

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents background of the research, research questions, objective of the research, significance of the research, and definition of key terms related to this research.

A. Background of the Research

Language is closely related to the culture and social system of certain community in which language is used. Culture is the basic consideration of how communication should take place or how language should be used. Culture causes the variation of language from one region to another or from one community to another. From the sociolinguistics point of view, language variation may be prompted by several factors such as age, social networking, social class, and gender (Meyerhoff, 2006: 127-128). These factors also influence the existence of standard and non-standard languages. Standard language is used in the formal occasion, while, non-standard language is usually used in the environment which is not in contact with the formality such as in song, movies or jokes. One example of variations in non-standard English language is slang.

Slang is informal language used by members of certain group for internal communication that may not be understood by the members of other groups. Sometimes, slang cannot be interpreted as it is because many slang words contain different meaning than the definition in a standard dictionary. For example, in a standard dictionary, the word '*sick*' means '*not feeling well*', but now it becomes recent innovation of slang that means '*great*'. Slang is very informal vocabulary

used only by people who know each other well (Swan, 1995: 510). People who belong to a particular group such as group of teenagers, musicians, and sailors use slang frequently in their everyday speech (Fan & Zhou, 2013: 2209). Thus, slang language is one of language varieties which is properly used in particular situation and cannot be used in formal circumstances.

The use of slang words in a particular community has two tendencies namely social purpose and antisocial purpose. Slang can keep insiders together and exclude people outside the group (McCrinkle & Wolfinger, 2011: 61; Mattiello, 2008: 32). For social purposes, slang can facilitate social interaction and encourage friendliness or closeness. It is used by members of a group to get acceptance in a group and to enhance group solidarity (Eble, 2009: 83). On the other hand, slang has several antisocial purposes such as showing social differences, marking group identity during a limited stage of life (Yule, 2014: 262) and hiding secret information from other community (Mattiello, 2008: 40). For example, a group of snatchers use certain slang words to keep the content of their conversation in private because slang words that they usually utter can only be understood by their fellow criminals.

Slang differs from jargon although these two terms refer to the specialized vocabulary used by the members of certain community. Jargon is associated with a specific area of work or interest (Yule, 2014: 262). Slang word is lack of prestige and pretentiousness rather than jargon. Slang is much more well-known and spontaneous than the technical jargon of science, medicine, academics law, bureaucracy and business. However, slang can be an option within Jargon

(Mattiello, 2008: 36). For example, drug addicts employ specific slang terms to refer to the name of drugs such as *coke* (cocaine), *weed* or *pot* (marijuana) and *happy pills* (ecstasy). Other example, beauticians use specific slang terms such as *naked* (no makeup look), *haul* (a large amount of products all bought at the same time) and *swatch* (testing out make up shades on the skin to show the pigments and texture when applied). Therefore, slang and jargon are not the same because they have their own characteristics.

Slang can be found in teenagers' conversations. Young people tend to be more creative and full of new ideas. As a result, their creativity influences their colloquial language. Teenagers are quite energetic in creating slang (Fan & Zhou, 2013: 2209). They like to combine or create new words from unattractive become fresh and understandable by their peers. Yet, most of slang terms have not been added into the dictionary (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2011: 53). Usually, teenagers use slang words to create intimacy while communicating with their mates or groups, but it also can create distance with people outside their group. For example, specific slang words used by teenagers in one region can easily be understood by their friends, but it may not be grasped by their own parents or even teenagers from other region. Thus, speakers use slang to show their belonging to a group and establish solidarity with the other group members.

Sometimes, when young people use slang, it is quite hard for the elders to comprehend what they mean. Youth slang is notorious to make parents perplexed because many slang words are only used to communicate with their peers (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2011: 61). For example, teenagers use slang to talk to

their best friends about boyfriend or cute boys that they admire in the school so that their parents will not understand the content of their conversation. In addition, many parents do not understand about some slang words created from abbreviation or acronym such as *YOLO* (You Only Live Once), *OOTD* (Outfit of The Day) and *TBT* (Throwback Thursday).

Over the last few years, social media has transformed the way people communicate. Social media allows anyone with the internet to interact with society. Furthermore, there are some slang expressions produced by online communicators and social media users (Huffaker & Calvert, 2005: 3). For example, *Instagram boyfriend* (the man who goes the extra mile to take perfect Instagram photo for his girlfriend), *Tweet* (posting something on Twitter), *DM* (Direct Message) and *hashtag* (the # character combined with a word or simple phrase that defined a post or image into a category to make it easier for people to find it on social media). Those online slang are also difficult for the elders to keep up with.

Slang words can be differentiated based on their users. First, some slang words are associated with a specific region. Slang varies from one region to another. Many countries, regions and cities have their own slang terms which often make people from neighbouring areas confused (McCrinkle & Wolfinger, 2011: 64; Mattiello, 2008: 221). For example, some of American slang may be different from Australian or British slang even though their language is English. Second, slang words used by people in certain status and occupation vary from one another. That is why there are some social categories of slang like teenage

slang, doctor's slang and military slang (Agha, 2015: 308). Third, the users of slang can be distinguished from the age. Slang used by youths and adults are different because new words are born in each age group (McCrinkle & Wolfinger, 2011: 53). As a result, slang differs across the generations.

The advent of the Internet altered social communication, including language and slang. Via the Internet, people can communicate and share their ideas with other people who live far away and even across countries easily and quickly. Now, there is no longer required face-to-face interaction for connectivity in a group. Two standard major characteristics of slang; its restriction to oral communication and its role in the maintenance of groups will appear threatened by the Internet communication which is mainly written and has no group boundaries (Eble, 2009: 87-88). In few years ago, slang is only used by people who know each other well (Swan, 1995: 510), but now slang can be understood by many people even though they do not belong to certain group. Anyone on the planet with an Internet connection can find slang language on the Internet easily such as from YouTube, Facebook, Blog, or Twitter.

In this modern era, teenagers' lifestyles get much influence from the Internet and social media. YouTube is one of popular platform which is really liked by millennial circles (Lee, 2017: 28). There are numerous people who like to create and upload their videos on their YouTube channel. One kind of popular videos across YouTube is *vlog*. Vlog is an abbreviation from words 'video blog'. Vlogs and blogs are similar except that the medium used to post content is video instead of text. The activity to create vlog is called *vlogging*, and the person who creates

vlog is called vlogger or video blogger. Vloggers usually speak in front of the camera to tell a certain topic such as their personal stories, experiences, tutorial, and many more in very creative way. Hence, many teenagers actually copy their lifestyle and their speech.

Nowadays, many teenagers become vloggers, and they often upload their vlogs on their own YouTube channels. YouTube is a popular platform that allows users to upload, tag, and share video clips so that their video will be watched by people around the world (Gao, et. al., 2010: 2). Most of teenagers upload their vlogs on YouTube just for fun. Yet, some vloggers successfully gained so many subscribers, and their videos have been watched by thousands viewers or even more. In fact, most of them use informal language as well as slang words in their vlogs. Obviously, not all people understand with what they said. Now, with the ability to send video clips through the Internet, slang is thriving tremendously in Internet communication, especially American slang (Eble, 2009: 87-88). That is why the researcher wants to analyze slang language used by several American teenage vloggers that have been uploaded in their YouTube channel.

There are two reasons why teenage vloggers are selected by the researcher for analyzing slang. First, vlog nowadays is popular among teenagers. In recent years, vlog has gained much attention worldwide after Google's acquisition of YouTube in November 2006 (Gao, et. al., 2010: 2). Youth viewers prefer to watch YouTube videos than television because they are able to relate to the authenticity of user-generated content (Holland, 2016: 52). Second, many teenage vloggers use

informal language and even slang in their vlogs. Therefore, the researcher can get the data of this research from their vlogs.

In this study, American vloggers are chosen by the researcher because America dominates the world in many things, including language and culture. American culture and ideas are spreading inevitably, and it triggers Americanization. Americanization of the globe is the worldwide spread and dominance of American influence and culture (Jaja, 2010: 117). As the effect of Americanization, American music, movies, television and language are so dominant. America's big domination influences the tastes, lives, and aspirations of virtually every nation (Daghrir, 2013: 19). Therefore, people can easily find American products because they are now available everywhere on Earth.

Like other American products, American slang is very popular in the world. American slang as a part of Americanization will become even more international as the development of America and American English (Fan & Zhou, 2013: 2209). American youth slang is nowadays part of global mediatized processes (American pop music, movies, television, travel, and tourism) that make particular expressions of the variety very widely known. It is not difficult today to find speakers of Japanese, Thai, or Bengali who employ American youth slang even though they do not speak English fluently (Agha, 2015: 310). Vlog made by American is also one example of American products which is popular in social media nowadays. Their ideas, information, culture, language and even slang that they show in their vlogs influence their viewers all around the world.

The studies on slang have been interestingly conducted, but it is still interesting to know slang language used by American teenage vloggers because not all people who watch their vlogs understand the meaning of slang language used by them, especially people whose mother tongue is not English. Hence, this research can be used as a reference by the readers, especially for students who want to analyze slang language as object in thesis writing.

In term of the user of slang language, previous studies mostly focused to analyze slang used by singers in their song lyrics, or slang used by actors and actress in American movie. For example, some studies discussed about the meaning and the reasons of using slang words in American movies (Hanggoro, 2011; Sari, 2010). Those studies found that African-American and gangsters tend to be more often to use slang language in their daily conversation. In addition, there is a study about slang language used in some rap songs lyrics (Wiratama, 2016). Based on three studies in terms of the user of slang, it is significant to investigate slang language used by American teenage vloggers.

B. Research Questions

1. What are the types of slang language used by American teenage *vloggers* in their *vlogs*?
2. What are the meanings of slang language used by American teenage *vloggers* in their *vlogs*?

C. Objective of the Research

1. To classify the types of slang language used by American teenage *vloggers* in their *vlogs*.
2. To find out the meaning of slang language used by American teenage *vloggers* in their *vlogs*.

D. Significance of the Research

This research contributes to enrich the study about slang language which is included in sociolinguistics. Besides, hopefully this research has benefits for language learning, especially for English Education Department students to increase their knowledge about slang language. By learning about slang language, they can understand and use slang language appropriately in the daily conversation or in informal situation. Further, learning slang language can help non-native English students to avoid misunderstanding when they communicate with English native speakers. Moreover, the researcher hopes that this study can inspire other researchers to conduct further research about slang language used by vloggers or other topics related to slang language to enhance the existing of the study.

E. Scope and Limitation of the Research

The scope of the research is slang used by American teenage vloggers. This research will analyze the types of slang language and its meaning from the transcript of American teenage *vlogs* selected by the researcher.

F. Definition of Key Terms

1. Slang is informal language used by members of certain community. Here, the communities are vloggers and their viewers.
2. Vlog is video blog made by vlogger that the content inside is dominated by vlogger's voice or explanation which is selected by the researcher.
3. Vlogger means the creator of vlog (video blog) that has at least 10.000 subscribers on their YouTube channel.
4. Teenage vloggers means the creator of vlog (video blog) from age 14 to 19.
5. American teenage vloggers refer to American citizens from age 14 to 19 who often upload their vlogs to their own YouTube channels which have at least 10.000 subscribers.

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<i>abbr.</i> abbreviation	<i>adj.</i> adjective
<i>adv.</i> adverb	<i>cont.</i> contraction (a shorter form of a word or words)
<i>exclam.</i> exclamation	<i>interj.</i> interjection
<i>interrog.</i> interrogative	<i>n.</i> nominal (noun and noun phrases)
<i>prep.</i> preposition	<i>pro.</i> pronoun
<i>sent.</i> sentence	<i>v.</i> verb