semantic features. Semantic features, which are also known as semantic properties, mean part of word meanings which reflect our knowledge about the meaning of the word (Fromkin *et al*, 2014:158). The way of determining the meaning in semantic features is strengthened by Leech (1981) in semantic oppositions. Semantic oppositions mean the dimensions of meaning as the result of the use of formulae in determining the meaning(s) (Leech, 1981:90).

Table 2. Meaning(s) of Slang Expressions by Male and Female Rappers

Meanings	Male Rappers' Slang Expressions	Female Rappers' Slang Expressions
[+Finance]	<i>Fat, Dough, Grip</i>	-
[+Profession]	<i>Yackety-yack, Butt, Hustlers, Bouncers</i>	-
[+Vulgarity]	<i>Shit, Butt, Bitches, Nigga, Hustlers, Fucked up</i>	<i>Lap dance, Gunner, Popping, Motherfucking, Bird, Nigga, Cum, Fuck, Bitch</i>
[+Body part]	<i>Butt</i>	<i>Weave, Bird</i>
[+Crime]	-	<i>D</i>
[+Power]	-	<i>Kahuna</i>

In Table 2, it can be seen that both male and female rappers show two same meanings in using slang expressions. The meanings are [+Vulgarity] and [+Body part]. Besides, slang expressions used by male and female rappers also show some differences meanings. As seen in Table 2, the different meanings resulted from the use of slang expressions are [+Finance], [+Profession], [+Crime], and [+Power]. The first meaning, which is [+Finance], is only resulted from slang expressions used by male rappers. The slang expressions are found in the lyrics below:

Lyric 1: *Got a fat knot from that rap profit*

Lyric 2: *My mind was fine 'til the dough hit it*

Lyric 3: *I only pick it up for that grip*

In slang dictionary, one of the meanings of the term “fat” in the first lyric is wealthy. This meaning is suitable with the meaning of the lyric itself since the lyric mention the word profit which also has semantic feature [+Finance]. Hence, the term “fat” also has semantic feature [+Finance]. The next term is “dough”. In slang dictionary, one of the meanings of this term is money. Hence, automatically this term has semantic feature [+Finance]. The last term is “grip”. In slang dictionary, one of the meanings of this term is a small suitcase. This term has semantic feature [+Finance] because this term is still related to the previous lyrics:

Money on my mind, can't take it off that shit

A nigga's got five different iPhones

I only pick it up for that grip

in which in the lyrics, there are three words containing semantic feature [+Finance]. The words are money, shit, and iPhones.

The second meaning, [+Profession], is also only resulted from the use of slang expressions by male rappers. The slang expressions are found in the lyrics below:

Lyric 1: *Backpack rap crap, yap-yap, yackety-yack*

Lyric 2: *Cause I worked my butt off now*

Lyric 3: *I'ma play the corners where the hustlers be*

Lyric 4: *She know the promoters and all the bouncers*

In slang dictionary, the term “yackety-yack” means inconsequential talk. This meaning is related to the word “rap” in the lyric since in rapping, the rappers often create inconsequential lyrics which cause inconsequential talk when they are rapping. Because of the relation between the term “yackety-yack” and

the word “rap”, it can be concluded that semantic feature of the term “yackety-yack” is [+Profession]. The next term is “butt”. In Table 2, this term has 3 semantic features, which are [+Vulgarity, +Body parts, and +Profession]. These 3 semantic features are obtained by considering one of dictionary meanings and the phrase “worked off” in the lyric. One of dictionary meanings of this term is the buttocks. Hence, by looking at the meaning, this term has semantic features [+Vulgarity and +Body parts]. However, there is one more semantic feature which can be obtained from this term. The semantic feature is [+Profession]. The meaning of this term, which is the buttocks, is related to the phrase “worked off” in the lyric since this term is something which is used to work in order to earn money. The third term is “hustlers”. In Table 2, this term has 2 semantic features, which are [+Vulgarity and +Profession]. These semantic features are obtained by considering one of dictionary meanings, which is a prostitute, especially a male homosexual, of the term. As it is known, prostitute is a job in which people offer themselves to others for sex in order to earn money. The last term is “bouncers”. In slang dictionary, one of the meanings of the term “bouncers” is a person, usually a strong man, employed to maintain and restore order in a bar, restaurant, club, or performance. Semantic feature of this term is obtained by considering the dictionary meaning and also the relation between the term itself and the word “promoters” in the lyric.

The next two different meanings are [+Crime and +Power]. These meanings are only resulted from the use of slang expressions by female rappers. The first meaning, which is [+Crime], is found in lyric, “*Stingin' with the Queen Bey and we be whippin' all of that D*”. In slang dictionary, one of the meanings of the term “D” is a police detective. The meaning of the term is obtained by relating the dictionary meaning and the word “whippin” which also has semantic feature [+Crime] in the lyric. The word “whippin” also has semantic feature [+Crime] since one of the meanings of this word, according to slang dictionary, is to arrest someone. The second meaning, [+Power], is found in lyric, “*I'm the big kahuna, go let them whores know*”. In slang dictionary, one of the meanings of the term “kahuna” is a great or important person or thing, in which this term is from Hawaiian term used for priest or wise man and it is often used with the word “big”. Semantic feature of this term is obtained by relating the dictionary meaning itself with the next lyric after the lyric where the term exists.

I'm the big kahuna, go let them whores know

Just on this song alone, bitch is on her fourth flow

These two lyrics show that the rapper wants to show to other people, especially other rappers, that she is an great rapper, and by using only one song, she can gain power and defeat other rappers level. Because of that, the meaning of the term “kahuna” in the lyric is [+Power].

C. Analysis of Style

Based on the analysis of forms and meanings of slang expressions used by male and female rappers, there are two differences between male and female rappers in using slang expressions. The first difference is the use of slang forms. The slang forms used by male rappers are Analogy, Compounding, Functional Shift, Coinage, Shortening, Affixation, and Change in Spelling, while slang forms used by female ones are Analogy, Compounding, Functional Shift, Coinage, Shortening, Affixation, Change in Spelling, and Borrowing. The second difference is the meanings resulted from the use of slang expressions. In using slang expressions, male rappers show four certain meanings, which are Finance, Profession, Vulgarity, and Body part. Similar in term of quantity, female rappers also show four certain meanings, but with different meanings. The meanings shown from the use of slang expressions by female rappers are Vulgarity, Body part, Crime, and Power.

Those differences show that male and female rappers have different style in using slang expressions. Male rappers use less slang forms than female ones because male rappers do not use slang form of borrowing in their song lyrics, while female rappers do. In term of meanings, male and female rappers show two meanings which differentiate one another. Male rappers show Finance and Profession in their slang expressions, while female rappers show Crime and Power in their slang expressions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, there are some outcomes concluded. The first one is the similarity between male and female rappers in using slang forms. Both male and female rappers use slang forms of Analogy, Compounding, Functional Shift, Slang Free Morpheme, Shortening, Changes in Spelling, and Affixation. The second one is the difference between male and female rappers in using slang forms. Male rappers do not use slang form of Borrowing, while female rappers do. The third one is the similarity of the meanings resulted, in which both male and female rappers show Vulgarity and Body Part in their slang expressions. The fourth outcome is the difference of the meanings resulted, in which male rappers show Finance and

Profession, while female ones show Crime and Power. The last outcome is the style of male and female rappers. Male rappers use less slang forms than female ones, while female rappers use more slang forms than male ones. However, both male and female rappers show four meanings, with two meanings which differentiate them.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Complete Name : Yustina Rosa
Institution : Sanata Dharma University
Education : Undergraduate Student, English Letters Department, Sanata Dharma University
Research Interests : Stylistics