

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SLANG: THE PHENOMENA OF SLANG USED BY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION DRIVERS IN MALANG INDONESIA**

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**Abstract:** As a product of creativity, slang continuously raises in society used to mark social and cultural differences. This study aims to discover terms of slang used by the community of public transportation drivers in Kacuk Malang, the process of its formation, the meaning it refers to, and the purpose of its usage. Qualitative design is used as the research method by using the following steps in collecting and analyzing data. The observation was done to gain information about using slang in conversation among public transportation drivers and followed up by interviewing ten drivers. The study found that Slang was used for a variety of purposes. Initially, as their code language. As a language for jokes, second. Third, they use Bahasa Jawa (Javanese language) as words or supplementary language to keep the discourse fresh and further demonstrate their Kacuk community identity. Fifth, as a way to get to know one another better. The final one was for their regular discussions.

**Keywords:** *kacuk slang, slang, osob ngalaman*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Understanding the codes used is very important to mingle with a certain community. These codes are not only a sign of differentiating its speech community but also indicate the language situation and reflect the users' language's purposes, topics, norms, and modes (Hidayat et al., 2022). In certain communities, to create a solidarity atmosphere among the members, they use slang, an informal and temporary linguistic

form, in their interactions. Slang is also used to serve as the group's property and an identity badge for the group (Thorne et al., 2013).

According to Adams, (2012), other types of slang can be classified into three categories: Internet and Texting Slang: With the rise of the internet and digital communication, a new form of Slang has emerged. Internet slang includes abbreviations, acronyms, and expressions commonly used in online forums, social media, and texting. Examples include "LOL" (laugh out loud), "ROFL" (rolling on the floor laughing), or "AFK" (away from keyboard). A gang or Street Slang is associated with urban communities, particularly those involved in gang culture or street life. It often includes coded language, specialized vocabulary, or terms used to denote specific affiliations or activities. Examples include "crip" and "blood" for gang affiliations or "yo" and "dope" for positive expressions. Fashion and Pop Culture Slang, slang terms can also emerge from fashion, entertainment, and popular culture. They often reflect current trends, celebrities, or cultural phenomena. Examples include "fashionista" for a person passionate about fashion or "binge-watch" for watching multiple TV series episodes in one sitting.

Recently slang still grows from generation to generation and is used by criminal groups and people from various social backgrounds and education. It is not only a means of communication. Slang has also grown as a group identity to send secret information among people safely; in the Dutch imperialism era, Malang slang has developed increasingly (Setyanto, 2016) It becomes a new vocabulary source that is spoken and written in daily life, especially in some local mass media, such as daily Malang Pos, Memo Arema, and JTV news program named "Pojok Kampung Ngalam" This program always uses Javanese in its broadcasting. The terms *kodek* (girl), *nganal* (boy), *ebes* (parent), *genaro* (people), *nakam* (eat), etc., recently belong to the vocabulary widely used, and slang certainly contributes new vocabulary to the language (Hermawan, 2014).

The slang still widely used in Malang is Kacuk Slang. Kacuk refers to a Suburb in Malang City, Indonesia; geographically, it is in the West of Gadang Station and South of the office of Sukun Sub-district (BPS Kota Malang, 2018). Kacuk village includes part of the under-head of a sub-district Sukun. Kacuk slang, however, is slightly different from Walikan Malang's structures, forms, and senses. Kacuk slang has

funny and distinct arbitrary. The slang language used in Kacuk Village exposes the Malang people's creativity by changing Javanese and other language words into new words. According to Suwardono (2016), in its early appearance, the people of Kacuk Village, especially those who work as public transportation drivers in this area, used this code as an argot code, a secret code used in daily communication to keep outsiders from finding out what they mean. The changing word can be in the last syllable. For example, when they are going to say "bengi" (night), it is changed into "bengeb". But some words are relatively the same and are not changed.

Due to the uniqueness of Kacuk slang which is so different from the slang widely used by Malang people in general, known as *boso walikan*, this current study tries to dig deeper into the phenomena, especially in discovering the slang and the meaning used by public transportation drivers regarding its structure and the user's purposes. It is limited only to the community since it is believed that the early appearance of this Slang came from them and spread widely ever since.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Slang refers to informal, non-standard language that particular groups or communities commonly use. It often evolves within subcultures, such as youth culture, specific professions, or social groups. Slang is characterized by its informal nature, creativity, and ability to express ideas concisely or playfully (Thorne et al., 2013).

Further, Thorne et al. (2013) add that slang serves several functions within language and society, such as:

**Social Identity and Group Affiliation:** Slang can be a marker of social identity and group affiliation. It helps individuals express belonging to specific social groups, subcultures, or communities. By using slang, people can signal shared experiences, values, and interests, creating a sense of solidarity and inclusion.

**Communication Efficiency:** Slang often emerges to facilitate efficient and concise communication among particular groups. It allows members to convey complex ideas, emotions, or experiences using shorter, more expressive terms. Slang can be used as a form of shorthand or jargon, enabling insiders to communicate quickly and effectively within their social circles (Agha, 2015).

**Expressing Intimacy and Inclusivity:** Slang can foster a sense of intimacy and camaraderie among speakers. It creates a shared language that sets insiders apart from outsiders. Using slang can create a sense of exclusivity and connection, strengthening interpersonal relationships and fostering a sense of community (Alimov, 2021).

**Creative Language Play:** Slang is often rooted in linguistic creativity and playfulness. People enjoy inventing and using new words, modifying existing ones, or employing unconventional grammar or pronunciation. This creative aspect of slang allows individuals to express their personality, wit, and linguistic skill, adding an element of fun and innovation to communication (Izmaylova et al., 2017).

**Expressing Emotion and Attitude:** Slang can convey specific emotions, attitudes, or cultural nuances that might not be easily captured by standard language. It allows speakers to inject humor, sarcasm, irony, or other shades of meaning into their communication. Slang provides a means to express oneself with a particular style, tone, or attitude.

**Keeping Language Dynamic:** Slang contributes to the evolution and dynamism of language. It introduces new words, meanings, and expressions into the linguistic repertoire. Slang reflects the ever-changing nature of culture, technology, and social trends, ensuring that language remains relevant and adaptable to the needs of contemporary society (Trimastuti, 2017).

Those six functions are in line with what (Sabbagh, 2018) says, she adds besides those six, slang also functions to convey humor to handle awkward social situations and to discuss semi-taboo subjects, such as drunkenness, sexual organs and activities, drugs and drug use, 'elimination' and 'bodily waste'.

### **The Formation of Slang**

Dalzell and Victor (2017) state that creating slang words is a dynamic and spontaneous process involving linguistic creativity, cultural influences, and the need for efficient communication within specific groups. While the exact process can vary, there are a few common ways in which slang words are created:

**Word Formation:** Slang words can be formed through various word formation processes, such as:

**Abbreviation:** Words or phrases may be shortened to create slang terms. For example, "totes" for "totally" or "ad" for "advertisement."

**Blending:** Two words are combined to form a new word. For instance, "brunch" is a blend of "breakfast" and "lunch."

**Coinage:** Completely new words are created, often by altering existing words or using unconventional combinations of sounds. For example, "fleck" or "YOLO" (You Only Live Once).

**Semantic Shift:** Slang words often undergo semantic shifts, where their original meanings are extended or modified to serve new purposes. This can involve metaphorical or figurative usage, where words take on new connotations or associations. For example, "sick" originally referred to illness but has shifted to mean something impressive or cool.

**Borrowing and Adaptation:** Slang can be borrowed from other languages or dialects, or existing words can be adapted to have new meanings. This can be influenced by cultural contact, globalization, or the need to express ideas concisely. For example, "schmooze" (from Yiddish) or "FOMO" (Fear of Missing Out).

**Cultural References and Influences:** Slang words often emerge from cultural references, such as movies, music, sports, or popular trends. They can be inspired by iconic characters, catchphrases, or the jargon associated with specific activities or subcultures. For example, "Jedi mind trick" from Star Wars or "swag" derived from hip-hop culture (Bucholtz, 2015).

**Internet and Technology:** The internet and technology have significantly impacted slang creation. Online communities and social media platforms have given rise to new slang terms, acronyms, and abbreviations. Memes and viral content also contribute to the creation of Slang in the digital realm.

**Linguistic Playfulness:** Slang often emerges from a desire for linguistic playfulness and creativity. People enjoy inventing and using new words to express themselves uniquely and engagingly. This can involve wordplay, puns, or the adoption of unconventional grammar or pronunciation.

## **METHOD**

Using a purposive random sampling technique, ten public transportation drivers were taken as the accurate informants. The data were collected from July 30th to August 3rd, 2022. Before getting the data in the field, the researcher did an observation. The

observation was conducted in Kacuk village. During the observation, a checklist sheet and type recorder were used to classify the data and record the conversation of the public transportation drivers. In this study, observation was conducted to observe the use of Slang in conversation among public transportation drivers. The authors also recorded the informants' conversations to support the observation's validity.

The next form of observation sheet was checklist observation, which consisted of information related to the Kacuk slang and why they use Slang—in unstructured interviews to collect the data to be easily analyzed. Moreover, recording is to get valid data from the conversation of the public transportation drivers. After collecting data, the data will be analyzed by Identifying the data or information related to the Slang used by public transportation drivers. The analysis was based on Thorne et al. (2013) theories of slang. The researcher made a word list of slang used by public transportation drivers. The third step was looking for the meaning of the words and then arranging data in the form of a table. The fourth step was analyzing the reasons for using Slang in their daily conversation. The last was drawing conclusions based on the data.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

Ngalam Slang is a well-known slang used in Malang. The Ngalam slang that the Malang people are familiar with is a variety of languages. Here, the authors presented additional, unfamiliar terminology, specifically Kacuk Slang, which originates from Kacuk Village. Even if this Slang has been modified in the last syllable of Javanese, it is still difficult to understand. The inventor utilized only pure Java but altered the original meaning to create a new one. In addition, he coined new words with fresh connotations.

The drivers of public transportation and the natives of Kacuk regularly engage in informal conversation using this Slang. Because it has interesting and humorous characteristics, they employ this Slang in everyday speech.

**Table 1. Kacuk Slang, Its Formation, and Meanings**

| No. | Kacuk Slang | Derived from<br>Javanese | Indonesia | Meanings<br>English | Purposes of<br>Usage |
|-----|-------------|--------------------------|-----------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1   | Cikrak      | cilik                    |           | Small (adj)         | Code                 |
| 2   | Dumbo       | omah                     |           | family<br>(noun)    | language<br>Joke     |
| 3   | Landak      | langsung                 | langsung  | direct (adj)        | Identity             |
| 4   | Luwak       | luweh                    |           | hungry (adj)        | Interaction          |
| 5   | Duren       | duwit                    |           | money<br>(noun)     |                      |
| 6   | Lemon       |                          | lain      | different<br>(adj)  |                      |
| 7   | Endang      | enak                     |           | tasteful (adj)      |                      |
| 8   | Ijo         | iwak                     |           | fish (noun)         |                      |
| 9   | Lumajang    | lumayan                  |           | middling<br>(adj)   |                      |
| 9   | Tanjidor    |                          | tanya     | ask (verb)          |                      |
| 10  | Bis         |                          |           | Person<br>(noun)    |                      |
| 11  | mandala     |                          |           | connect<br>(verb)   |                      |
| 12  | damar       |                          | dapat     | Can (modal)         |                      |
| 13  | mendol      | melok                    |           | Follow<br>(verb)    |                      |
| 14  | tail        |                          | lihat     | See (verb)          |                      |
| 15  | genthong    | gedhe                    |           | Big (adj)           |                      |

The drivers of public transit employ the following word formations, in which the process of borrowing, semantic swift, and linguistic playfulness is dominant, such as:

1. Name of cleaning tool (in the Javanese language)

*Cikrak* (noun) – small (adj)

Originally it comes from the word ‘*cilik*’ (Javanese language, which means small), the term is spoofed as *cikrak* (dustpan).

2. Name of animals

*Dumbo* (noun) – family (noun)

*Luwak* (noun) – hungry (adj)

*Landak* (noun) – direct (verb)

Those three examples also come from borrowing, linguistic playfulness, and semantic swift. *Dumbo* (a kind of catfish) comes from *omah* (house in Javanese) which becomes the representation of the family. *Luwak* (mongoose) is used to spoof the term *luweh* (hungry, in Javanese) and Landak (hedgehog) to spoof the term *langsung* (direct). These patterns of processes also apply in the following terms.

3. Name of fruits

- Duren (noun) – money (noun)
- Lemon (noun) – different (adj)
- 4. Personal name
  - Endang (noun) – tasteful (adj)
- 5. Name of color (in the Javanese language)
  - Ijo (noun) – fish (noun)
- 6. Name of town
  - Lumajang (noun) – middling (adj)
- 7. Name of musical instrument
  - Tanjidor (noun) – ask (verb)
- 8. Name of media transportation
  - Bis (noun) – person (noun)
- 9. Name of the top mountain of Jaya Wijaya and the brand of media transportation
  - Mandala (noun) – connect (verb)
- 10. Name of the lamp (in the Javanese language)
  - Damar (noun) – can (modal)
- 11. Name of food
  - Mendol (noun) – follow (verb)
- 12. Diverse language
  - Tail (verb) – look (verb)
- 13. Name of kitchen tool (in the Javanese language)
  - Genthong (noun) – big (adj)

A few factors encouraged the drivers of public transit to develop this slang for use in social interactions. Using (Thorne et al., 2013) theories, they are classified into below functions:

1. As their code language people outside the Kacuk community cannot comprehend what the drivers are saying.
2. As a joke to make other people laugh who are unfamiliar with these phrases when they hear this term. Employing Java language (more refresh) as words or another language so they don't become bored with their chat
3. As an identity to demonstrate their distinctiveness as the Kacuk community. They are proud of the Slang they are using and want to keep it that way forever.



4. To improve their daily communication by becoming closer to one another (interactional purpose).

Their motivations for using this Slang were the same as those stated above. For these reasons, they developed and utilized their language to communicate within Kacuk. Using these phrases made people feel less distant and rough when they encountered one another there or elsewhere.

The group of people always uses language to engage and communicate. Without language, people are unable to cooperate, engage, or communicate. Because there are many differences within a group of individuals, language has many different traits and variations and is used for every requirement throughout our lives. Slang was used to communicate between Kacuk's natives and drivers of public transportation in this case. Group language is another term for a communication tool that an individual group holds. However, they utilize Java when speaking with others outside of Kacuk.

When speaking informally and discussing a private matter, such as gossip or a private business, they would utilize Kacuk slang. Because they wanted to have their unique character and to demonstrate their close relationship, they used this Slang to demonstrate their willingness and skill to invent specific terms. Additionally, they refer to each other as a unit in Kacuk slang.

### **Discussion**

In the study, Kacuk slang mostly comes from the process of borrowing, semantic shift, and linguistic playfulness. 57 terms from the informant interactions were deemed to be relevant to this study. Each phrase has a distinct meaning, and they were all invented by Kacuk-based public transit drivers and Kacuk natives. Because it has interesting and humorous characteristics, they employ this Slang in everyday speech. This was in line with the thesis put forth by (Gwinn et. al, 2011) who claimed that "Slang is developed by clever people to refresh the language, to vitalize it, to make the language more intense and scenic, to enhance the stock of pithy and striking phrases, or to give a vocabulary for new shades of meaning. It implies that those who use Slang in communication are unaware of how it infuses their language with newness and individuality and helps them avoid speaking monotonously.

The words were created from the names of various things, including a cleaning tool, an animal or fruit's name, a person's name, a color, a town's name, a musical

instrument, a brand of media transportation, a lamp's name, a food name, a name for the top mountain in Jaya Wijaya, a name for a language, and a kitchen tool with a name that originated with them. These terms include nouns, verbs, adjectives, or adverbs (Sumarno & Kardjowidjojo, 2019).

Kacuk public transportation drivers communicated using these terms in their community, with their families, and inside the driver's community. They utilized this Slang as their code language, a joke language reflecting their roots as the Kacuk people, and a way to keep their language alive so that the outsiders in the Kacuk hamlet would laugh when they heard it and not get weary of their daily contact. Everyone can understand Slang, but no one can agree on what it means. Slang is frequently the source of humor used by speakers with amazing ingenuity. Slang has several salient characteristics, although defining it precisely seems to be very difficult. They usually call sampan = sampeyan (you), sokran = sopo (who), ojob/bodeng = bojo (wife/husband), ebor/memes = ibu (mother), ebes/embong = bapak (father), sam/cak = mas (brother), pembokat = pembantu (servant), lele dumbo = orang Madura (Madurese) in general, people speak in their native tongue when they interact with one another, squat, greet their friends, participate in community gatherings, gossip, and converse with their drivers on the road.

After extensive discussion and interviews, it concluded that languages come in a wide variety. Kacuk slang is one instance of our nation's Slang that is quite distinctive and humorous and piques our interest when we hear it since it sounds strange. And the city's public transportation drivers, natives of Kacuk, also regularly utilize this language.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Conclusion**

By rephrasing Javanese and other language terms into new ones, the slang spoken in Kacuk Village reveals the creativity of the Malang people. Kacuk slang is different from the language widely used by Malang people, *boso walikan*, in terms of its styles and its formation processes. Kacuk slang mostly comes from the process of borrowing, semantic swiftness, and linguistic playfulness. They are derived from the names of cleaning implements, animals, fruits, people, colors, towns, musical

instruments, brands of media transportation, Jaya Wijaya's highest mountain, names of foods, diverse languages, and, last but not least, names of kitchen implement all contributed to the creation of slang that public transportation drivers use.

Slang was used for a variety of purposes. Initially, as their code language. As a language for jokes, second. Third, they use Bahasa Jawa (Javanese language) as words or supplementary language to keep the discourse fresh and further demonstrate their Kacuk community identity. Last, as a way to get to know one another better.

### **Suggestions**

The authors suggest that future researchers who are interested in investigating Kacuk slang to be more focused on the historical background underlying such phenomena.

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