

THE USE OF ENGLISH IN INDONESIAN ADOLESCENT'S SLANG

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ABSTRAK

Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan penggunaan bahasa Inggris di dalam slang remaja Indonesia yang secara luas dikenal sebagai bahasa gaul, yakni ragam bahasa yang merupakan lambang keakraban para remaja. Dengan menggunakan data yang diambil dari tiga kamus bahasa gaul dan penerapan metode distribusional dan metode identitas, ditemukan bahwa satuan ekspresi bahasa gaul dilihat dari bentuknya dapat dibedakan menjadi slang berbentuk kata, baik monomorfemik maupun polimorfemik, frase, dan kalimat. Slang yang berbentuk monomorfemik dikreasikan melalui berbagai proses perubahan fonologis dan ortografis. Sementara itu, slang yang berupa kata polimorfemik diciptakan melalui sejumlah proses morfologis, seperti afiksasi, reduplikasi, modifikasi internal, kontraksi, dan pemajemukan. Slang berbentuk frase dan kalimat mungkin dapat terbentuk dari kata-kata bahasa Inggris atau campuran antara bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia. Akhirnya, hampir semua satuan ekspresi bahasa gaul mengalami perubahan makna yang sengaja dikreasikan untuk memenuhi berbagai fungsi komunikatif.

Kata Kunci: slang, ekspresi, remaja, bahasa gaul, fungsi komunikatif

ABSTRACT

This paper aims at describing the use of English in Indonesian Adolescent's slang broadly known as *bahasa gaul*, the colloquial variation that symbolizes intimate relationships among the youngsters. By using data extracted from three slang dictionaries and applying distributional and identity method, the investigation finds that according to the form, the English slangy expressions can be classified into word (either mono morphemic or poly morphemic word), phrase, and sentence. The monomorphemic words are mainly created through various phonological change or orthographical alterations. Meanwhile, the poly morphemic words may be constructed through affixation, reduplication, internal modification, contraction and compounding processes. The vernacular phrases and sentences may consist of English words or mixture of Indonesian and English element. Finally, nearly all of slangy expressions experience semantic and translational deviations which are intentionally created for fulfilling various communicative purposes.

Keywords: slang, expression, adolescent, *bahasa gaul*, communicative purposes

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INTRODUCTION

It can't be denied that nowadays English is used by people from all over the world. This language constitutes an international language used by the speakers to meet the need of various communicative functions. Accordingly, its influence on other languages will be very significant in all domains of usage. With regard to Bahasa Indonesia, English approximately contributes not less than 57% of the total borrowings. Others come from Arabic (18%), Javanese (18%), Dutch (2.5%), and Jakarta Dialect (1.2%) (Wijana, 2009:203). Generally, the discussions of English influence on Bahasa Indonesia so far mostly concern with its usage in formal and more prestigious occasions, such as what has been done by Hassal (2010:123-143) concerning the basic principles that underlie the use of foreign words (including English) by the educated Indonesians and Budiman (2010:88-119) in connection with the use of them as a means of code switchings by the characters of three contemporary Indonesian novels. Contrary, its influence in casual interactions might be considered not or less important by the experts who are interested in studying English borrowings in Bahasa Indonesia. Accordingly in this brief article, I want to investigate the existence of English expressions in colloquial Indonesians broadly known as *Bahasa Gaul* (Friendship Language), language used among Indonesian youngster for symbolizing their intimacy. Even now, only a few Indonesian Scholars pay attention to this issue. Three of them are Wijana (2009), Wijana (2011), and Yuwono (2010:61-85). Wijana states that there are several interesting problems with regard to the use of English in Indonesian slangy words, and one of them is translational failures. Meanwhile, Yuwono which focuses his attention on swearing expressions says that the use of English is motivated by economical and stylistic purposes. Even though slang can only be found in casual speech, this colloquial variation is rich of linguistic phenomena that can not be ignored in linguistic description. In addition, from pragmatic perspective, the use of slangy expressions is exploited by the teenagers to convey various communicative functions, such as informing, directing, joking, swearing, teasing,

keeping something secret, etc. So, the use of slang conceals a lot of information about Indonesian teenagers' behaviors.

As far as the use of English is concerned, there are at least three important issues need to discuss related to the Indonesian slang. Those are form and formation, linguistic process, and meaning that will become the focus of my study. The term "formation" includes morphological and syntactical processes. Meanwhile "linguistic process" covers all phonological modification, such as sound change, phonological and syllabic transposition, sound deletion, sound addition, etc.

Most data used in this paper come from three Indonesian slang dictionaries compiled by Livia (2007), Sahertian (2008), dan Mastuti (2008) and other sources. Firstly, all slangy expressions borrowed from English are extracted from the dictionaries, and further by using distributional method and identity method, they are classified and analyzed according to those three issues. The first method is carried out by examining the formal elements which constitute the slangs, while the later is conducted by careful examination of the forms and their meanings.

FORM AND FORMATION

There are hundreds of English expressions that enrich Indonesian slang vocabulary, and many of them are English words which has been phonetically and ortographically maintained, adapted, and slightly or markedly changed, as shown by (1) to (6). Several words have been treated as Indonesian words by the speakers (1) and (2). The slangy expressions are commonly used to refer to different meaning (1), (2), and (3), and some of them only use for giving beauty (4), (5), and (6).

- (1) Abstrak '*wajah tidak berbentuk, jelek, tidak cakep, aneh*' (ugly)
- (2) *Sarden* '*tinned sardin, istri tua*' 'first wife'
- (3) *MARS* '*mahasiswa alim rajin sembahyang*' (a good and dilligent praying student)
- (4) *Master* '*pakar*' (expert)
- (5) So sweet '*sangat manis*' (very sweet)
- (6) So wot '*memang kenapa*' (so what)

In the first three examples the word *abstrak* (originally *abstract*), *sarden* (originally *sardencis*), and *mars* which conventionally mean 'abstract', 'tinned sardin', and 'name of planet' are changed to refer to facial state, first or old wife that often betrayed by the husband, and idealized student. Meanwhile, there is no semantic alteration applied to *master*, *so sweet*, and *so wot* except a marked orthographical modification occurs in the last example (*what > wot*).

Formally the slang expressions borrowed from English may take three forms, i.e word, phrase, and sentence. These three types of slang will be analyzed in below.

English words exploited as slang in Bahasa Indonesia may be base forms as well as complex ones. Base forms are expressions that have not been undergoing morphological processes. They only consist of a single free morpheme, such as (7) to (11) below:

- (7) *Affair 'hubungan gelap, selingkuh'* (deviate)
- (8) *Ay 'aku, saya'* (I)
- (9) *Error 'kesalahan'* (mistake)
- (10) *Chicken 'pengecut'* (coward)
- (11) *Kiyut 'keren, (cute)*

In contrast, the complex forms consist of two or more morphemes as a result of various morphological processes, such as affixation (12), (13), (14), and (15), internal modification (16) and (17), reduplication (18), (19), and (20), compounding (21), (22), and (23), and contraction (24) and (25).

- (12) *Cookies 'kumpulan laki-laki'* (a group of men)
- (13) *Hunting 'cari-cari sambil menjelajah'* (looking for and exploring)
- (14) *Joger 'melucu'* (joking)
- (15) *Emphazise 'ditekan, dipaksa'* (to be forced)
- (16) *Hang 'bego, bodoh'* (stupid)
- (17) *Bondon 'jangan dibatasi' ({bound} don't > do not {bind}, do not limit)*

- (18) *Blink-blink 'perhiasaan mengkilat yang dipakai para rapper'* (sparkling rappers' accessories)
- (19) *Hello mellow* (stupid fellow) 'halo' (hallo)
- (20) *Walking-walking 'jalan-jalan'* (take a walk)
- (21) *Down load 'boker, doyan'* (like very much)
- (22) *Crocodile tears 'air mata buaya'* (scoundrel tears)
- (23) *Stand by 'sudah siap'* (ready)
- (24) *HIV 'hasrat ingin vivis'* (urinating need)
- (25) *Akuisisi 'akuilah ini sia-sia'* (confess that it is useless)

In affixation process, the bound morpheme might be taken from Bahasa Indonesia or its dialect. In (26) **Nyemok** 'merokok' (smoking) for example, *ny-* is one of the {N-} allomorphs in Jakarta dialect. The base form **smok** is an English borrowing modified from **smoke**. Reduplication process is totally a characteristics of Bahasa Indonesia because this kind of word formation process does not exist in English. In Indonesian slang, the reduplication form can be a total reduplication or one with sound change. The other examples are (27) and (28). A lot of English compounds are created from word to word or literal translational process which is strongly avoided in translation activities, such as (29), (30), and (31). Finally, contraction process is deliberately created by creating abbreviations and acronyms which have similarities to English words. For other examples see (32), (33), 34) below:

- (26) *Nyemok 'merokok'* (smoking)
- (27) *Walking-walking 'jalan-jalan'* (take a walk)
- (28) *Hello mellow stupid fellow 'halo'* (hallo)
- (29) *Fruit kid 'anak buah'* (subordinate)
- (30) *Blue blood 'darah biru, bangsawan, ningrat'* (nobleman)
- (31) *Enter wind 'masuk angin'* (air sickness)
- (32) *AIDS 'anak istimewa dengan sejuta pesona'* (a special person with a million of wonder)
- (33) *BMW 'body mengalahkan wajah'* (a nice body person with ugly face)

- (34) Coffee drink '*komplek sepi bikin merinding*' (quite and spouky house complex)

Phrase is any linguistic unit which consists of two or more words that does not have a characteristics of clause. All elements that form the slangy phrases are commonly English (35) to (41). However, some times the phrases are also possibly created by taking Indonesian colloquial words, such as *maksud* 'meaning'(42), and *Sudir(man)* 'personal name' (43).

- (35) Different river '*lain kali*' (other time)
 (36) Homer boy '*cowok rumahan yang jarang keluyuran*' (boys that rarely go outside home)
 (37) Meteor garden: 'title of Taiwan film' (*Mi telor ganjen*) 'flirtatious egg noodles'
 (38) Not a play '*bukan main-main*' (unserious)
 (39) One pack '*perut buncit*' (big stomach)
 (40) So sweet '*sangat manis*' (very sweet)
 (41) Car kid '*anak suka mobil tapi tidak tahu mobil*' (guys who like cars but do not know much about them)
 (42) Meaning of the *maksud* '*sesuatu yang perlu dijelaskan*' (something important to explain)
 (43) Sudirboy '*lelaki yang kuliah di Sudirman*' (a man who studies in Sudirman campus)

The meanings of the phrases might be the true or close translation (40) and (43), literal translation (35) and (38), creative translation (36), (41), and (42), metaphorical correspondent (39), and phonological correspondent of the pure or mixed English phrases (37).

Indonesian slang sentences are generally constructed by simple sentences or shorts complex sentences. The simple sentences consist of single clause (43), (44), (45), and (47). Meanwhile, to yield short expressions, the complex sentences should have undergone ellipsis, such as subject deletion that occurs in (46). Like slangy phrases, the sentence may consist of an Indonesian or a regional language element, such as a slight orthographical modification of Javanese *donk* 'understand' in (43). The Indonesian influence can also be badly

translated Indonesian sentence into English, such as (44).

- (43) I don't donk '*saya tidak mengerti*' (I don't understand)
 (44) Don't follow mix '*jangan ikut campur*' (do not interfere)

The English sentences are also often phonologically or ortographically deviated, such as (45) and (46) below.

- (45) Ilopu '*Aku cinta padamu*' (I love you)
 (46) Slow but *suwe* '*pelan tapi yakin*' (slow but sure)
 (47) *Wats ap* '*Ada apa sih?*' (what happen)
 <> Whats up!

Meanwhile, in (48) the relation between the form and its intention sometime is merely based on the phonological similarities:

- (48) Go back to the door '*gobak sodor*' (name of traditional Javanese game)

Pragmatically the use of slang sentences is exploited to carry out various communicative functions, such as directing, informing, expressing emotional state etc. In (43) the speaker might be want to get clarification or explanation about what the intelocutor has said. In (44) the speaker possibly want the interlocutor not interfering his/her personal business. In (45) the speaker expresses his/her passion, and in (46) the speaker may seek an information about what has happened to the person (s)he speaks to.

LINGUISTIC PROCESS

Phonological differences between English and Bahasa Indonesia cause a lot of difficulties for the Indonesian speakers in pronouncing English words. As result, a number of English sounds are changed or replaced with other sounds that exist in Bahasa Indonesia. For example, the sound [sy] orthographically represented by *sh* is replaced by [s]. English diphtongs [ou] and [ea] are substituted by monophthongs [o] and [e]. See (49) to (51) below:

- (49) Siyok 'shock, *terkejut setengah mati*' (schoked)
 (50) Bondon '*jangan dibatasi*' (bound don't > do not bind, do not limit)
 (51) Suwer takewer-kewer '*sumpah tidak bohong*' (swear!)

In contrast, to achieve stylistic goals, some sounds and letters that exist in Bahasa Indonesia are changed by English sounds or letters in English spelling system, such as the substitution of [d] and [k] with [sh] and [ck] in (50) and (51) below:

- (52) Oh, my gosh 'Oh, my god'
 (53) Backam '*bebek kampung*' (village girl),
 bedes kampung (village boy)'

For yielding short expressions some English words undergoing syllabic deletions, such as (54), (55) and (56):

- (54) Borju '*kaya, banyak uang*' (borjuis, rich)
 (55) Bro '*kakak*' (brother)
 (56) Idi '*idiot*'

If Indonesian words become the target of modification, either deletion or addition, the results are English-like expressions, as shown in (57) and (58).

- (57) Hamilton '*hamil*'
 (58) Ketty '*ketiak*' (armpit)

Phonological transposition which is broadly known as metathesis is also found in Indonesian slang. For examples the modification of *pipis* 'urinate' becomes *pepsi* 'name of soft drink brand' and *I am sorry* 'pardon me' becomes *Amrosy* 'name of terrorist in the first Bali bombing', *doberman* 'dog species' becomes *debormen* are three evidents of this phenomenon.

- (59) *Pepsi* '*buang air kecil*' (urinate)
 (60) I am sorry, *Amrosy* (personal name)
 (60a) *Debormen* '*demam ngebor mengap-mengap*' (gasp for breath drilling fever) < *Doberman* (species of dog)

Finally orthographical modification, either for imitating English or Indonesian, is considered dominant in slang creation. See the following examples.

- (61) *Betmen* '*berak terus mencret*' (Batman)
 (62) *Kiyut* '*keren*, (cute)
 (63) *J-rock* '*jorok*' (dirty, untidy)
 (64) *Ontohot* '*bego, nyalakan sampai panas*' (stupid, heat it untill hot).
 (65) *Skul* '*sekolah*' (school)
 (66) *So wot* '*memang kenapa*' (so what)

Many English words in Indonesian slang are pronounced according to the Indonesian pronunciation manners, in which there is no big differences between the spelling and their pronunciation. Therefore, **popeye** in (67) below is pronounced [popeye] instead of [phOp ai], and **blink-blink** in (18) above is pronounced [blIK-blIK] instead of [blIKk-blIKk].

- (67) *Popeye* '*lelaki berbadan kecil, tapi berotot*' (a small man, but muscular)

English words in Indonesian slang vocabulary are never totally reversed or given insertion elements, such as the process applied to Indonesian or regional words (Wijana, 2010:25-27). The impossibilities are probably caused by the relatively bigger differences of English spelling and pronunciation than that of exist in Bahasa Indonesia. Notice (68) to (71) below:

- (68) *kewut* < *tuwek* (old)
 (69) *elub-elub* < *bule-bule* (albinos)
 (70) *Cokin* < *C* + *-ok-* + *in* < *Cin(a)* (Chinese)
 (71) *nyokap* < *ny* + *-ok-* + *ap* < *nyak* 'mother'

The creation of (68) to (71) is intended to hide the speakers' intentions. The normal order variation *Tuwek* 'old' and *nyak* 'mother' are borrowed from Javanese and Jakarta dialect respectively. Meanwhile, *bule* 'albino' and *Cina* are both Indonesian words.

MEANING

Some English expressions have the same meaning to their Indonesian equivalents. The use of English for these expressions is intended by the speakers for giving beauty or showing their English mastery. The English words in (72) to (76) below do not experience semantic alternation.

- (72) *ay* > 'saya' (I)
- (73) *Error* 'kesalahan' (mistake)
- (74) Go home 'pulang ke rumah' (back home)
- (75) Home alone 'di rumah sendirian' (title of children film played in Christmas and new year)
- (76) Matching 'pas, cocok' (matched)

Semantic changes do not occur in word to word translation slangs. See (76a), (76b), (76c) below:

- (76a) Blue blood 'darah biru, bangsawan, ningrat' (nobleman)
- (76b) Don't talk as delicious as your belly button 'jangan ngomong seenak udelmumu' (do not talk as you wish)
- (76c) Hot sick 'sakit panas' (fever)

However, most of English borrowings in intimate interactions among the Indonesian youngsters are semantically deviated for gaining various communicative goals, such as joking, insulting, teasing, directing, etc. The deviation causes several semantic relations between the English words and their Indonesian counterparts. Those semantic relations are simply classified into metaphor, metonymy, homonymy, and cohyponymy.

Metaphor is the use of linguistic expressions to refer to other things based on certain similarities (Kridalaksana, 1993:136). In language use, metaphor is exploited by the speakers to produce figurative meanings. In human life metaphor plays an important role, not just in language but in thought and action as well. The human conceptual system, in terms of which they both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in

nature (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003:3). English word *big* whose meaning denotes to physical concepts is enlarged for referring a nonphysical matter (77). *Affair* which formerly has neutral and broader meaning is violated and narrowed to refer to negative behavior in husband and wife relation (78).

- (77) Big man 'orang yang paling berpengaruh' (the most influential person)
- (78) *Affair* 'hubungan gelap, selingkuh' (deviate)

Indonesian youngsters recently create a lot of new metaphorical slangs by using the taste of food referents as the basis of the similarities. See (79) to (82) below:

- (79) *Brownis* 'lelaki ganteng, nama kue, brondong manis (acronym)' (handsome male, brownies, sweet popcorn)
- (80) *Cookies* 'kumpulan laki-laki' (a group of men)
- (81) *Popcorn* 'berondong yang ganteng dan tajir' (a handsome and rich young person)
- (82) *Barbeque* 'istri simpanan' (mistress)

The rapid advances of information, automotive and other technologies inspire the youngsters to create various metaphorical slangs, as shown in (83) to (88) below.

- (83) *Down load* 'boker, doyan' (like very much)
- (84) *Pentium 1* 'bodoh, lemah otak' (stupid, slow thinking)
- (85) *Hang* 'bego, bodoh' (stupid)
- (86) *Cewek linux* 'wanita berkepribadian rumit, sulit ditebak' (woman with complicated personality)
- (87) *Hunting* 'cari-cari sambil menjelajah' (looking for and exploring)
- (88) *Cadillac* 'heroin, kokain, narkoba' (drugs)

Different from metaphor, the semantic relation in metonymy is not based on similarities, but on associations. **ATM** which means 'Auto Teller Machine' does not mean 'money', but it is only associatively related to such a thing and to sense

of materialism. As a proper name, the word **Einstein** does not have any meaning. This word refers to a genius scientist, the founder of "relativity theory". As such, this word can be associated to any clever person. The following (89) and (90) are the examples of metonymic exploitation in Indonesian slangs.

- (89) ATM woman 'cewek *matere*' (materialistic woman)
 (90) Enstein 'very clever person'

The other examples are (91), (92) and (93) below:

- (91) Popeye '*lelaki berbadan kecil, tapi berotot*' (small muscular man)
 (92) *Mis Ring-ring* 'woman who likes making phone calls'
 (93) Strawberry '*cewek yang pakaiannya serba merah*' (woman in complete red)

Two or more linguistic expressions possibly have the same form (phonetically or orthographically) but different meaning. The relation between or among them is called homonymy (Cf. Allan, 1986:150). Complete homonyms have the same pronunciation and the same spelling. Partial homonyms only have similarity in one respect which can be further divided into two categories, i.e. homophony and homography. The first relies the similarity on pronunciation while the latter on spelling. In slang vocabulary, the homonymic pairs are intentionally created by treating ordinary English words as abbreviations or acronyms. The following (94) (to) (99) show that English ordinary words, phrases, acronyms, and abbreviations have their newly created meaning(s).

- (94) AC : Air condition
angin cendela (window air)
 (95) AIDS : aquired immune deficiency syndrome
anak istimewa dengan sejuta pesona (a special person with a million of wonder)
 (96) BOS : boss
bekas orang susah (ex poor person)

- (97) Coffee drink : coffee
komplek sepi bikin merinding' (quite and spouky house complex)
 (98) Internet : International network
indomi pake telur dan kornet (noodle with egg and corned beef)
 (99) Joker : person who is very skillful in making a joke
jomblo keren (handsome single fellow)
jorok keringatan (dirty and sweaty)
jongos keren (handsome male servant)

For obtaining amazing impressions, the speakers create one of the meaning as if it reasonably relates to the other meaning(s), such as (100) and (101) below:

- (100) Humor : *humor*
hubungan menyenangkan orang (entertaining relation)
 (101) ATM : auto teller machine
artos tina mesin' (money come out of mechine)

Meanwhile, for eliciting humorous effects, the Indonesian youngsters intentionally make the association of the homonymic pairs as if they are contradictory to each other, as clearly seen in (102), (103) and (104).

- (102) elit : elite
Ekonomi sulit (difficult economic condition)
 (103) pilot : pilot
pikiran kolot (conservative thinking)
 (104) populer : popular
pulang-pulang teler' (drunken when got home)

Hyponymy is a relation that holds between generic and (more) specific concepts. In this relation words with generic concepts are called hypernym, while ones with (more) specific

concepts are called hyponym. For instance, the meaning of *bird* covers *robin*, *dove*, *starling*, etc. As such, *bird* is the hypernym of *robin*, *dove*, and *starling*. Conversely, the last three *bird species* are the hyponym of their genus, *bird*. Meanwhile the relation among *roben*, *dove*, and *starling* is called cohyponymy. The use of *sea food* in (105) below is an exploitation of cohyponimic relation because it is used to refer to 'fried cat fish' for gaining a more prestigious image. The genus of this cohyponimic pair is *fish*.

(105) sea food '*lele goreng*' (fried cat fish)

It is also important to note that a lot of Indonesian slangs which come from English sources are merely based on phonological similarities such as in (48). The other examples are (106) to (108) below:

(106) *kolang-kaling dalam gelas*: palm seeds in the glass '*calling-calling nggak jelas*' (to call unclearly)

(107) *Sesuk* tomorrow 'see you tomorrow'

(108) Meteor Garden: *Mi telur ganjen* 'flirtatious egg noodle' (title of Taiwan film)

CONCLUSION

The influence of English in Indonesian can not only be found in formal style, but in informal ones, as well. As far as Indonesian slang is concerned, the English expressions can take various forms, such as word, phrase, and sentence. The words can further be classified into base word and complex words. The former consists of single morpheme, while the later consist of more than one morpheme as the result of various morphological processes, such as affixation, reduplication, internal modification, contraction and compounding. The mono morphemic words borrowed from English may undergo phonological alterations, such as deletion, insertion, and addition, or orthographical deviations. English phrases, sentences, and idiomatic expressions of Indonesian slangs may either all consist of English words or Indonesian and English blend. At last, most of the English expressions are semantically changed or badly

translated. Accordingly there are many semantic relations found in the English influenced Indonesian slangs to their formal equivalents, such as metaphor, metonymy, homonymy, hyponymy, and cohyponymy.

The linguistic processes that occur in informal situations are considerably much more various than those of in the standard variations. This fact suggests that the linguistic investigations which concern with English influences on Indonesian in the future time must not only focus on the standard Indonesian, but should also be directed toward its use in more casual varieties. Such kinds of investigation will give us more comprehensive understandings about how Indonesians of the lower social economic class use English expressions in their daily activities together with their views and attitudes toward English which nowadays functions as an international means of communication. This brief article is not more than a data collection display. Therefore, more serious studies concerning English contribution in casual Indonesian discourses are considered very urgent to carry out.

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