



A Race-Based Approach to the Study of Slang Expressions in American Movies and TV Series

*Prof. Amthal Mohammed Abbas
University of Diyala*

*Laith Amer Mahmood
University of Mosul*

Abstract

This study employs a race-based framework to analyze the use of slang expressions in American movies and TV series. By examining linguistic choices in media content through the lens of race, we aim to uncover the nuanced ways in which cultural identities are portrayed and negotiated. Through a comprehensive qualitative analysis, encompassing a diverse range of productions spanning various genres and time periods, this research seeks to illuminate the complex interplay between language, ethnicity, and societal constructs within the realm of American entertainment. The findings of this study promise to contribute valuable insights to both linguistic and cultural studies, offering a deeper understanding of how language functions as a vehicle for representation and identity construction in the media landscape. In the first movie "Get Rich or Die Trying" the number of slang are seventeen words. Concerning the race thirteen of the speakers are black, and four are white. Function used most in slangy words the social status scale. In the second T.V Series "Atlanta" the number of slang words are fifteen. Concerning the race, 15 of the speakers are black. Function used most in slangy words the Middle class.

Email: abdulsalam@gmail.com

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الملخص:

تستخدم هذه الدراسة إطارًا قائمًا على العرق لتحليل استخدام التعبيرات العامية في الأفلام والمسلسلات التلفزيونية الأمريكية. من خلال دراسة الاختيارات اللغوية في المحتوى الإعلامي من خلال عدسة العرق، فإننا نهدف إلى الكشف عن الطرق الدقيقة التي يتم من خلالها تصوير الهويات الثقافية والتفاوض بشأنها. من خلال تحليل نوعي شامل، يشمل مجموعة متنوعة من المنتجات التي تغطي مختلف الأنواع والفترات الزمنية، يسعى هذا البحث إلى إلقاء الضوء على التفاعل المعقد بين اللغة والعرق والبنى المجتمعية في عالم الترفيه الأمريكي. تعد نتائج هذه الدراسة بالمساهمة برؤى قيمة في كل من الدراسات اللغوية والثقافية، مما يوفر فهمًا أعمق لكيفية عمل اللغة كوسيلة للتمثيل وبناء الهوية في المشهد الإعلامي. في الفيلم الأول "اغتنن أو مت وأنت تحاول" عدد الكلمات العامية سبع عشرة كلمة. فيما يتعلق بالعرق، ثلاثة عشر من المتحدثين هم من السود وأربعة من البيض. الوظيفة الأكثر استخدامًا في الكلمات العامية هي مقياس الحالة الاجتماعية. في المسلسل التلفزيوني الثاني "أتلانتا" عدد الكلمات العامية خمسة عشر. وفيما يتعلق بالعرق، فإن ١٥ من المتحدثين هم من السود. الوظيفة الأكثر استخدامًا في الكلمات العامية هي الطبقة الوسطى.

1. Slang Expressions: An Overview

Language serves as a powerful medium for cultural expression, reflecting the intricacies of societal dynamics and individual identities. In the realm of American entertainment, particularly within movies and television series, slang expressions play a pivotal role in shaping narratives and character portrayals. This study adopts a race-based approach to scrutinize the use of slang in these media forms, aiming to unveil the multifaceted relationship between linguistic choices and racial identities. The casual language used in daily encounters is known as slang. It is defined as "an ever-changing set of commonplace words and expressions used by speakers to develop or maintain social identity or group cohesion inside a group or with a trend or fad in society at large" (Eble, 1996, p. 11). It defines terms or expressions that are employed by younger speakers and other groups with specialized interests in place of more commonplace ones (Yule, 2014, p. 262).

There are fifteen "varied purposes" of slang (Crystal, 2003, p. 182). In his statement, Crystal identifies number 13 as "the principal role of slang," which is "to establish that one belongs to a given school, trade, or profession, artistic or intellectual set, or social class". To engage or "make contact," in other words, what slang is used for. Slang is also utilized to create identity, particularly, young identity: Slang is used to create identity, especially youth identity, according to Bucholtz (2007). Slang is utilized as an interpersonal source to achieve specific interactional aims, rendering Bucholtz's investigation of the use of slang by California youths.

There are some reasons why people use slang, Slang can represent a certain sub-social group's identity because it is cool, it seems like a fashion when everybody

likes it, and it will be often used by people. Patridge (1950, p. 7) mentioned that People use slang for any of at least fifteen reasons:

- 1) In sheer high spirits, by young people in heart as well as by the young in years; 'just for the fun of the thing'; in playfulness.
- 2) For delights in virtuosity.
- 3) To be different, to be novel.
- 4) To be picturesque, this could be found in songs or poems. To be unmistakably arresting, even startling.
- 5) to be beautiful
- 6) To avoid using overused phrases or to be succinct and to the point.
- 7) To enhance the language by creating novel vocabulary.
- 8) To provide an impression of substance and tangibility, adding a touch of practicality to the idealistic, and making the distant seem more immediate and contrasting.
- 9) To lighten the tone of a discussion.
- 10) To lighten the tone of a discussion.
- 11) To facilitate social interaction.
- 12) To encourage a sense of warmth and friendliness.
- 13) To To demonstrate affiliation with a specific group.
- 14) To demonstrate or establish that someone is not part of a particular group.
- 15) This includes individuals such as students, romantic partners, members of covert political organizations, both law-abiding and incarcerated criminals, and innocent individuals inside prisons.

1.1 The Impact of Language –Based Racism

Dei's (1996. P. 2) second anti-racism education principle states that without an awareness of the intersections between race and other types of social oppression, it is difficult to completely appreciate the social repercussions of race. Linguistic oppression is one of these methods. Therefore, it is crucial to evaluate ELLs' experiences via an intersectional framework "so that intra-group experience is discernible and unequal treatment between diverse linguistic groups [becomes] clear" (Davey, 1996, p.191). Immigration status, gender, and religion are other facets of oppression that could be intertwined with language. Not every ELL experiences racism or linguisticism on the same scales or in the same ways. To certain groups of people, racism "takes varied forms over time and geography (Condry, 2006, p. 36).

Regarding how racism and prejudice affect ELLs' academic progress, Canadian literature is lacking. For pupils who are seen to be ELLs or members of minorities, administrators, counselors, and instructors frequently have lower expectations. EAL instructors must recognize the prejudice and discrimination

that their pupils experience. If these difficulties are only skimmed over, pupils will get disengaged from the lesson (Olding, 2016, p.9).

1.2 Social Dimension Classification

Both the social component and the circumstances in which language is utilized can serve as indicators of the social rank differences between speakers. In other words, the social dimension is a reflection of the language's usage, purpose, topic, style, and mood. This study is inextricably linked to the social aspect of communication since it also examines social function. For instance, before speaking out, a member of a certain group will take into account the social context before expressing his or her feelings of rage at another member.

Four related social measures are then treated individually. They are the following (Holmes et al.,1991, p. 102):

1. The Social Distance Scale

Labov (1966, p. 76) argues that social distance may be defined as a condition produced by a social relationship in conjunction with other social relationships. Any specific social distance is a result of at least two relationships of differing tendencies. The social distance scale becomes an indicator of how well someone knows the other that will become a relevant factor in linguistic choices.

2. The Social Status Scale

The socioeconomic position of a person affects his or her opportunities for several things, such as education, income, occupation, marriage, health, and friends. Occupation is the best single predictor of social status. The status scale refers to the status classification of people involved in a conversation (Greif, 1980, p. 256).

3. The Formality Scale

The formality scale is a tool to assess the influence of a social setting or type of interaction in influencing a language choice. In a friendly chat held in cafes, people prefer to use colloquial language. On the other hand, people tend to use formal language in a ritual service or a business transaction (Siegel, 2010, p. 95).

4. The Functional Scale

Sociolinguists aim at justifying the extent to which the function of a language or variety considerably shapes its use. Language can convey both objective information of referential kinds and an individual's feeling. The more referentially oriented and interaction is, the less it tends to convey the speaker's feelings (Zhou & Fan, 2013, p. 17).

1.3. Scientific Dimension Classification

The specialized language of any industry, trade, discipline, or pastime is known as jargon (Scientific Slang). As researchers uncover novel occurrences, they create new terminology to describe their results. By definition, these

terminologies, which are technical terminology exclusive to a subject, will be jargon. As a result, jargon effectively invents language to accommodate scientific advancement. Additionally, scientists demonstrate their advancement in the subject by including new jargon in their works. Jargon is distinct from "fatty" language, or words and sentences that are too complex. It refers to the precise technical phrases used in a discipline, not just any confusing writing. Thus, using jargon helps the author communicate with a disciplinary audience clearly and efficiently (Rosen berg, 2012, p. 1).

1.3.1 Using Scientific Slang

Scientists use specialized vocabulary to present themselves as experts in their fields. Jargon can, however, occasionally make a passage harder to read and draw readers' attention away from the paper's main point. It is crucial to keep the audience in mind while employing jargon and to be deliberate about when and how frequently to use specialist lingo. The following should always be taken into account by authors to increase clarity (Wardhaugh, 2006, p. 53).

1. Audience

The reader has a significant influence on the allowable degree of jargon. For instance, a government official reading an environmental policy statement might not have the background or time to grasp sophisticated terminology, even while the readership of a scientific journal article is probably knowledgeable about the topic and can, thus, comprehend a high degree of slang. Consider your target audience carefully when you exercise caution (Bucholtz, 2007, p. 44).

2. Poorly constructed slang

In certain instances, slang's meaning may still be ambiguous even though it is utilized suitably for the audience. Several scenarios include (ibid).

2. Methodology

The present chapter introduces slang expressions and how it was used by the study sample and the procedures of the study. It also focuses on the model of analysis and the variables of the study that will be examined later on in chapter four. Finally, it concludes with a description of how data will be collected quantitatively.

2.1. The Model

The model of the study is an eclectic model built on Holmes, Bell, Boyce (1991) & Jordana (2012). The model is sketched as follows in Figure (1).

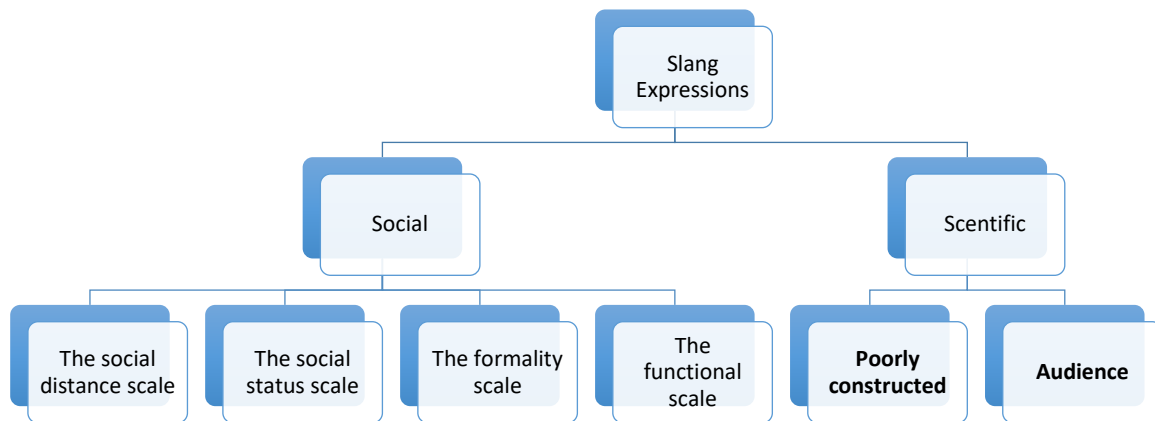


Figure (1): The Model of the study

2.2. Data Selection and Description

The data will be described as follows:

2.2 Data selection

The data of the study are selected from the internet and they cover one movie, and one T.V. series.

2.3 Description of Data

“Get Rich or Die Tyrin” is an American crime drama film written by Terence Winter and directed by Jim Sheridan in. It stars Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson in his feature film acting debut alongside Terrence Howard, Joy Bryant, Bill Duke, Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje, Omar Benson and Miller, and Ashley Walters.

Concerning series, Atlanta is an American drama television series created by Donald Glover. The series follows college dropout and music manager Earnest "Earn" Marks (Glover) and rapper Alfred "Paper Boi" Miles (Brian Tyree Henry) as they navigate a strange, seemingly otherworldly, Atlanta hip hop scene. Atlanta also stars Lakeith Stanfield as Darius, Earn and Alfred's eccentric friend, and Zazie Beetz as Vanessa "Van" Kiefer, Earn's on-again-off-again girlfriend and the mother of his daughter.

3. The Sample

1. Get Rich or Die Tyrin movie (2005)

2. Atlanta T.V. series (2016)
 4. Analysis and Finding Discussion
 1. Slang in Get Rich or Die Tyrin Movie

Slang	Race
Nigga	Black
Homie	Black
Yo	Black
Get busted	Black
Gangsta	Black
Deuce	Black
Wack	Black
Lousy	Black
Ghetto	Black
Pumping out	Black
Crack	Black
Wha'gwan	Black
Junebug	Black
Shook	white
Flunky	white
Nacs	white
Fiend	white

Table (1): Types of the Slang in Get Rich or Tryin Movie

Slang	Meaning	Function
Nigga	An ethnic slur against black people.	social distance scale
Homie	A person from one's home town	formality scale
Yo	used as a greeting	formality scale
Get busted	caught or arrested by the police for doing something illegal	Functional scale
Gangsta	member of a criminal	social status scale
Deuce	peace; goodbye	social status scale
Wack	Annoyingly or disappointingly bad	social status scale
Lousy	of poor skill or quality	Functional scale

Ghetto	A city inhabited mainly by people of the same ethnic	formality scale
Pumping out	to produce or supply it continually and in large amounts	formality scale
Crack	Smoking cocaine	Functional scale
Wha' gwan	Greeting equivalent to what's up	social Distance scale
Junebug	someone that stood up and did not back down from anyone	social Distance scale
Shook	Surprise	Functional scale
Flunky	someone who works obediently for another person	social status scale
Nacs	prison acronym for "non affiliated caucasian".	social status scale
Fiend	a diabolically cruel or wicked person	social status scale

Table (2): The Meaning and Functions of Slang Get Rich or Tryin Movie

Variables		Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	15	83.3%
	Female	2	11.7%
Age	15-24	9	52.9%
	25-64	8	47%
Statue	Criminal	1	5.8%
	Jobless	1	5.8%
	Housewife	١	5.8%
	Gun dealer	1	5.8%
	Educated	1	5.8%
	Rapper	7	41.1%
	Gangster	5	29.4%
Race	Black	13	91.6%
	Wihte	٤	23.5%

Table (3) Findings of "Get Rich or Die Trying" Movie

2. Slang Atlanta TV

Slang	Gender	Age	Status	Race
Nigga	Male	25-64	Poor	Black
Dawg	Male	25-64	Middle Class	Black
Shottas	Male	25-64	Poor	Black
Boi	Male	25-64	Poor	Black
Ghetto	Male	25-64	Poor	Black
Bistros	Male	25-64	Middle Class	Black
Dope	Male	25-64	Poor	Black
Dude	Male	25-64	Middle Class	Black
Aight	Male	25-64	Middle Class	Black
Booze	Male	25-64	Middle Class	Black
Lil	Male	25-64	Middle Class	Black
Dip	Male	25-64	Middle Class	Black
Boogie	Male	25-64	Middle Class	Black
Ratty	Male	25-64	Poor	Black
Doja	Female	15-24	Poor	Black

\ Table (4) gives some examples of slang in Atlanta T.V Series

Slang	Meaning	Function
Nigga	An ethnic slur against black people.	social distance
dawg	Dude, bud, pal, used to address a close male friend	social distance
Shottas	An armed gangster	social status
Boi	an alternate spelling of boy used to describe boys, men, girls, women, and things that aren't even human	Poorly constructed
bistros	a little cafe or wine shop	social status
ghetto	A city inhabited mainly by people of the same ethnic	social status
dope	a fool, a slang term for "excellent," or refer to drugs like marijuana.	functional scale
dude	guy" or "man."	social distance
A'ight	all right	Poorly constructed
booze	alcoholic drink	functional status
Lil	an abbreviation of the word little	Poorly constructed
dip	to leave especially suddenly or prematurely	social distance
Boogie	to dance to pop music. to make love	functional scale
ratty	angry and irritated easily	functional scale
Doja	weed or marijuana	functional scale

While Table (5) meaning and Functions of the Atlanta T.V Series

Variables		Num ber	Percent age
Gender	Male	14	93.3%
	Female	١	6.6%
Age	15-24	١	6.6%
	25-64	14	93.3%
Statue	Middle class	9	% ٦٠
	Poor	٦	% ٤٠
Race	Black	15	100%

Table (15) Findings the Atlanta T.V Series

Discussion of Findings

In the first movie “Get Rich or Die Trying” the number of slang are seventeen words. Concerning the gender of the speakers, fifteen of them are males, and two are female, males use slangy words more than females. The ages of the speakers are different, it has two classes nine are between 14-21 adolescence and eight of them between 21-35 youth . People of ages between 14-21 years use slangy words less than those in ages between 21-35. The statues of the speaker are also different. One of them is criminal, one is jobless, one is housewife, one is gun dealer, and one is educated, as well as seven are rapper, five are gangster. Rappers use slang words more than others. Concerning the race fourteen of the speakers are black, and four are white. Function used most in slangy words the social status scale.

In the fifth T.V Series “Atlanta” the number of slang words are fifteen. Concerning the gender of the speakers, 14 of them are males, and 1 is female. The ages of the speakers are same, it has one classes 15 are between 21-35 youth. People of ages between 21-35 years use slangy words more than others than. The statues of the speaker are differents. eight of them are middle class and seven are poor. Concerning the race, 15 of the speakers are black. Function used most in slangy words the Middle class.



Conclusions

The conclusions of the current study:

1. Two kinds of slangy expressions are used in the sample of the study, the social, and scientific slangy expressions. The social used by the participants more than the scientific.
2. Six functions of slangy expressions are used in the sample of the study, the functional scale, the formality scale, the social status scale, the social distance scale. The social status scale used by the participants more than the other three kinds.
3. According to race, Black English use slangy expressions in the selected sample of the study more than white do.
4. In movies, series, and live shows, African-American speakers utilize slang terms more frequently than American, European, Latin, and other speakers.

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