
SLANG ANALYSIS OF DRAG QUEEN IN THE MOVIE TO WONG FOO, THANKS FOR EVERYTHING! JULIE NEWMAR: SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY

Aslinda Yuniarti, Elysa Hartati*, Bagas Dwi Kameswara

English Education science, Faculty of Teacher and Education, Mercu Buana University Of Yogyakarta, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author Email: elysa@mercubuana-yogya.ac.id

ABSTRACTS

This research was conducted to identify the slang employed by the drag queens in the film "To Wong Foo, Thanks For Everything! Julie Newmar" and how the slang is interpreted in the context. Qualitative descriptive research method was used to find out the meaning of the slang. The result showed a collection of slang identified in the film. It can be seen that in the context of a drag queen where a man with a manly appearance following a woman, the realization of the language used in the community follows the characteristic language of a woman. As the film often appears, the word 'Mama', 'Mamita' is used to refer to the same community to show a feeling of affection as a sexual identity and shows the language of feminism. Additionally, some slang that emerged with the addition of the suffix -a became 'gringa', -sies became 'looksies' and 'feelsies' also showed the characteristics of the gendered female language. In-depth study about slang in the context of drag queen is necessary to do. Further research can hopefully identify how this slang is formed when viewed from the perspective of the gender attribute.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: 4 July 2024

Revised: 10 July 2024

Published: 31 July 2024

Keywords:

Slang,
Drag Queen,
Sociolinguistic

INTRODUCTION

Linguistics is the science that studies language, as language is a tool of human communication whose manifestations can vary from oral to written (Wijana, 2021). One of the linguistic disciplines that is currently becoming a trend is slang. Slang is an ideological framework that is one of the many reasons about language that defines different language classes. This ideology may exist with various intensity levels, seeing from the existence of language with many functions, and the power institutionalized within a language community (Agha, 2015). Meanwhile in Indonesia, slang or slang is one of the languages of Indonesian communication. The slang term appeared in the late 1980s. Slang is a language style that arises from the development or modification of various languages. Because slang is a commonly used language, there is no clear and standard pronunciation structure (Anggini et al., 2022).

Language has its characteristics in a particular community, including in a profession that a person is engaged in. One of them is the profession of drag queen where someone, usually a man, dresses and makes up like a woman, excessively imitating the characteristics of women and their roles to entertain. Drag or drag queen is a form of self-expression created by an actor. Applying costumes, hairstyles, make-up and personalities that are different from everyday life to convey a certain point of view, claim social satire (Pattamaporn and Poonpol, 2022).

Drag queens are often associated with gay men and gay culture, although other sexual identities can also be included in this profession. The sexual identity of drag queens is also depicted in a film entitled To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar. This comedy

genre film was released in America in 1995 and tells the story of the journey of three main drag queens, namely Vida, Noxeema, and Chi-Chi. With their characteristics, they head to Hollywood to participate in the Miss Drag Queen of America Pageant. On their journey they encounter various obstacles, how their friendship is tested, how they teach tolerance to the local community where they live temporarily while repairing the broken car they are riding in about their sexual identity. Finally, they arrived in Los Angeles and Chi-Chi received the title of drag queen of the Year and was immediately crowned by Julie Newmar.

The depiction of a drag queen character in the film entitled *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar* is actually very in line with the findings of Olivera et al., (2018) who stated that the characteristics of a drag queen's identity and her work as a drag artist, namely appearance and clothing, are elements that support the fantasy that is accepted in society. One of the elements that gives meaning to transgender work is the connection of several characteristics of a single identity with the social and affectional dimensions that underpin a form of social recognition.

The film, which examines queer life, also depicts the heterogeneous sexual identities that exist in people's lives, which have become a social phenomenon. According to Butler (2004) in Riggs and Treharne (2017) queer theory talks about how marginalized groups can gain agency and recognition in order to be accepted in society because it is not written down in standard rules. They also communicate between individuals using certain types of language that are understood by their community.

Slang includes social purposes to mark relationships of informality, convey creativity or humor, and show impoliteness or even rejection of formal conventions (Roth, 2020). Even so, slang emphasis an interactional dynamics which is interpreted by reducing the formality of an utterance, naturalizing standard language, and linguistic expectations from standard language speakers including linguistics. An example of the application of the slang principle in this case is communication between teenagers which shows their level of closeness but on the other hand, they will use formal language in certain conditions. Slang is part of the language used for communication. Wahyu and Pahamzah (2021) also discovered the fact that Slang is a variation of language that has recently been widely used in teenage interactions. Teenagers use this variety of language for various purposes such as enriching the language by creating new words, creating a friendly atmosphere, appearing different and lightening up social interactions, and reducing the seriousness of conversations.

Not only found in everyday conversation, according to Frommer et al., (2004), people can also easily find slang words in music and films, as shown in the film *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Neymar*. This means that slang is a variation of language that cannot be separated from human life, especially for certain groups who are informal and more relaxed.

Slang speech patterns reflect the real world and the thoughts of the speaker, in this case, the drag queens. Therefore, it is not surprising that most of the words produced are related to relationships, the environment, or the activities of the drag queen (Febriansyah and Iskandar, 2023).

Partridge (2015) states that there are at least fifteen reasons why slang is used. Reasons include the desire to experiment with using 'poetic' or creative language, for fun, the desire to be secretive, the desire to be expressive, the desire to use language as a symbol of group membership to express intimacy with people in the group or to exclude those who do not in the group to show that someone has a relaxed and casual nature, etc. Apart from that, Andersson and Trudgill (1990) also stated that the purposes of using slang include the desire to be different, enrich the language, play around, identify oneself with a certain educational status, trade and social class or to maintain confidentiality.

The desire to use language as a symbol of group membership to express intimacy with those within the group and to exclude those who are not, is demonstrated in the film *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newman*. In the film, there is slang produced by drag queens in carrying out their profession and sexual identity in interacting with the same community. Based on this phenomenon, this research was conducted to identify what slang is produced by the drag queen in the film, and how this slang is interpreted in the existing context.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research used descriptive qualitative research to find slang words and their meanings. The object of this research is the slang words found in the film *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newman* is 1995 American road comedy film. The original subtitle in the film was English and translated into Indonesian language to see the meaning. In conducting this research, a total sampling technique was used to collect data. The researcher took all manuscripts that contained slang words. The data collection steps are explained as follows: (a) watching the film, (b) confirming the content of the film with the source language script that is english, (c) identifying the slang contained in the film, (d) finding the meaning of the words slang found in the subtitling along with the context. Data analysis in this researched does not use special methods, only documentation of findings and note taking. The object of this research under study is a film, the code of ethics used is not informed consent but rather an initial one to prevent plagiarism or research misconduct, and you accurately represent your results. This research has been known and approved by academics, so in the process no party is harmed, the data analysis carried out only focuses on topics related to slang and linguistics so that researchers do not include topics outside the research to enhance research validity and maintain scientific or academic integrity.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following are findings of some of the slang found in the film *To Wong Foo* which is expressed by drag queens. There is some slang that is general, and there is also specific slang that is characteristic of drag queen speech. Overall, the slang found in the film is written in table 1.

Table 1. Slang Identification

| No | Slang | Meaning | Context |
|----|---|------------------------------|--|
| 1 | <i>Here comes mama</i> | I'm coming | The word 'mama' often appears in this film and refers to an affectionate greeting in the drag queen community, also showing the feminine character of drag queens. |
| 2 | <i>I'm gonna make my lips even more beestung.</i> | I'm will make my lips bigger | Drag queens like things that are excessive, so even from the appearance of their lips they want to look thicker and more exotic. |
| 3 | <i>He's going on my tyres.</i> | I'm going home with him | When a drag queen sees a man with a very muscular body the mostly are their type of liking, they wants to spend more time with him. |
| 4 | <i>We have a tie!</i> | Equal | 'A tie' is defined as a draw because there are two drag queens who have the same result when selecting drag queen pageant. |
| 5 | <i>would one day share a title with moi?</i> | Sharing the same title | <i>Moi</i> in French means 'me'. Sometimes drag queens mix their language with other |

| No | Slang | Meaning | Context |
|----|---|---|---|
| | | | foreign languages such as French, Latin, Mexican. |
| 6 | <i>How bi.</i> | Too much bisexual | There is a man who dresses sexually as a man but he also likes men who work as drag queens. |
| 7 | <i>All-day sucker</i> | Loser all day | A curse given to the person you are talking to for an unpleasant incident. |
| 8 | <i>Golly! Golly!</i> | Sensational | An expression expressed when seeing something amazing or cannot be explained in a good ways |
| 9 | <i>to get kicks</i> | Desire in sexuality | The phrase is said in the context of men who have sexual desires. |
| 10 | <i>Is there a drag ball going on?</i> | Is there any party going on | Special party for drag queens. |
| 11 | <i>Oh, stop. My nerves.</i> | My inpatient | When Vida one of the drag queens can no longer imagine what Chi-Chi, her/his friend, is reading in a sexual context. |
| 12 | <i>Where the freak are we?</i> | Where we are right now?! | Phrases to emphasize a question. |
| 13 | <i>Give Daddy some sugar.</i> | Give someone a pleasure | When a police officer seduces one of the drag queens into having sex. |
| 14 | <i>The little Hispanic rent-a-tart.</i> | Hispanic man with stupid trait | A curse given to a friend because of several obstacles experienced with him in several parts of the film. |
| 15 | <i>a bucket of chicken.</i> | Moron | An expletive given to friends who don't believe in him. |
| 16 | <i>Looksies, feelsies.</i> | no Look but not touch. | The form of expression is conveyed with the suffix --sies which shows the feminine side of the person speaking. |
| 17 | <i>Here, kitty, kitty, kitty.</i> | Come here kids | Kitty is defined as a cute animal so it suits the character of a person who is gentle and beautiful. These words are suitable to be used to call a community of people who love each other. |
| 18 | <i>What a coinky-dinky.</i> | A coincidence | Coinky-dinky is a slang of the word coincidence. |
| 19 | <i>my papi is built like a brick...</i> | My soulmate is strong | In this context, 'papi' is defined as a man who is the lover of the drag queen. |
| 20 | <i>No, mamita, please!</i> | No dear I beg you | Almost the same as 'mama'. 'Mamita' is expressed by drag queens as an expression of saying and shows the feminine side. |
| 21 | <i>Poinky-poinky-poink-poink!</i> | Argument on something that have similiary | This slang appears when drag queens are discussing sexual relations with their lovers who also have the same genital organs. |
| 22 | <i>She's an oppressive gringa with a pinga.</i> | He/she is indeed a bully. | 'Gringa' here is the feminine form of the word 'Gringo' which means foreigner, not well known. |

From the collection of slang identified in the film *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything!* Julie Newmar in table 1, it can be seen that in the context of drag queens where a man imitates a woman's appearance along with her role, the realization of the language used in that community also follows existing feminine linguistic characteristics. As often appears in the film, the words 'Mama', 'mamita' are used to refer to members of the same community to show affection for the same sexual identity and show a feminist language style. Apart from that, some slang that appears with the addition of the suffix -a in 'gringa', -sies in 'looksies' and 'feelsies' also shows linguistic characteristics of the female. Danesi (2010) explained that the forms and functions of language vary systematically, not only according to geography, but also according to social level, cultural use, and various communicative functions. Slang is a linguistic symbol that encodes social phenomena that are seen as belonging to a particular community. If it is associated with speakers who are educated and high class, it is considered part of jargon. Slang forms can be new words created for certain reasons, such as meaning luxury or hype as a sign of a gimmick. Or perhaps an old word with a new meaning, people use slang more often than they realize. And slang has a very high level of appeal. This is because slang is like a type of poetry, indicating friendliness, sameness, and innate musicality. The basis of slang perhaps explains why many linguistic expressions have become colloquial, entering everyday speech and blending perfectly into linguistics. In addition, the linguistic nature of slang shows the importance of slang as a dynamic, creative and socially significant linguistic phenomenon. By studying slang, we can gain insight into the evolving nature of language and the dynamics with which people express identity and social interaction (Fayzulloyevna, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Based from the result it can be concluded that in this film there are several slang used by the actors whose characters are drag queens, the implication of the slang shows aspects of feminism as female characters that exist in their souls. In the context of the film, slang is used to show their sexual identity within the same group, namely drag queens, and to keep their identity secret when in an environment outside their community.

This research is very interesting to study further. It is hoped that further researcher able to identify how this slang can be formed and formulate its word form when viewed from the perspective of its gender attributes.

REFERENCES

- Agha, A. (2015). Tropes Of Slang. *Signs And Society*, 3(2), 306-330.
- Andersson, L. and Trudgill. P.(1990). *Bad Language*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- Anggini, N., Afifah, N. Y., & Syaputra, E. (2022). Pengaruh Bahasa Gaul (Slang) Terhadap Bahasa Indonesia Pada Generasi Muda. *Jurnal Multidisiplin Dehasen (Mude)*, 1(3), 143-148.
- Danesi, M. (2010). The forms and functions of slang. *Semiotica*, 2010(182), 507-517. <https://doi.org/10.1515/semi.2010.069>
- Fayzulloyevna, N. M. (2023). LINGUISTIC PROPERTIES OF SLANG. *Academia Repository*, 4(11), 175-182.
- Febriansyah, F., Khair, U., & Iskandar, Z. (2023). Analisis Bahasa Slang pada Komunitas Waria di Desa Keban Agung Kecamatan Kikim Selatan Kabupaten Lahat (Doctoral dissertation, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Curup).
- Frommer, Paul R. and Edward Finegan. (2006). "Looking at Language: A Workbook in Elementary Linguistics." USA: University of Southern California.

- Oliveira, T. Z. D., Guimaraes, L. D. V., Caeiro, M. D. L., & Gomes Júnior, A. B. (2018). Identifying As A Drag Queen And The Meaning Of Work. *Ram. Revista De Administração Mackenzie*, 19, Eramd180060.
- Partridge, E. (2015). *Slang: To-Day and yesterday*. In *Slang: To-Day and Yesterday*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315692111>
- Pattamaporn, C., & Poonpol, P. (2022). *Drag Queen: Identity And Value To Personal And Social Development* (Doctoral Dissertation, Srinakharinwirot University).
- Riggs, Damien W. dan Treharne, Gareth J. (2017). *Queer Theory*. Diakses secara online pada https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316058501_Queer_Theory
- Roth-Gordon, J. (2020). *Language And Creativity: Slang*. *The International Encyclopaedia Of Linguistic Anthropology*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Doi, 10, 9781118786093.
- To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar. *Movie*. (1995)
- Wahyu Nuraeni, F., & Pahamzah, J. (2021). An Analysis Of Slang Language Used In Teenager Interaction. *Jurnal Penelitian Bahasa, Sastra Dan Pengajarannya*, 20(2), 313-322.
- Wijana, I. D. P. (2021). *Pengantar Sociolinguistik*. UGM PRESS.