

SLANG WORDS IN PANDEMIC CONDITION IN INDONESIA

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Abstract : *Slang makes language spoken in society vary. The variation creates new context that is only understood by a certain community. One variation occurs in the pandemic condition in Indonesia. Hence, it is important to conduct analysis on the form and function of slang in the government instruction in mass communication in the pandemic condition. This study applies descriptive qualitative method to analyze the data. The data are taken from the government instructions that had been used widely in Indonesia. Then, the data are analyzed by using the classification proposed by Allan and Burridge (2006). There are five classifications used to classify the slangs. They are fresh and creative, flippant, imitative, acronym, and clipping. The result of the analysis showed that fresh and creative showed any in the government instruction, flippant emerged in some government instructions. Imitative and acronym also emerged in some government instructions, while clipping did not emerge in any of the government instruction. It may happen because some people often use slangs in flippant, imitative, and acronym classifications in their daily life context and conversation.*

Keywords: *Pandemic Condition, Slang, Sociolinguistics*

INTRODUCTION

A condition of a society can be determined by the use of language on a social communication scope, either it is separated by geography aspect, culture, occupation, or current political situation. It is put in the sociolinguistics field. Wardhaugh (2000: 12) state “sociolinguistics is concerned with investigating the relationship between language and

society with the goal of being a better understanding of the structure of language and how language function in communication.” This field covers speaker’s speech act in communication. A speaker’s decision in choosing diction, pronoun, and even tone of speech refers to language agreement that is affected by many factors. One of them is that a polite language can reflect interlocutor’s

position. This thing makes changes in speech. Some changes in speech can possibly happen when one person shows agreement, rejection, or no response at all to the given stimulus during the interaction. It makes language play an important role in mass communication. Besides that, current situation refers urging community to make a unique, thematic, and conventional language agreement.

One way to make language unique is by using slang. Slang is a language phenomenon with specific purpose. It emerges in community by changing language function, both micro and macro. Holmes (1997: 11) state slang as “an ever-changing set of colloquial words and phrases that speakers use to establish or reinforce social identity or cohesiveness within a group or with a trend or fashion in society at large.” This phenomenon makes language spoken in society vary. Language spoken in society shows some changes as well as creates new context that is only understood by a certain community. These characteristics are in line with the characteristic of slang. Slang as a form of language has social characteristic

shown by specific interlocutor, referring to identity, age, gender, or even specific community. Language spoken in specific community may create new variations. One of the variations in this study context is a language spoken in an outbreak condition due to Coronavirus. This condition affects language aspect of the society. Society is urged to share the same context frequency so the language spoken shows same pattern, the language variation has same purpose, and the characteristic of language variation is easily accepted.

Language variation in the pandemic condition shows new terms. They are usually spoken in specific community. The terms are used to interact with others in the same age, both oral and written, and more popular than the use of formal Indonesian. Slang as a language variation is sometimes not accepted because the language structure is regarded not in line and breaks formal Indonesian structure.

From the perspective of language forming, language variation can be seen as the effect of the social diversity of speakers. The more varied a language, the more developed a

language in a society. It happens as the effect of language and language function diversities. Emerged slang, as a language phenomenon, shows that social value in society affects more on the language function. Slang in the pandemic condition of Coronavirus is dominated by restructuration in oral communication and gives effect on the written form in society. Some abbreviations and acronyms show the condition in which society needs a simple, implicit, and unique communication tool to make the condition better in social affirmation. As a language community, slang can be identified as implicit meaning that is not understood by all parties. Slang's function refers to its characteristic. Its characteristic is usually short, while the longer one is going to be shortened through morphological process or by changing it with a short one. Society's understanding needs to be evaluated and validated to make the language phenomenon widely accepted. Slang also forms language characteristic closely connected to the sociolinguistic phenomenon in society. One slang variation occurs in the pandemic condition in Indonesia. It emerges as

the effect of the social diversity of speakers. Its language characteristic is closely connected to the sociolinguistic phenomenon in society. Hence, it is important to conduct analysis on the form and function of slang in the government instruction in mass communication in the pandemic condition of Coronavirus in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Related Theory

Sociolinguistics

Chaer and Agustina (2010:2) define sociolinguistics as a branch of linguistics that has interdisciplinary relation with sociology, with using relation between language and social factors in a community as its object. In other words, sociolinguistics discusses structures (phonology, morphology, and syntax structures) of a homogeneous language and heterogeneous language. Factors that make language heterogeneous are situational and speaker's background. Situation affects language variation, that is called style and register, while speaker's background creates dialect (geographical, age, and social) and level of politeness. Language in sociolinguistics is not solely seen as a language. It is rather seen as

interaction or communication way in human life. Therefore, any definitions proposed by linguists always relate to language relation with community aspects. Kridalaksana (1978: 94) argues that sociolinguistics is a knowledge related to language characteristics and its variation, and it also shows the relation between linguists and the functional characteristics of language variation in a community.

Slang

Kridalaksana (2008: 225) proposes slang as informal language variation used by teenagers or specific social group for internal communication as a way to make outsiders not understand what they are talking about. Slang is a brand new and flexible vocabularies. It is informal and seasonal in use. Slang is created from form change of linguistic message without changing its meaning for enjoyment. Bussmann (1990), in *Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*, define slang as British or American variant of carelessly used colloquial language with explicitly social and regional variant. Corresponding to the French argot,

slang is characterized by the innovative use of common vocabulary as well as newly coined words. Slang corresponds to the older designation can't which originally referred to secret languages and sublanguages.

Slang can be forms in many ways. Asri (2011: 16) proposes some ways in forming slang. They are changing a word, putting similar word, phoneme changing, and putting affixes. Allan and Burridge (2006) propose five classifications of slangs. They are fresh and creative, flippant, imitative, acronym, and clipping.

1. Fresh and creative

It indicates that slang has different vocabulary to describe something in a casual setting. Many terms that are already common in our subconscious may be slang words that we don't know. The explanation why these slang words are recognizable to our minds is that these slang words occur long ago, as slang words have already existed since the 18th century, as Allan and Burridge (2006) have pointed out. For example, the term "mom" is used to refer to a woman, especially the elderly.

2. Flippant

It indicates that the slang is formed by two or more terms in which the term written does not refer to the denotative meaning. The definition is "break a leg" which implies "good luck." It is theatrical superstition that finds the hope of good luck to be a tempting fate. The slang word derives from folk etymology, and provides the context of the American actor John Wilkes Booth, who killed President Abraham Lincoln. The assassin leapt to the stage and broke his leg. Contrarily, it is recorded in use in the 1930s and is thought of being of English origin; it is definitely commonly used in the United Kingdom and the United States about 1973.

3. Imitative

It means that slang imitated or derived from standard English (SE) word; using SE in different meaning or combining two different words. The example is "gonna". This is the slang word derived from the phrase words "going to".

4. Acronym

It is constructed by the result of the word formed by the first letter of each word in a phrase

or made by initials from a group of words or syllables and pronounced them as a new word. The example is NATO which is the acronym of "North Atlantic Treaty Organization".

5. Clipping

This classification means that slang is made by deleting some parts of longer word become a shorter form in the same meaning. The example is the word "till" that derives from "until". The words which commonly used can be clipped into shorter form. In addition, clipping form is not appropriate to use in formal conversation.

METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

This study was a study of how the pandemic condition in Indonesia affected a new form of words or phrases. The new form of words or phrases was regarded as slang. This study applied descriptive qualitative method to analyze the data. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) state "descriptive qualitative is one of the research procedures which produce descriptive data in form of speech and the behavior of those being observed." The data were taken from the

government instructions that had been used widely in Indonesia. Then, the data were analyzed by using the classification proposed by Allan and Burridge (2006). There were 5 classifications. The classifications were fresh and creative, flippant, imitative, acronym, and clipping. Last, the result of the research was described descriptively to explain the details of the classifications.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section described the slang emerged in the pandemic condition of Coronavirus in Indonesia. There were some slangs emerged, but the data in this study were taken from the government instructions. The government made some new slangs in the pandemic condition to raise people's awareness of this condition. It was conducted to make Indonesian people aware and care more on their health. The instructions were not only proposed for elders, but also youngsters. The government instructions in the pandemic condition were dominated by slangs. The slangs, then, were divided into five classifications proposed by Allan and Burridge (2006). They are fresh and creative, flippant, imitative, acronym,

and clipping. The details for each classification were descriptively explained as follows:

1. Fresh and Creative

Fresh and creative show that the slang word has new vocabularies to describe something in an informal situation. Slang words in the pandemic condition in Indonesia showed no fresh and creative classification. It might happen because this condition is a serious one and the government chose formal words to persuade Indonesian people to be aware of this condition.

2. Flippant

Flippant means that the slang word consists of two words or more that do not correlate with the denotative meaning. Some slang words in this pandemic condition used flippant classification. The slang words were "lockdown", "rapid test", "swab test", "social distancing", "cluster".

- Lockdown. In the pandemic condition, it referred to precautionary act taken by the authorities in closing access ways in heading into or outside of an area. People must stay when they are and must not exit or enter a building or an area. It was one of the

ways to control the spread of coronavirus.

- Rapid test. In this pandemic condition, it not only referred to any kind of tests that showed the result in a short time. The meaning of the rapid test got smaller since it was only limited to the Covid-19 test. Rapid test could be stated as a method of checking or testing the presence of Coronavirus. It was performed to screen patients under surveillance (PDP) and people under surveillance (ODP) by taking blood sample from a finger or a vein. The result of rapid test came in two statuses, i.e., reactive and non-reactive.

- Swab test. The term swab test was rarely used before the pandemic condition. But in this condition, many people used the swab test to refer to the Coronavirus test. The result of the swab test was more accurate than the rapid test and the result was believed to be a precise result of Covid-19 infection. Swab test was done by rubbing the nasopharyngeal cavity and oropharynx by using a tool.

- Cluster. During the pandemic condition, some people sometimes use the term cluster. Cluster referred to an aggregation of cases of Coronavirus. It

occurred when there is a concentration of infections of Coronavirus in the same area at the same time. The term cluster in the pandemic condition could include school cluster, workplace cluster, wedding celebration cluster, and even family cluster.

- Social distancing. People rarely used the term social distancing before the pandemic condition occurred. The term emerged and started to use globally when the world condition showed an outbreak. Social distancing referred to the act of keeping a certain distance from others as much as possible. It was done as one of some ways to reduce the spread of coronavirus, so people could do their jobs and activities. The ideal distance the authorities suggested was 6 feet or around 1.8 meters.

3. Imitative

Imitative implies the slang word imitating or deriving from the standard English word; using the standard English word in different meaning or combining two different words. Some slang words used imitative were “*isoman*” and “*karwil*”

- *Isoman (isolasi mandiri)* or self-isolation. Self-isolation is when

someone does not leave his home because he has or might have Covid-19. Someone conducts self-isolation if (1) he has any symptoms of Covid-19, (2) he has tested positive for Covid-19, (3) someone he lives with has symptoms or tested positive, (4) he has been in close contact with someone who has symptoms or tested positive since the symptoms started or during the 48 hours before they started, (5) he has been told he has been in contact with someone who tested positive, or (6) he arrives from a country with a high corona virus risk.

- *Karwil (karantina wilayah)* or local quarantine. Quarantine was meant as separating and restricting the movement of people exposed to Coronavirus. In Indonesia, the term local quarantine referred to separating and restricting the movement of people in one area who were exposed to Coronavirus. The authorities set this kind of quarantine to prevent the spread of Coronavirus and to minimize the toll of the disease.

4. Acronym

The acronym is a kind of slang word that makes up a new word by taking the initial letter from some words. Some government instructions

during this pandemic condition used acronyms. The words were “PPKM”, “PSBB”, “ODP”, “OTG”, “PDP”, “WFH”, “WFO”

- PPKM. PPKM stood for *Perlakuan Pembatasan Kegiatan Masyarakat* or The Implementation of Micro-Community Activity Restrictions. It meant the government instructed some areas to restrict some community activity during this pandemic condition. The government and people made this into PPKM acronym to show the condition of micro restriction during pandemic. Some regions applied this regulation and others did not. The regulation was different because it depended on the Mayor by analyzing the number of Covid-19 tolls in his region. Some regions in Java and Bali applied this because the number of people who got infected with Coronavirus was the highest in Indonesia.

- PSBB. PSBB stood for *Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar* or Large-Scale Social Restrictions. It meant as the government restrict community activity in massive scope, not only limited to one area. PSBB regulation was applied when the number of Covid-19 increased as it

was one of the government ways to minimize the number of Covid-19 tolls in Indonesia. PSBB was put on the Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 21 Year 2020 which covered all aspects, starting from the explanation to the implementation.

- OTG. OTG stood for *Orang Tanpa Gejala* or asymptomatic person. It referred to a person who had been exposed to a positive Covid-19 person or a person infected with Covid-19 but showed no symptoms. This term was no longer in use. It was because the Minister of Health removed the term with the Health Minister's Decree No. HK. 01.07/MENKES/413/2020.

- ODP. ODP stood for *Orang dalam Pemantauan* or people under surveillance. It referred to those who traveled to the Covid-19 affected area or had made contact with people who were suspected positive with Covid-19. ODP people were required to self-monitor their health.

- PDP. PDP stood for *Pasien dalam Pengawasan* or patients under surveillance. It referred to ODP who had shown one or more symptoms of Covid-19. PDP people were required

to be isolated after they did the swab test.

- WFH or work from home was popular term among workers. It meant the workers could remotely work from their homes. They did not have to physically go to the office due to the pandemic condition. The WFH policy could differ from one company to another company. It was meant to minimize the spread of Coronavirus among workers.

- WFO or work from office was also popular term among workers. As the government set PSBB and PPKM, companies applied the regulation in the office and set the schedule for their workers. WFO was the schedule for the workers to physically go to the office and do their jobs there. The presence of workers who went to the office was only 50% - 75% of the total workers in a company. It was hoped that the reducing number could also reduce the spread of Coronavirus while getting the jobs done.

5. Clipping

Clipping is a form of a slang word that comes from the deletion of some part of a longer word into a shorter word in the same meaning. Slang words in the pandemic condition

in Indonesia showed no clipping because it is used in formal context.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusions

This section sums up the analysis and description of the study. The conclusion of this study shows that slang in the pandemic condition in Indonesia is classified into five classifications by Allan and Burridge. Fresh and creative and clipping classifications do not emerge in the government instructions during the pandemic condition in Indonesia. It may happen because this kind of situation is a serious situation. While, flippant, imitative, and acronym classifications show couple times in the government instructions. Those classifications may emerge because some of the terms are used by society in daily life context and conversation, for example WFH (work from home) and WFO (work from office). The use of slang in the pandemic condition is dominated by restructuration in oral communication and gives effect on the written form in society.

Suggestion

Regarding conclusion above, a suggestion comes up. In

communicating with others, the use of slang is acceptable as long as it is used in proper context. In formal context, such as in government instructions, the use of slang is allowed, except for clipping. Clipping is only used in informal context.

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