

**A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY ON THE INSTANT MESSAGING
UTTERANCES USED BY TEENAGERS ON COMMUNICATION IN THE
SERIES OF *BRING IT ON* MOVIES**
*(Studi Sociolinguistik pada Ucapan Pesan Instan yang Digunakan Remaja dalam
Komunikasi di Film Berseri Bring It On)*

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Abstract

Instant messaging or IM is a system on the internet that allows people to exchange written messages to other people quickly. However, IM can be used in utterances as well. One of the examples is in the *Bring It On* movie series. This article analyzed the use of IM terms in the form of utterances used by the teenagers characters in the *Bring It On* movie series. The sociolinguistic approach was used to investigate the social context happens in the films. The main goals of this study were to find what kinds of language variations IM utterances belong to and what the possible factors that motivate the teenagers to use IM terms on conversation in the films. This study used the data from the teenagers' utterances in the films and list of register of signs in *chat lingo* (language in chatting) proposed by Lailiyah (2002). The data were analyzed using Biber (1988) parameters in determining register, Brown and Attardo (2000) and Mattiello's (2008) theories in collecting the characteristics in defining slang, and slang sociological properties. The findings of this study were IM utterances regarded as slang, and the factors that motivate the teenagers to use IM terms on their conversation were group- and subject- restriction, secrecy and privacy, solidarity, economical factor, and to keep the older at a distance. The teenagers in the films not only used IM term to make the conversation efficient or save time but also related to group restriction. In other words, when a group of people start using special terms on their communication, they actually showed other people which group they belong to.

Keywords: instant messaging, IM, sociolinguistics, language variation, slang, *Bring It On* movies

Abstrak

Pesan instan atau IM merupakan suatu sistem di internet yang menyediakan pertukaran pesan tulis kepada orang lain dengan cepat. Namun IM juga dapat digunakan dalam bentuk ucapan. Salah satu contohnya terdapat pada film serial *Bring It On*. Artikel ini menganalisa tentang penggunaan istilah-istilah IM dalam bentuk ucapan yang digunakan oleh karakter remaja dalam film dengan menganalisa ucapan-ucapan yang terdapat istilah IM didalamnya melalui naskah film tersebut. Pendekatan sociolinguistik digunakan untuk menginvestigasi konteks sosial yang terjadi di dalam film. Pokok utama studi ini adalah untuk menemukan variasi bahasa apakah IM dalam bentuk ucapan dan mengetahui faktor-faktor apa sajakah yang memotivasi remaja di dalam film untuk menggunakan istilah IM dalam percakapan mereka. Data studi ini adalah ucapan-ucapan yang mengandung istilah IM dan register simbol-simbol pada chat lingo (bahasa pada chatting) yang telah dikemukakan sebelumnya oleh Lailiyah (2002). Data tersebut dianalisis menggunakan parameter untuk mengidentifikasi register oleh Biber (1988), teori slang oleh Brown dan Attardo, serta teori Mattiello untuk mengumpulkan karakteristik-karakteristik dalam mendefinisikan slang, dan sifat-sifat sosiologi slang. Penemuan dari studi ini adalah IM dalam bentuk ucapan adalah dianggap sebagai slang, dan faktor yang melatarbelakangi penggunaannya adalah pembatasan grup dan persoalan (dalam diskusi), rahasia dan privasi, solidaritas, faktor ekonomis, dan untuk menjauhkan umur yang lebih tua. Para remaja dalam film tidak hanya menggunakan istilah IM karena lebih efisien dan menghemat waktu, tetapi juga untuk membatasi anggota kelompok IM. Dengan kata lain, ketika suatu kelompok mulai menggunakan istilah khusus dalam komunikasi mereka, ini menandakan mereka ingin menunjukkan kepada orang lain tentang kelompok mereka.

Kata Kunci: pesan instan, IM, sociolinguistik, variasi bahasa, slang, film *Bring It On*

Introduction

The use of Instant messaging (IM) through the internet has become very popular in this globalization era. IM is a system on the internet that allows people to exchange written messages with other people quickly. However, IM can be used in utterances as well, especially among young people in America. This research analyses sample of the use of IM on communication in the form of utterances from five movie scripts of *Bring It On* sequels. It is interesting when all of the movie directors insert some IM on the teenagers conversation or what they called as speaking in IM.

Furthermore, in the previous study (Hu, et. al., 2004) it is found that the amount of IM use was associated with perceived intimacy between friends. The amount of IM use was positively associated with verbal, affective, and social intimacy, and frequent conversations via IM actually encouraged the desire to meet face-to-face. Speaking in IM itself is more frequently used by girls than boys in the films. It is closed to another study of internet use among young people in Israel, IM is the most frequent internet activity, with 77% of high school students reporting using IM on a daily basis. According to that study, the IM use was more popular with girls than boys, with 70% and 64%, respectively, making use of this method of communication (Lamish&Ribak,2007). Therefore, it can be seen that all of the IM speakers are girls in the films.

As Hudson (1996:1) proposes that sociolinguistics is the study of language in relation to society, therefore from sociolinguistic point of view, the IM in the form of utterances used by teenagers on communication in the films is classified as one of the language variety in social context. Of course there must be some reasons related to social life behind the use of IM terms on conversation in the films. Thus, through sociolinguistic study this kind of language variety can be investigated. When people in society start using special terms or styles in conversation, they have possibility to create a speech community that use different variation of language.

A speech community is a community that share body or verbal sign on their communication. In other words, the study of a certain language cannot be separated from its social context. This means that people can modify the way they talk depending on who they are with and what the situation is. When they do this, they are drawing on sociolinguistic knowledge. Therefore, every time they change the way they speak, depending on their interlocutor or situation, they provide more sociolinguistic information that builds up the sociolinguistic knowledge in the speech community (Meyerhoff, 2006).

This study attempts to acknowledge the following formulated question:

1. What kind of language variation is the use of IM in utterances in the films?
2. What factors that motivate the teenagers to use IM instead of using common expressions that can cause misunderstanding in the films?

The next points are the purposes of this study:

1. To know what kind of language variation the use of IM in utterances in the films is.

2. To reveal what factors that motivate the teenagers in the films to use IM terms on their conversation instead of using common expressions that can cause misunderstanding are.

Research Methods

This research is qualitative research where the analysis of the data are explained in the description and uses documentary research as the strategy to conduct the research. The objects are the utterances consist of IM terms in the *Bring It On* movie series and register signs in *chat lingo*. The purposive sampling is required in order to pick the data that are going to be analyzed. The description is explained by tabling the data and then analyze them whether IM utterances regarded as register or slang. The dialogues are also provided to support the arguments and statements.

Results

The following tables are the results of using Biber (1988), Brown and Attardo (2000) and also Mattiello's (2008) theory to defind IM utterances regarded as register or slang.

Table.1 Defining IM Utterances Regarded as Register or Not

No.	Parameters	Chat Lingo	IM Utterances
1	Subject Matter	The use of signs in <i>chat lingo</i> (language in chatting) by the chat users.	The use of IM terms on the teenagers' spoken conversation in the series of <i>Bring It On</i> movies.
2	Social roles and situation	Used by chatters/chat users while chatting through computers in the form of written text.	Used by teenagers on their face to face conversation.
3	Discursive function	For communicating, showing solidarity, and saving time, since it is written language.	For discussing, keeping the conversation in private and the older at a distance, restricting the group, and showing solidarity.

From the table, it can be seen that the differences between register in *chat lingo* and the IM utterances are the subject matter, the social roles or situation, and the discursive function. Therefore, the IM utterances cannot be regarded as register anymore. The next table describes similarities between IM utterances and slang. The mark √ indicates whether the characteristics of *chat lingo* and IM utterances are the same as slang or not.

Table 2. defining IM Utterances Regarded as Slang or Not

No.	Characteristics of Slang	<i>Chat Lingo</i>		IM Utterances
1	Used by restricted part of the population.	√	Used by the chatters through computers only.	√ Used by some people or a certain community (IM community) on face to face conversation.
2	Used by youngster or less respectable (adolescents or college students).	√	Mostly used by college students.	√ Used by high school and college students.
3	Based on a very informal lexicon that often replaces the other words available in the general lexicon.	√	Based on informal words that replace by other words in the form of acronyms.	√ Based on very informal words that replace the formal lexicon in the form of acronyms or short forms.
4	Based on a Very innovative lexicon that often replaces the other words available in the general lexicon.	√	Based on a very innovative lexicon in the form of signs.	√ The words are innovative because it is influenced by the language use in social media.
5	Used to keep the content of the conversation private or to keep the older generation at a distance.	-	Used to keep the solidarity among the chatters and because it is more economical.	√ Used to show a solidarity and because it is more economical, to talk to the same community, keep the conversation in privacy of a group, and to keep the older at a distance.

From the table above, the characteristics of slang and IM utterances are the same, but a bit different from *chat lingo*. It happens because signs in *chat lingo* do not contain the private conversation and the speaker and hearer share the information or the meaning of a term. In contrast, the IM utterances have deeper reasons behind such as it is used to keep the conversation in private, restrict the the group or community, and keep the older at a distance.

Discussion

As it is mentioned before, slang is associated with many sociological properties proposed by Mattiello (2008). There are several reasons of using IM utterances in conversation used by teenagers in the films according to Mattiello's (2008) theory of slang and slang sociological properties. Those reasons are group- and subject- restriction, secrecy and privacy, to keep the older at a distance (based on Mattiello's (2008) theory of slang), or it could be the same as the reason of using register in *chat lingo* which are economic reason and solidarity.

According to slang sociological properties proposed by Mattiello (2008:214) group- and subject- restriction go hand in hand because speakers who adhere to a specific group certainly share the other members' interests, concerns, values, pastimes and habits, which presuppose similar conversational topics and related areas for discussion. In the films, the characters who use IM terms on their conversation do not speak directly to all teenagers they know or meet. They only talk using IM terms to certain people, because some of them may not understand the terms or misinterpret the meaning of a term. In addition, the member of speaking IM can express his or her objection by talking using IM terms related to grouping the membership. The objection of a member in speaking IM community occurs because she or he thinks that the other person does not have what it takes to be a member of speaking IM community such as have the same interests, concerns, values, pastimes and habits.

Other reasons of using IM slang are secrecy and privacy. Mattiello (2008) describes that slang can be exclusive when it is used by certain subgroups to hide their conversations and incomprehensible to others. In the film the IM terms are uttered by the members of speaking IM only. Look at the following dialogue.

Amber : "we're really going to miss you, Britney.
IMYA."
Brianna : "I miss you already too."
Britney : "Oh guys. I'm gonna MYSM."
Sierra : "D-A-M-N."
Brianna : "Sierra, you're not speaking IM. You're just spelling."
Sierra : "S-H-I-T."

From the conversation, it can be seen though the other characters know that Sierra cannot speak IM which means she does not belong to speaking IM member, they do not explain what IM is and how to speak like them. It means that they actually create a sense of intimacy among in-group members, but at the same time it may create a sense of exclusion or even rejection among people who are not part of the group.

According to Mattiello (2008) many slang expressions are deliberately used by the speaker to show their affiliation to a certain group. In other words, by choosing the right words, some people imply using the the specific vocabulary of the group affiliates to maintain a bond and solidarity and not to conform people who do not belong in the group.

The fourth reason of using IM in utterances is economical factor. In the first and the third sequel of *Bring It On*

movies, it shows that the use of IM terms on face to face communication does have certain purposes related to speaking IM community. It is found that economical factor is one of the most dominated purposes of using IM terms on communication used by teenagers in the films. The purpose of using IM terms that are used by high school and college students is because they consider the terms as faddish private words which are essentially used to communicate efficiently among insiders and exclude outsiders and sometimes easily to make it faster or to save time.

The fifth reason of using of IM utterances is to keep the older at a distance. In the films, all of the 82 utterances consist of IM terms that are spoken by teenagers on their communication only used to talk to the same age. As Mattiello (2008:32) states that in particular, slang is viewed as an in-group vocabulary that certain people cultivate to keep the content of their conversation in private, or which such specific subgroups as adolescents or college students adopt to keep the older at a distance.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that IM in utterances are regarded as slang, not register. From the analysis, there are five reasons of using slang of IM utterances that are used by the teenagers in the sequels of Bring It On movies. They are not only for showing group- and subject- restriction, secrecy and privacy and to keep the older at a distance, but also solidarity and economical factor. It is also been found that in one dialogue that contains of IM terms on the teenager conversation, there are also other purposes that lies behind the use of IM in face to face conversation. It means that as long as the partners know the meanings and understand the message, the purpose of showing group restriction, talking in the secrecy and privacy area, showing solidarity among the users, using IM because it is more economical, or keeping the older at a distance will be found. Therefore, in using IM terms in utterances on face to face conversation, the reason is not only as communicating or expressing something anymore but more than that because it shows many different purposes behind and those reasons cannot be separated each other especially from the subject, context and the function. That is why the purpose of using IM terms or signs in *chat lingo* is important to know, because it will determine whether the terms are regarded as register or slang.

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