

**A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY ON AFRICAN AMERICAN SLANG WORDS
FOUND IN 8 MILE MOVIE**

(Pembahasan Sociolinguistik pada Ucapan - Ucapan Populer Orang Afro Amerika dalam Film "8 Mile"

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ABSTRAK

Artikel ini membahas tentang studi sociolinguistik pada ucapan – ucapan populer orang Afro Amerika dalam film 8 Mile. Dalam artikel ini terdapat dua pertanyaan. Pertanyaan pertama mengenai bagaimana ucapan – ucapan populer orang Afro Amerika dibentuk dan dibedakan dari bahasa standar. Pertanyaan kedua mengenai bagaimana ucapan – ucapan populer orang Afro Amerika dapat dimengerti masyarakat umum. Untuk menganalisa ucapan – ucapan populer tersebut digunakan teori ucapan – ucapan populer sociolinguistik dan linguistik milik Mattiello dan karakteristik gramatika bahasa Afro Amerika milik Rickford dan Rickford. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini dari segi sociolinguistik adalah bahwa ucapan – ucapan populer orang Afro Amerika berbeda dari bahasa standar karena ucapan – ucapan tersebut diucapkan sebagai bahasa informal, bahasa kasar, dan bahasa yang bersifat terbatas dalam suatu kelompok. Dari segi linguistik, ucapan – ucapan populer orang Afro Amerika digunakan sebagai bahasa singkatan dan bahasa campuran. Dan karakteristik gramatika bahasa Afro Amerika dapat dimengerti dari penggunaan kata ain't, tidak adanya kata kerja penghubung, tidak adanya -s/-es dalam kata kerja bagi orang ketiga tunggal, dan penggunaan beberapa kata negatif.

Kata kunci: Sociolinguistik, Ucapan - ucapan populer orang Afro Amerika.

ABSTRACT

This research discusses a sociolinguistic study on African American slang words found in 8 Mile movie. In this research, there are two research questions. The first question is how African American slang words are formed and distinguished from the standardized language. The second question is how African American slang words can be understood by common people. In analyzing data, Mattiello's theory about slang from sociological and linguistic point of view and Rickford and Rickford's theory about African American Language Grammar are used in this research. The conclusion of this research is that from sociological point of view, African American slang words are different from the standardized language because those slang words are mostly spoken as informal words, vulgar words, and group and subject restriction. From linguistic point of view, African American slang words are mostly spoken as clipping words, compound words, a blending word and semantic words. And grammatical characteristics of African American Language can be understood by the use of ain't, the use of zero copula, the absence of third person -s/-es marking and the use of negative concord.

Keywords: Sociolinguistics, African American slang words.

Introduction

A language cannot be separated from human being. The connection between language and society is closely immovable. A language performs various functions in the society and the society does the same way. If one will not exist, the other one will be affected. Society, however, controls our language by giving us choices as what are acceptable or not, because each one of us has our own perception. A group of people may accept our language, but for others, our language can be a kind of offence or insult. We must know how, when and where to say it and for what purpose we say it.

The language changes are influenced by social changes. Language combines social values. However, social values are only the same as linguistic values when the society is a stable and unchanging one. Once society starts changing, then language change produces special effects. Language changes and spreads quickly around the world. The change of languages is used by people in daily life. People tend to interact with other people in their life. In the interaction, they use languages to communicate with others. The languages use can be standard language and non-standard one. Standard language is used in printing and speaking which are normally taught in a school. On the other hand, non-standard language is properly used in a particular situation such as in streets and it should not be used in a formal situation for instance talking with a lecturer. The example of non-standard language is slang words

From the sociological approach, Mattiello (2008:32) states that:

“slang is viewed as an in-group vocabulary that certain subclasses in society (e.g. criminals or drug addicts) cultivate to keep the content of their conversation private, or which such specific subgroups as adolescents or college students adopt to keep the older generation at a distance”.

Slang words are spoken by people in a group to keep their conversation secret among them. The slang words are often related to show solidarity among them in a group. They feel closer while they use slang words. There are many kinds of

slang spoken by people or groups around the world. One kind of slangs is African American slang words. People consider that language is the most effective communication tool for them who are representative for the group.

Slang is the restricted speech of marginal or distinct subgroups in society (Mattiello, 2008:31). Slang is spoken by people in a specific group and slang distinguishes them from other. The use of a special language, i.e. slang, is a means of excluding oneself from others (Remes, 1991:139). Slang is spoken to signal identities by those who use it. The identity can be ethnic identity. People belong to many social groups and have many social identities. Each group has its own language variety. A group of African American people will have their own slang words in their group, thus African American slang words signify African American people identity.

From the linguistic point of view, Mattiello (2008:34) states that:

“Within the linguistic approach, slang is distinguished from the standard language in both its morphology and its semantics. In morphology, it is characterized by clear insubordination as regards the standard word-formation rules, and in semantics, it not only renames everyday objects, but also enriches, qualifies and complexities them”.

Slang words are created and spoken by people in a specific group. And those slang words are different from the standard language in both its morphology and its semantics. African American Language (AAL) has different features with other languages. The features can be grammatical features. Green (2002:200) states that AAL features play a significant role in the presentation of black characters, including grammatical forms (e.g., multiple negation, habitual *be*), phonological forms (stress on the first syllable of *police*) and lexical items, particularly those associated with adolescents or young adults such as *dawg* (close acquaintance) and *cheese* (money). The use of AAL can represent black identity of the speakers who they are. Their identity can be seen by their features of AAL.

AAL is a variety language spoken by many African Americans in the USA which shares a set of grammatical and other linguistic features that

distinguish it from other various American dialects (Fought, 2006:46). The forms and structures of AAL are spoken by African American people of different backgrounds to create their ethnic identity.

Result

This table contains African American slang words spoken by African American people from sociological and linguistic point of view.

			Percentages	
Slang Words	Sociological Point of View	Informality and Debasingment	49	65,40%
		Vulgarity and Obscenity	19	25,30%
		Group and Subject Restriction	7	9,30%
		Total	75	100%
		Linguistic Point of View	Clipping Words	26
Compound Words	4		5,30%	
A Blending Word	1		1,30%	
Semantic Words	44		58,70%	
Total	75		100%	

In the *8 Mile* movie, African American slang words are formed and distinguished from the standardized language. From sociological point of view, the numbers of informality and debasingment are 49 (65,40%), vulgarity and obscenity are 19 (25,30%), and group and subject restriction are 7 (9,30%). From linguistic point of view, clipping words are 26 (34,70%), compound words are 4 (5,30%), a blending word is 1 (1,30%), and semantic words are 44 (58,70%). This description tells that African American slang words are different from the standard language because

those slang words are mostly spoken as informality and debasingment. From linguistic point of view, African American slang words are mostly spoken as semantic words. It also shows that African American slang words are indeed different from standard language.

This table contains the grammatical characteristics of African American slang words.

No	The Grammatical Characteristics	Total	Percentages
1	The absence of third person singular <i>-s</i> marking	5	6,7%
2	Zero Copula (either is or are)	17	22,6%
3	The use of <i>ain't</i> for negation	18	24%
4	Negative Concord	5	6,7%
	No grammatical characteristics found	30	40%
	Total	75	100%

AAL (African American slang words) can be understood by common people. From 75 African American slang words, there are 45 grammatical characteristics which are spoken by African American people in the *8 Mile* movie. The absence of third person singular *-s* marking is 5 (6,7%). The use of zero copula is 17 (22,6%). The use of *ain't* for negation is 18 (24%). The last one, negative concord is 5 (6,7%). This description tells that AAL has grammatical characteristics. These grammatical characteristics of AAL can be used by common people to understand slang words. In this research, it is found that the grammatical characteristics are the absence of third person singular *-s* marking, the use of zero copula, the use of *ain't* for negation, and negative concord that make common people easier to understand African American slang words

Conclusion

In the *8 Mile* movie, it is found that African American slang words are formed and distinguished from the standard language in both its sociological point of view and linguistic point of view. From the sociological point of view, African American slang words are mostly spoken as informality and debasement. Informality and debasement are informal, lower, familiar, casual, relaxed, conversational, unofficial, friendly, easier speech or words spoken by African American people. Moreover, African American slang words are as vulgar, dirty, bad, obscene, rude, impolite, offensive words spoken by African American people. And slang words are spoken to create cohesiveness, closer relationship within group members and to strengthen group affinity.

From linguistic point of view, African American slang words are formed and distinguished from the standard language. African American slang words are mostly formed as semantic words. It means that slang words have meanings. The meanings depend upon the speakers, hearers and context. Second, slang words are formed as short, abbreviated words. Third, slang words are formed as compound words. The last one, slang words are formed as a blending word. Those slang words show that African American slang words are indeed different from standard language. Furthermore, African American slang words have characteristics. One of characteristics is grammatical characteristics. The grammatical characteristics are the absence of third person singular *-s* marking, zero copula, the use of *ain't* for negation, and negative concord. These grammatical characteristics can be used by common people to understand African American slang words.

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