

Original Article

Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Slang: Analyzing Oral Communication Attitudes Within Philippine Higher Education

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Abstract. This mixed-methods study examined the sociolinguistic perspectives on slang in oral communication within a Philippine state university. It sought to identify and classify the most prevalent slang terms, assess their effectiveness across various demographic groups, and explore attitudes toward slang within social and academic contexts. Employing an explanatory sequential design, the research used descriptive statistics to categorize slang terms by their linguistic formation, origin, and contextual meaning. Through Lichtman's 3Cs method – coding, categorizing, and concept formation – the researchers unearthed complex attitudes toward slang, emphasizing its deep roots in gay lingo and Internet culture. Findings revealed that while slang is widely recognized as a powerful tool for enhancing social cohesion and bridging communication gaps, its effectiveness varies significantly by age, gender, and residence. Despite its widespread use, concerns were raised about its potential to hinder clear communication, particularly in formal academic settings. The study concluded that while slang is integral to identity formation and social interaction, its use should be carefully moderated to ensure clarity and effectiveness in communication. To address these challenges, it was recommended that educational institutions incorporate discussions on the sociolinguistic implications of slang into curricula, establish guidelines for its appropriate use, and promote cross-generational dialogue to bridge communication gaps. This balanced approach may help maintain the cultural relevance of slang while upholding academic discourse standards.

Keywords: Slang; Sociolinguistics; Oral communication; Gay lingo; Explanatory sequential design; Philippines.

Using slang in oral communication within higher education introduces various sociolinguistic dimensions that directly influence interactional norms, communication efficacy, and linguistic identity among students and faculty. Slang, characterized by informal and nonstandard vocabulary, remains a dynamic and evolving linguistic phenomenon that reflects cultural trends, generational shifts, and identity negotiations. In academic settings, its presence can either enrich social engagement or clash with formal language norms, creating

a persistent tension between linguistic inclusivity and institutional language expectations (Liu et al., 2024; Rafiqoh, 2023; Jeresano & Carretero, 2022). While slang serves as a powerful tool for peer bonding and self-expression, especially among youth, its use in academic discourse can be contentious. It is sometimes perceived as indicative of linguistic inadequacy or informality, raising concerns about its appropriateness in formal educational contexts (Puspitasari & Setiawan, 2023). Moreover, the increasing impact of digital culture and social media on communication, particularly within Generation Z, further complicates these dynamics as slang becomes a more prominent part of the social landscape (Gimadieva, 2024; Jeresano & Carretero, 2022).

Understanding the dynamics of slang in higher education is crucial for navigating the sociolinguistic complexities that influence pedagogy and interpersonal communication. Educators face the challenge of bridging formal academic expectations with students' real-world linguistic repertoires—especially in multilingual settings—requiring both adaptability and sensitivity to students' sociolinguistic realities (Sathiyaraj et al., 2025). Although global research on slang has flourished, particularly in the areas of social identity, digital communication, and informal discourse (Hendrajat et al., 2023; Sikandar et al., 2022), few studies have systematically examined how slang operates in oral academic communication within Philippine universities. Given the Philippines' linguistically diverse environment, marked by the coexistence of Filipino, English, regional languages, and hybrid forms like Taglish, the sociolinguistic function of slang deserves critical attention (Valdez & Vitorio, 2024).

Within the ASEAN region, research has begun to address the influence of slang on youth culture and communicative norms (Rafiqoh, 2023; Hendrajat et al., 2023; Thuya, 2021; Abdullah & Mohd Ghazali, 2021). However, localized inquiries in the Philippines remain sparse, often limited to written communication or lexical categorization, and insufficiently explore how slang affects real-time oral interactions and communicative strategies in formal academic settings (Jeresano & Carretero, 2022). Recent studies have called for a more nuanced approach to language education that incorporates morpho-pragmatic awareness and sociolinguistic competence, especially in multilingual classroom environments (Munalim et al., 2022; Yap & Saludez, 2022).

This study analyzed the sociolinguistic perspectives on slang in oral communication among students, faculty, and staff at a Philippine state university. Grounded in Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), which posits that speakers adjust their speech to reduce or emphasize social distance (Giles et al., 2023), the research examined how slang usage facilitates or hinders academic interactions. By examining attitudes and communicative effects, the study contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of linguistic adaptation and identity performance within the Philippine academic milieu.

This research filled a critical gap by contextualizing slang in a setting shaped by institutional norms, multilingual influences, and evolving youth language practices. It aimed to inform educational policy, curriculum design, and pedagogical strategies that recognize the value of linguistic diversity while upholding communicative clarity. Ultimately, this study advocated for a more responsive and inclusive academic environment that legitimizes students' linguistic identities and promotes meaningful engagement across linguistic registers.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods design to address research questions about the use of slang in oral communication in Philippine higher education. Mixed methods were chosen because they combine the numerical precision of quantitative data with the contextual richness of qualitative data, providing a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of complex sociolinguistic phenomena (Ciccarino & Silva, 2024). Specifically, an explanatory sequential design was employed, beginning with quantitative data collection to identify slang terms, assess their effectiveness, and examine demographic differences in perceptions. In this phase, slang terms were categorized by frequency and rank, with the latter selected for their ability to reflect both prevalence and relative salience across participants. These measures provided a clear, comparable basis for identifying widespread patterns in slang use.

Subsequently, qualitative data were gathered to explore students', faculty's, and staff's attitudes toward oral communication, revealing the social and contextual factors that shape these perceptions. The explanatory sequential design was well-suited for the study because it allowed the researchers to measure the extent of slang use and then explore the underlying complexities. Through this approach, the study provided a comprehensive understanding of the role of slang in higher education, capturing its measurable aspects and the nuanced factors

that influence its use and perception.

Research Respondents

The study included 255 college students selected via stratified sampling to ensure a representative sample based on age, gender, and residence. The actual distribution of these demographics within the student population was as follows: 78% were aged 18 to 22, 22% were 23 or older, 44% were female, 34% were male, 16% identified as gay/lesbian, and 6% as bisexual. Regarding residence, 54% of the participants lived in urban areas, and 46% in rural areas. This demographic profile provided a solid foundation for understanding factors influencing their use of slang in oral communication.

Additionally, three college students who completed the survey, three faculty members, and three staff members were purposively selected for in-depth interviews for their relevant expertise and experience. The faculty member, holding a master's degree in education with a major in English and five years of teaching experience, offered informed perspectives on slang in educational contexts. The staff, each with a bachelor's degree and five years of employment at the institution, provided insights into the broader institutional context. This selection ensured manageable yet meaningful data collection, capturing diverse viewpoints within these groups.

Research Instrument

This study employed a structured interview questionnaire as the primary data collection tool to address the research questions comprehensively. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: the first collected demographic information (age, gender, residence); the second identified and classified commonly used slang terms based on origin, linguistic formation, and contextual meaning, and assessed their effectiveness in oral communication, while the third gauged students, faculty, and staff attitudes toward slang in social and academic settings.

To ensure validity, a panel of ten experts—college instructors with master's or doctoral degrees in education and at least five years of teaching experience—evaluated the instrument using Lawshe's (1975) Content Validity Ratio (CVR). Their feedback led to rewording, adding, and modifying items to enhance clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research questions. The CVR for individual items ranged from 0.80 to 1.0, with an overall Content Validity Index (CVI) of 0.92, indicating strong content validity. Reliability was established using the test-retest method, yielding a coefficient of 0.86, indicating high consistency. This rigorous validation process ensured that the questionnaire was both valid and reliable for investigating the use of slang in higher education.

Data Gathering Procedure

In the pre-data-gathering phase, the researchers secured formal approval from the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the deans to conduct the study within the state university. Once approved, the researchers communicated the survey's objectives, schedule, and scope to the college students. During the first data collection phase, the survey was administered face-to-face to ensure a consistent environment across respondents. Clear instructions were provided, and respondents had the opportunity to ask questions, minimizing potential confusion and ensuring accurate data collection. In the second phase, the researchers conducted in-depth interviews with three college students, three faculty members, and three staff members. Data collection continued until saturation was reached, meaning no new themes or insights emerged after the ninth participant. This process ensured that the data were comprehensive and accurately reflected the perspectives required for the study. After completing both phases, all responses were promptly gathered, encoded, and prepared for analysis. This systematic process ensured consistency and accuracy, enabling reliable conclusions.

Data Analyses

Descriptive statistics, including frequency and rank, were used to address research question 1, which explored the slang terms commonly used by college students and their classification by origin, linguistic formation, and contextual meaning in social and academic settings. Mean and standard deviation were used for research question 2, which investigated the perceived effectiveness of slang in oral communication across different demographic groups. These statistical tools were appropriate because they allowed for quantifying respondents' perceptions and comparing them across groups, thereby directly addressing the research question.

Lichtman's (2014) 3Cs method—coding, categorizing, and forming concepts—was employed to address research question 3, which examined emerging themes regarding the attitudes of college students, faculty, and staff toward

the use of slang in social and academic contexts. This qualitative data analysis was chosen because it allowed the researchers to systematically explore and interpret the complex, nuanced attitudes toward slang, moving from the initial coding of raw data to the development of broader concepts that encapsulate the study’s findings. This method was well-suited to uncovering the underlying social dynamics and identity issues related to slang use in the academic environment.

Ethical Considerations

Researchers adhered to key ethical principles throughout the study, beginning with obtaining informed consent. Participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits, and were assured that their participation would not affect their academic standing. They were also informed of their right to withdraw without repercussions. This transparency helped build trust, likely enhancing the accuracy and honesty of the data collected. Anonymity and confidentiality were rigorously protected, with data securely stored and responsibly disposed of after the required retention period in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. By maintaining confidentiality, the researchers fostered an environment in which participants felt safe expressing themselves freely, particularly in discussions of sensitive topics such as slang usage and identity.

Special care was taken to safeguard participants' emotional well-being, particularly during sensitive discussions and exchanges. The researchers maintained an empathetic and supportive approach, which protected participants and enhanced rapport, making it easier to gather meaningful data. The study ensured justice and fairness by treating all respondents equitably, using diverse sampling methods to capture diverse perspectives, and avoiding bias in data collection and analysis. Transparency was maintained through ongoing communication with participants, ensuring they were informed of the study's progress and their role within it. Additionally, the researchers' qualifications and the adequacy of digital facilities ensured that the research process was conducted with integrity and professionalism.

Results and Discussion

Slang Terms Commonly Used by College Students

The analysis of slang usage among college students reveals a dynamic linguistic landscape shaped by social interactions, identity formation, and cultural influences. Table 1 lists the frequently used slang terms, including 'Charot/Char' ($f=188$), 'Gora' ($f=163$), and 'Keri/Keribels' ($f=155$), which primarily originate from gay lingo, highlighting the influence of LGBTQIA+ culture on youth language in the Philippines. These terms have become integral to casual communication, reinforcing social identity and peer interactions within academic and social spheres.

Table 1. Slang Terms Commonly Used by College Students Formed Through Neologisms

Word	Origin	Meaning	Frequency (f)	Rank
Char/Charot	Gay	Just kidding	188	1
Gora	Gay	Go/Let's do it	163	2
Keri/Keribels	Gay	I got this	155	3
Aura/Umaura	Gay	To show off	153	4
Shookt	Gay	Shock/Surprised	148	5
Kaloka/Kalurks	Gay	Crazy/Unbelievable	144	6
Beshie/Mars/Mema	Gay	Close friend	139	7
Eme/Eme-eme	Gay	Just saying/joking	128	8
Ganern	Gay	Like that	122	9
Lafang	Gay	To eat	120	10
Kabog	Gay	Fabulous	118	11
Jowa	Gay	Partner	112	12
Peg	Gay	Inspiration/Vibe	115	13
Mensu/Mensula	Gay	Men	110	14
Spyuk	Gay	To speak	109	15

This trend aligns with Ulla et al. (2024), who studied the emergence of 'swardspeak' or gay lingo as a form of resistance and identity affirmation within the Filipino LGBTQIA+ community. The study emphasized that such slang serves as a means of communication and a marker of cultural and social identity, particularly in urban settings where these terms are prevalent. Similarly, Rosales and Carretero (2019) discussed stylistic variations in

gay lingo, emphasizing its significance in non-binary communication practices within the Filipino context. These studies underscore the fluidity of language among young adults, driven by their need to navigate multiple cultural and social identities.

Slang serves as a tool for fulfilling human interaction needs, particularly in informal settings (Trimastuti, 2017; Germe & Carado, 2024). The prevalence of terms like 'Charot/Char', 'Gora', and 'Keri/Keribels' supports that slang is essential for expressing camaraderie and solidarity among peers. Several studies examined the role of slang in fostering group cohesion (Haro Álvarez, 2024; Sicam & Lucas, 2016), noting that such language practices are crucial in forming and maintaining social bonds within peer groups.

The specialized usage of less common terms such as 'Peg' ($f=115$), 'Mensu/Mensula' ($f=110$), and 'Spyuk' ($f=109$) mirrors the findings of Jeresano and Carretero (2022), who studied the role of slang in social media interactions. They discovered that while specific slang terms are widely recognized, others are used selectively, often within specific subcultures or niche groups. Cabantac-Lumabi (2020) further explored the nuances of in-group slang among Filipino millennials, highlighting how such terms create a sense of exclusivity and belonging within specific communities.

However, the results also highlight potential drawbacks of using slang in educational settings. Matias (2023) noted that excessive reliance on slang can create communication barriers between generations and negatively impact formal writing skills. This concern is echoed in the current study, where the use of slang terms may hinder the development of students' academic language proficiency. Purwati (2020) also warned that the pervasive use of informal language could erode students' ability to engage in formal academic discourse, potentially affecting their performance in higher education settings.

The analysis of abbreviation-based slang among college students highlights the significant influence of Internet culture on contemporary communication practices. Table 2 presents the frequently used abbreviations, such as 'LOL' ($f=207$), 'OMG' ($f=201$), and 'TBH' ($f=197$), which illustrate the deep integration of digital platforms into students' everyday interactions. These terms, originating from online environments, have transcended their digital roots to become staples in online and offline communication.

Table 2. Slang Terms Commonly Used by College Students Formed Through Abbreviations

Word	Origin	Meaning	Frequency (f)	Rank
LOL	Internet	Laugh Out Loud	207	1
OMG	Internet	Oh My God	201	2
TBH	Internet	To Be Honest	197	3
IDK	Internet	I Don't Know	191	4
BRB	Internet	Be Right Back	183	5
BTW	Internet	By The Way	177	6
FYI	Internet	For Your Information	170	7
IMO	Internet	In My Opinion	161	8
DM	Internet	Direct Message	155	9
RN	Internet	Right Now	148	10
OOTD	Internet	Outfit Of The Day	145	11
FOMO	Internet	Fear Of Missing Out	139	12
ICYMI	Internet	In Case You Missed It	136	13
LMAO	Internet	Laugh My Ass Off	130	14
IDC	Internet	I Don't Care	127	15

This phenomenon aligns with Lesada (2017), who noted that digital communication has accelerated the adoption of English-based slang among Filipino youth culture. The prevalence of terms like 'LOL', 'OMG', and 'TBH' among college students exemplifies this principle, as these abbreviations allow for concise conveyance of complex social meanings. Furthermore, mid-tier terms like 'BTW' ($f=177$), 'FYI' ($f=170$), and 'IMO' ($f=161$) underscore the pervasive influence of Internet culture on language. These abbreviations reflect how cultural phenomena popularized through digital media are encapsulated in brief expressions.

Ulla et al. (2024) observed a similar dynamic in stylistic variation within gay lingo, where slang captures and

communicates shared cultural experiences. The selective use of terms like 'ICYMI' ($f=136$), 'LMAO' ($f=130$), and 'IDC' ($f=127$) suggests that while some abbreviations achieve widespread adoption, others remain context-specific. Vacalares et al. (2023) highlighted that such selective slang usage can create communication barriers between generations or linguistic groups, underscoring the complex interplay between language, culture, and identity.

The patterns observed align with those of Jebaselvi et al. (2023), who emphasized the role of social media platforms in the evolution of language, particularly through the creation and dissemination of abbreviation-based slang. The usage of these terms among college students is integral to the construction of social identities and the navigation of modern digital landscapes.

The analysis of slang terms among college students illustrates the dynamic and adaptive nature of language in informal settings. As shown in Table 3, the prevalence of terms like 'Jeproks' ($f=193$), 'Toma' ($f=188$), and 'Gimik' ($f=175$) highlights how these expressions have become integral in fostering and signifying close-knit relationships. This observation aligns with Trimastuti (2017), who emphasized that slang evolves to meet individuals' communicative needs, particularly in expressing social bonds and identities. The widespread use of these terms among peers reflects this phenomenon, where language is employed to strengthen group cohesion and shared identity.

Table 3. Slang Terms Commonly Used by College Students Formed Through Back Formation, Blending, and Clipping

Word	Origin	Meaning	Frequency (f)	Rank
Jeproks	Street	Cool	193	1
Toma	Friends	Drink	188	2
Gimik	Friends	Hangout	175	3
Chibog	Street	Food/Meal	169	4
Astig	Friends	Tough	151	5
Petmalu	Friends	Amazing	149	6
Lodi	Friends	Idol	143	7
Werpa	Friends	Power/Energy	137	8
Tropa	Friends	Close friends	133	9
Paps/Mars	Friends	Friendly nicknames	128	10
Chika	Friends	Gossip	127	11
Kanto	Street	Street-smart behavior	122	12
Erpat/Ermat	Friends	Father/Mother	117	13
Repapips	Friends	Buddy or male friend	113	14
Pre/Bes/Bro	Friends	Endearment for friends	108	15

Terms like 'Chibog' ($f=169$), 'Astig' ($f=151$), and 'Petmalu' ($f=149$), formed through back formation, demonstrate students' creativity in combining concepts to create new expressions. This practice mirrors the findings of Dimaculangan (2022), who discusses the ongoing evolution of Philippine English and its reflection of cultural hybridity. The innovative blending of words in slang reflects a broader trend of linguistic innovation within a rapidly changing cultural landscape. Jebaselvi et al. (2023) also highlighted that slang, particularly abbreviations and blends, plays a crucial role in digital communication and the evolving landscape of youth language.

Gregorio et al. (2022) identified the emergence of niche slang within specific subcultures, as evident in the less frequent use of terms such as 'Erpat/Ermat' ($f=117$), 'Repapips' ($f=113$), and 'Pre/Bes/Bro' ($f=108$). These slang terms reflect specific cultural or social contexts, aligning with Guzman (2018), who examined how language within subcultures serves as a marker of group identity. The use of 'Tropa' ($f=133$) for 'close friends' highlights the relational aspect of language, where terms are adapted to suit personal and cultural relationships. Dreisbach and Demeterio (2021) noted that such linguistic adaptations are common in multilingual communities, where language is continuously reshaped to reflect evolving social dynamics.

These findings emphasize students' linguistic resourcefulness and cultural relevance in everyday communication. Integrating various linguistic strategies—such as back formation, blending, and clipping—demonstrates creativity and a deep engagement with cultural and social identities. Vacalares et al. (2023) also argue that these creative linguistic adaptations are a hallmark of youth communication, offering valuable insights into how language changes within specific social and cultural contexts.

The results highlight the dynamic interplay between language, culture, and identity. While slang terms foster social bonds and reflect cultural influences such as LGBTQIA+ and Internet culture, their pervasive use raises concerns about potential communication barriers and impacts on academic language proficiency. Matias (2023) argued that excessive reliance on slang can hinder the development of academic language skills. Faculty and staff should acknowledge the cultural relevance of slang while encouraging students to balance informal language with the development of formal academic skills essential for success in higher education.

Extent of Effectiveness of Slang in Oral Communication as Perceived by College Students

Table 4 indicates that college students generally perceive the use of slang in oral communication as effective, with an overall mean score of 3.50 ($SD=0.90$), categorized as 'High'. This finding supports the idea that slang plays a crucial role in everyday communication among college students, bridging social gaps and facilitating smoother interpersonal exchanges (Trimastuti, 2017). The slight variations in perceived effectiveness across different demographic groups are particularly insightful. Younger students (18-22) and older students (23 and above) rate the effectiveness of slang as high, likely due to the evolving nature of language among youth, where younger generations are more adaptable to linguistic changes, including slang. However, older students, who may have more exposure to formal communication settings, still recognize the relevance of slang in specific contexts.

Table 4. Extent of Effectiveness of Slang in Oral Communication as Perceived by College Students

Category	Mean (M)	SD	Interpretation
As a Whole	3.50	0.90	High
Age			
Younger (18-22)	3.51	0.91	High
Older (23 and above)	3.45	0.93	High
Gender			
Male	3.49	0.81	High
Female	3.27	0.98	Moderate
Bisexual	3.65	0.81	High
Gay/Lesbian	3.68	0.89	High
Residence			
Rural	3.27	0.83	Moderate
Urban	3.66	1.03	High

Lesada (2017) discusses the evolving nature of language in youth culture and how slang bridges gaps in communication, emphasizing its relevance across generations. This finding is supported by Jebaselvi et al. (2023), who noted that social media platforms have helped younger people embrace slang, particularly abbreviation-based terms, facilitating communication and social bonding. The generational divide is thus reflected in students' varying perceptions of slang, with younger generations more likely to use it frequently. In contrast, older students may see its usefulness in informal contexts.

Gender differences are also notable, with male students perceiving slang as more effective ($M=3.49$, $SD=0.81$) than female students ($M=3.27$, $SD=0.98$). This finding aligns with Dimaculangan (2022), who explores how the evolution of Philippine English, including slang, intersects with gendered communication practices. Males may be more inclined to embrace slang due to societal expectations of informality and camaraderie in male speech. In contrast, females may lean toward more standardized language forms due to different social norms. Dreisbach and Demeterio (2021) suggest that language is continuously reshaped to reflect social dynamics, such as gendered expectations and the nature of group relationships.

The high ratings given by bisexual ($M=3.65$, $SD=0.81$) and gay/lesbian students ($M=3.68$, $SD=0.89$) are particularly significant. Code-switching and the use of nonstandard language forms, such as slang, can serve as markers of identity and solidarity within marginalized groups (Rosales & Carretero, 2019; Lesada, 2017). Quimosing-Ocay and Ocampo (2024) further emphasized that swardspeak – a slang term used within the LGBTQIA+ community – serves as both a social tool and a linguistic identity marker for self-expression and group cohesion. Slang, in this sense, becomes a tool for expressing identity and fostering a sense of belonging within these communities, reflecting their unique linguistic culture.

The differences in perceptions between urban and rural students, with urban students rating slang as more effective ($M=3.66$, $SD=1.03$) than rural students ($M=3.27$, $SD=0.83$), can be explained by Rosales and Carretero (2019), who noted that urban environments typically expose individuals to a broader range of linguistic influences, including slang. Urban students are likely to encounter a more diverse array of slang daily, making them more adept at understanding and appreciating its nuances than their rural counterparts. Dimaculangan (2022) further supports this by discussing the ambivalence of some speakers toward the evolving nature of Philippine English, particularly in urban areas where linguistic innovation is more prevalent. This study might explain why urban students are more open to using slang, viewing it as a natural part of their communication landscape.

The findings suggest that while the overall perception of slang in oral communication is high, its effectiveness is influenced by various demographic factors, including age, gender, and residential background. The variations observed suggest that sociocultural context and identity play significant roles in shaping attitudes toward the use of slang in communication.

Attitudes of College Students, Faculty, and Staff Toward Slang

The study revealed compelling themes in the diverse attitudes of college students, faculty, and staff toward slang, exploring its role as a marker of social identity, its implications for social cohesion and generational communication, and its appropriateness within academic discourse.

Embracing Slang as a Marker of Social Identity and Cultural Evolution

Slang is widely perceived as a significant marker of social identity and a reflection of cultural evolution among college students, faculty, and staff. It creates a common bond of understanding and fosters special relationships, reflecting an attitude that values slang as a tool for social cohesion within specific groups. Slang is defined by the participants as a 'newly bloomed kind of language tree', symbolizing its role in connecting different social groups and adapting to cultural changes. Furthermore, the youth were credited with advancing language through the creation and use of slang, highlighting a proactive attitude towards language innovation. This perspective is highlighted when one of the participants said:

"Slang is really popular nowadays, and I think people should use it with respect. Language keeps changing – it evolves and adapts over time – and slang is like a new branch growing from the language tree. It's creative and fun. We also have to give credit to millennials and Gen Z for making it flourish. Using slang makes conversations livelier and helps people feel more comfortable talking to others who speak the same way." (Participant 1)

Moreover, the participants supported the use of slang to develop critical thinking and open-mindedness, particularly in fostering multilingual and culturally aware identities. The recognition of 'gay lingo' as a vital communication tool for the LGBTQIA+ community underscores the importance of slang in affirming social identity and fostering inclusivity. As one of the participants mentioned:

"Embracing slang helps people become more open-minded and better critical thinkers, especially in a multilingual setting. Since slang is widely used, it is important to understand these words so we can connect and communicate better with the youth. Many slang terms actually come from the gay community, which started as a creative way for them to express themselves freely and safely. Now, it has become part of how we understand and celebrate diversity in language." (Participant 4)

Perceived Challenges of Slang in Clear and Effective Communication

While slang is often embraced for its cultural and social significance, concerns have been raised about its potential to hinder effective communication. The participants pointed out that slang can create communication barriers, particularly between generations, due to varying familiarity with the terms. Notably, one of the participants expressed a strong dislike for slang, arguing that it complicates communication and can lead to misunderstandings, especially when the listener is unfamiliar with the slang terms used:

"Using slang in daily conversations somehow affects the vocabulary of the younger generation, and this creates communication barriers with the older ones. It feels like the youth are making things more complicated. What is the point of using these words if the listener cannot understand what the speaker means? If the younger generation keeps insisting on using slang, it will become even harder to connect and communicate with others." (Participant 8)

One of the participants also expressed concerns that slang could hinder immediate comprehension and cause confusion, highlighting a cautious attitude toward its impact on communication efficiency. In one of the narratives, a participant emphasized the need to moderate slang use to avoid impoliteness, reflecting a pragmatic attitude toward balancing slang's informality with the need for respectful communication, when he expressed:

“These words create a sense of shared understanding among those who use them. However, they can also make communication less clear and sometimes cause confusion in spelling and pronunciation. Slang is informal, so it should be used only in the right context and appropriate situations.” (Participant 5)

Contextual Boundaries and Academic Reservations Toward Slang

The researchers found strong reservations about using slang in academic and formal settings, reflecting an attitude that prioritizes standard language forms for clear and effective communication. Older generations view slang in daily communication as 'futile', indicating its perceived inappropriateness in formal contexts. One of the participants highlighted the necessity of understanding slang for cross-generational communication, but suggested limiting its use to appropriate contexts, as he claimed:

“Using slang is the younger generation’s way of engaging with the social world. However, from the perspective of the older generation, its use in daily communication seems futile or unnecessary. Slang can become a barrier that prevents the message from being fully understood, especially when the listener is unfamiliar with the terms being used.” (Participant 3)

Furthermore, the participants believed slang is informal and unsuitable for academic or serious conversations. One participant expressed that using slang in academic settings complicates communication when simpler language is available:

“Slang is different from Standard English because it is informal and should only be used at the right time, place, and with the right people. It really depends on how someone uses it appropriately. The youth can express themselves more freely and creatively through slang, but in academic settings, it is important to use proper and formal language to maintain clarity and professionalism.” (Participant 6)

The findings underscore the dualistic nature of attitudes toward slang among college students, faculty, and staff, highlighting its role as a dynamic marker of social identity and cultural evolution, as well as its challenges for clear and effective communication. While slang is celebrated for fostering social cohesion, particularly among younger generations and marginalized groups like the LGBTQIA+ community, its informal nature raises concerns about its appropriateness in academic and formal contexts. Participants recognized the innovative contributions of youth in advancing language through slang, yet emphasized the need to moderate its use to prevent communication barriers across generational divides. This dichotomy suggests that while slang is valued for its ability to make conversations lively and inclusive, its application must be contextually bounded to maintain clarity and respectfulness in communication.

Conclusion

College students frequently use slang terms, which can be classified based on linguistic formation, origin, and contextual meaning. The most prevalent slang terms in this study are primarily derived from gay lingo and Internet culture, underscoring the significant influence of these subcultures on communication in both social and academic contexts. This classification emphasizes how slang serves as a marker of identity and solidarity among specific groups, particularly in peer relationships and group dynamics within the university.

Additionally, slang is generally perceived as an effective tool in oral communication, as its usage bridges social gaps and facilitates smoother interactions among students. However, its effectiveness varies across different demographic groups. Younger students, particularly those in urban areas, find slang especially useful for creating connections and fostering communication. Gender differences also emerge in perceptions of slang's effectiveness, with male students generally rating it more effective than female students. This disparity may reflect broader societal norms and expectations that influence how different genders embrace slang.

Emerging themes indicate a dualistic attitude toward slang. While it is widely accepted as a marker of social identity and cultural evolution, concerns have been raised about its impact on clear and effective communication,

particularly in formal academic settings. Participants recognized the value of slang in fostering social cohesion and identity formation but cautioned against its overuse, which could create communication barriers, especially across generations. There is a clear need for contextually appropriate use of slang to balance its social benefits with the demands of formal communication in academic environments.

Emerging themes suggest a dualistic attitude toward slang. On one hand, it is celebrated as a symbol of cultural evolution and a marker of social identity, particularly among youth and marginalized communities, such as the LGBTQIA+ group. Slang's role in enhancing social cohesion and identity formation is widely recognized, as it provides a sense of belonging and shared identity. On the other hand, concerns have been raised that it may hinder effective communication, particularly in formal academic settings. Slang can create communication barriers, especially between generations, due to differences in familiarity with and comfort using it. Participants acknowledged the social benefits of slang but expressed caution about its overuse, suggesting that an imbalance could detract from its clarity and overall effectiveness in academic discourse.

Contributions of Authors

Author 1: writing of the introduction, methodology, results and discussion; data analyses

Author 2: writing of the results and discussion; gathering of data and data analyses

Author 3: writing of the results and discussion; gathering of data and data analyses

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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