

SEMANTIC SHIFT OF ENGLISH INTERNET SLANGS USED IN SOCIAL MEDIA: MORPHOSEMANTIC ANALYSIS

Oon Suzana Rahman

Suzanarahmini@gmail.com

FIB UNPAD, Jatinangor-Bandung-Indonesia

Cece Sobarna

cecesobarna@yahoo.com

FIB UNPAD, Jatinangor-Bandung-Indonesia

Eva Tuckyta Sari Sujatna

eva.tuckyta@unpad.ac.id,

FIB UNPAD, Jatinangor-Bandung-Indonesia

Lia Maulia Indriyani

lia.maulia.i@gmail.com

FIB UNPAD, Jatinangor-Bandung-Indonesia

Abstract

The aim this research are to identify the most common morphological process through word formation found in the lexical of English Internet slang, and to identify the most common type of shift of meaning used by netizen on social media. The research Methodology applied in this research is descriptive qualitative-textual analysis (Bhawna & Gobind (2015) and Smith (2017). The data sources are taken from facebook, twitter and teenage English Slang that are selectively chosen on the basis of criteria. The Theory of English Internet Slang taken from Crystal (2003, 2005, 2011, 2013), Gua and Dai (2019). The research findings are: No Morphological process 72% , derivation consisted of 16%, Compounding 4%, Coined 4%, Clipping 4%. Whereas the type of semantic changes, mostly narrowing consists of 78%, The words that do not change the meanings are 28%. It is recommended for further reseach which is still open for semantic field, especially under the discussion on figurative meaning.

Keywords: *Textual analysis, English Internet Slang, morphosemantics, semantic shift, narrowing*

Sari

Tujuan peneltian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi proses morfologi yang paling banyak ditemukan di dalam pembentukan kata internet slang berbahasa Inggris, dan

untuk mengidentifikasi jenis pergeseran makna yang paling banyak digunakan dalam kata internet slang berbahasa Inggris. Metodologi penelitian yang digunakan yaitu descriptive qualitative –textual analysis dari (Bhawna & Gobind (2015) and Smith (2017). Teori Internet Slang Berbahasa Inggris yang digunakan dalam penelitian berasal dari Crystal (2003, 2011, 2013), Gua dan Dai (2019). Temuan penelitian ini yaitu: tidak terjadi proses morfologis 72%, derivation consisted of 16%, Compounding 4%, Coinned 4%, Compounding 4%. Sedangkan jenis perubahan semantik, yaitu: narrowing yang terdiri dari 72%, Makna kata yang tidak mengalamii pergeseran, yaitu 28 %. Peneliti merekomendasikan untuk penelitian selanjunya yang masih terbuka terutama di bidang semaantik dalam pembahasan makna figurative.

Kata Kunci: *Textual analysis, Internet Slang berbahasa Inggris, morfosemantik, pergeseran makna secara semantis, penyempitan makna*

Received 2022-01-17

accepted 2022-01-18

published 2022-01-31

APA Citation: Rahman, O.S., Sobarna, C., Sujatna, ETS., & Indriyani, LM. (2022). Semantic Shift of English Internet Slangs Used in Social Media: Morphosemantic Analysis. *Research and Innovation in Language Learning*, 5(1), pp. 53-70 <http://dx.doi.org/10.33603/rill.v5i1.6387>

Introduction

Internet has come to exist in the second half of the twentieth century, but its influence on language began to escalate in 1990 onwards. Since that time internet has been applied as a means of communication and involves in our surroundings in our daily activities. It drastically changed the way people to communicate (Al-Kadi and Rashad; 2018). Many researchers have been interested in how it affects the way people use the language. It means the way people use the language online such as when they communicate on social media with its various applications. Thus, almost everybody gets involved in using internet connection for communication in social media. Internet slang (Internet short-hand, cyber-slang, SMS speak, netspeak, cyber language, chatspeak) refers to a variety of everyday languages used by different communities on the internet. They produce English internet slang in their communication in social media. However, not all internet users know and understand how to speak perfect English as stated by Crystal (2003, p. 13). it is due to a fast majority of internet slang having the ability to convey meaning through the use of individual words.

The advancement of technology in internet based communication has a corresponding effect on the fast growing vocabularies that is called English internet slang. Supported by the sophisticated technology, especially in social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, WhatsApps, and YouTube has attracted million of English-speaking users who use internet connection for communication (Akunna, 2012, p. 7). In this case, Valikova (2014, p. 15) states that the majority of the innovations in the branch of computer technologies come from the English speaking world. It is supported by Crystal (2003, p. 115) who states that the communication via internet or social media mostly conducted in English, it is due to the worldwide use of internet and social media communication. It can be concluded that internet slang is a new language with innovative and novel characteristics (Gua and Dai, 2019). In this research, the writers apply the term English internet slang. The internet itself is an ideal medium for new slang to emerge because of the richness of the medium and the availability of information.

Mostly the type of new vocabularies that are emerged from the chat is in the form of lexicals, acronyms and abbreviations as stated by Zabolnova (2017). Thus, this research focuses on exploring the morphological process that contributes to the language change that leads to the changes of meaning and a shift of meaning that is also occurred. The following are the research questions to be answered that is to identify the common type of word-formation process used in social media and to identify the most dominant type of a shift of meaning resulted by the word formation process used in social media.

All languages change through time. In this case, the internet has been a new medium of the changes to take place. As Coleman (2012) says in Kolowich (2019): “It is not necessarily that language is changing more quickly, but technologies have developed and they allow the transmission of slang terms to pass from one group to another much more quickly.” The writers intend to explore the changes especially a shift of meaning based on morphosemantics analysis. Morphosemantics is a collaboration of subdiscipline of linguistic study consisted of morphology and semantics. Based on linguistic approach, morphology is the study of the internal structure of words. It also involves the study of word formation that permits us to deduce the properties of one lexeme for those

of one or more other lexemes. In this way, morphology is a branch of linguistics that studies such patterns of word formation across and within languages, and attempts to explicate formal rules reflective of the knowledge of the speakers of those languages (Adams, 1973), cited in Akunna (2012, p. 10).

Word formation process is a way to construct new words from the existing materials (Trask, 1997) cited in Ratih and Gusdian (2018). Meanwhile, Hacken and Thomas argue that word formation process is how to produce the new words based on some rules (2013). Morphology explores the internal structures of words that studies the form-meaning relationships between lexical units and their arrangement in forming words (Hamawand, 2011). Semantics defined as the study of meaning in a language plays a very important role whether the meaning resulted from word formation process is denotative or connotative. It is called denotative if the meaning of the words can be found in a dictionary (Rahman, 2015, p. 37). Whereas connotation refers to personal aspects of meaning, the emotional association based on individual experience, thus some words shared their connotations (Kreidler, 2002, p. 45) cited in Rahman (2015, p. 53). The following is an example of denotation and connotation *mouse* (Noun) is a denotation its meaning can be found in a dictionary that is sorts of small rodent, but at this time *mouse* (N) is a tool for moving a cursor when we operate computer, in this case there is a shift of meaning. Though it is denotative but its naming is taken connotatively from one characteristic of mouse, the movement of a cursor is mouse like characteristics. When it is viewed from the type of semantic changes, it is regarded as a more specific one, thus the changes of the word mouse meant small rodent into a tool for moving the cursor is narrowing.

Semantic change is a well-established vehicle for language development. Internet has come to exist in our surroundings in our daily activities. Since that time internet has been applied as a means of communication. Researchers have been interested in how it affects the way people use the language (Lundell, 2012). It means the way people use the language online such as when they communicate on social media with its various applications. The writers are interested in analysing a shift of meaning of English internet slang resulted from the morphological process that causes a change of meaning

through morphosemantics analysis. There are some researchers who are also discusses the semantic changes involving a shift of meaning but in some other research objects. Their researches will be explored as follows: The first is an article written by Tuti Siti Rohbiah under the title: *An Analysis of Semantic changes of English Lexical Borrowings in Indonesia Tourism Field* (2020). The aim of the research is to classify and analyze kinds of semantic in the borrowed English tourism field in Indonesian. The research method that was used is descriptive-qualitative content analysis to the corpus data in tourism field. The data were taken from Indonesian Magazines such as *Intisari*, *Tamasya*, and *Jalan-jalan* since June to July 2019. The findings are: 12 words did not change meanings, 13 words changed meaning. Indonesian borrowed from the foreign, whose concepts is adapted to the Indonesian, In Indonesian tourism field, the semantic changes was adopted to the social condition. The similarity of this research, it discusses the semantic changes, the differences are the object of the research, the aim of the study and the theory applied in her research. She applied descriptive-qualitative content analysis, while the reserchers descriptive-qualitative textual analysis.

The other research was conducted by Dede Narawaty entitled: *Semantic Change And Meaning Shift Analysis On Narrative Texts' Dialogues Among The Characters In The Second Year English Textbooks of Senior High School* (2017). The research aim was to describe the types of semantic change existing in character's dialogues of the narrative text in high school English textbooks class X, to distinguish the conceptual meaning and new meaning, and to show the cause of meaning shift. The research methodology applied in this research was a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. The research findings indicate a change and a shift of meaning as a result of the context used of language. The similarity of this research and the writer's, focuses on the semantic change and a shift of meaning. Whereas the differences are the object of the research that causes the differences of the aim of the research. The research methodology applied by the researchers is descriptive-qualitative design and textual method.

The last, the research executed by Maciey Widawski entitled *Semantic Change in African American Slang* (2013). This research paper presented the process of semantic shift in details. This research based on the lexical material from a sizeable database of

citations from contemporary African American source. Widawski states that semantic change quintessentially involves two main processes: figuration that makes use of metaphor, metonymy and related figurative means; whereas semantic shifting includes generalization, specialization, amelioration and pejoration. Descriptive studies were used in his research, the material was collected through extensive fieldwork at some universities, and the methods used in data collection and applied in the creation of database were varied, but largely traditional. The findings were figurative and semantic shifting often feature in poetry and their pervasive use in African American slang attests to great linguistic creativity and experimentation. Semantic shifting is extensive as well that involves the four processes. All of them occur in standard English which are connected with historical change in language. The differences are the object of the research, the writer's research object is English internet slang that is used worldwide globally, while Widawski is African American slang.

Based on the studies previously mentioned above, it can be concluded that the object of the writers research is not the focus of others' research, especially when it is related with semantic change and a shift of meaning. English internet slang is a new topic of linguistic approach. This approach emphasizes the aspects of novelty and freshness of slang. In line with this, Crystal (2005, p. 78) argues that there are so many people have learned so quickly to adopt the language to meet the demands of the new technology, and to exploit the potential of medium to creativity form new areas of linguistic expression. Moreover, Crystal (2001, 2005, 2011), believes that Internet English becomes a linguistic revolution. He also believes that the changes in English form and usage have given to a new branch of linguistics, namely Internet linguistics (Al-Kadi and Ali Ahmed, 2018).

Method

This research applies descriptive-qualitative textual analysis design. Descriptive research approach is a basic research that examines the situation, as it exists in its current state. Descriptive research involves identification of attributes of a particular phenomenon based on an observational basis, or the exploration between two or more phenomena (Bhawna & Gobind; 2015). Whereas textual analysis is a method of study

utilized by researchers to examine messages as they appear through a variety of mediums. The data generated for textual analysis can come from documents, films, newspapers, paintings, web pages, and so forth (Smith, 2017).

The object of this research consists of three data sources taken from facebook, twitter, teenage English Internet Slang. To get the data from facebook, we need to ask permission to the admin of the group to be involved as a member to get the data. Twitter and Teenage Internet Slang, permission was not needed, it was open publicly.

The steps to execute the research: 1. Collecting the data, The data consisted of lexicals, acronyms, and leets. 2. the data were randomly chosen, for this research only lexicals are needed. 3. Each word has lexical meaning, we used Merriem Webster Dictionary, Urban Dictionary and on-line Dictionary. 4. The words are analyzed based on morphosemantics. Thus, this involves the morphological and semantic process. Morphological process was executed through word formation, while semantics process was carried out through denotative and connotative meanings. Then the common type of word formation could be found, and also semantic shift.

Findings and Discussion

This section will describe the analyses of the data. The result of the analysis are expectedly would answer the problem that had been formulated previously mentioned in the research questions namely the most common word formation of English Internet slang found in the research, and type of shift of meaning involved in the research. There are three steps involved in the analysis, those are, morphological, process, semantical process and semantic changes.

JUNKY

Morphosemantic Process: *Junky* refers to someone who is addicted to drugs. The word to junk as a transitive verb means to throw or discard. The word junky (adjective) comes from the word junk (noun) with the addition of the suffix y. The morphological changes that occur from nouns to adjectives; namely **derivation**. Actually, what means condenser or drug addict is the word junkie (noun), the morphological process is the

word junk with the addition of the suffix, namely the word junkie. Thus, from the word junk (N to junkie (N), netizens prefer to use junky rather than junkie.

When viewed from the meaning search process, the word junk refers to drug addict, and the word junky (adjective) means low-quality goods. Therefore, drug addicts can be categorized as junk or low-quality goods, meaning that people are useless because they are not of high quality. The word junk means useless. It contains denotative meaning that turns into a connotative meaning, which refers to people who are useless or of have low quality such as drug addicts. Thus, there is a shift of meaning which is narrowing.

CRAP

Morphosemantic process: The word crap is a noun which means: a. dirt; b. something worthless, trash. If the word crap is an adjective, then the word means: c. is very bad; d. poor; e. stupid. The word crap that is used social media means: “something that is worthless or a lie.”

The use of the word crap in slang or its general meaning has not changed. From the meanings described above, it can be seen that the meaning shift that occurs from dirt which is a denotative meaning to something useless or a lie which is a connotative meaning. Thus, it is narrowing. The morphological process does not occur noun that is a dirt remains as a noun that is a lie. In this case, only semantic process occurs, that is semantic change or a shift of meaning.

HELLA

Morphosemantic Process: Hella can be used as an adjective or adverb, both are used as slang. As an adjective, the meaning is *a lot of* that can be seen in the following example:

“You've got to keep in mind that the rematch is more money. They're making hella money now, but the rematch is more money, or even a draw of a good fight is more money.”
(Deontay Wilder, quoted in *The Dallas Morning News*, 3 May 2015).

Whereas the use of an adverb, the meaning is very or extremely. Its usage in social media is in the form of adverb, and the examples are as follows:

“She is hella beautiful.”

“And though she's excited, she's also hella scared.”

(Mimi Valdes, *Vibe*, 2002).

Transfer of meaning does not occur that is due to this word had exactly the same meaning since 1987 as described in Merriam Webster Dictionary. Thus, there is no change of meaning or morphological process.

Discussion

The enrichment of English vocabularies is a process involving three mainstream ways, namely: borrowing from other languages, word formation included in morphological process, and semantic change or semantic shift. The process of semantic shift can be observed from two aspects. The first one is based on logic. In this case, the semantic change is observed from the results of semantic shift. The result of semantic change can be studied in the denotative and connotative meaning. The result of semantic changes in the denotative meaning. See the following discussion.

a) Widening or it is also called extension or generalization. The examples for this are: *rubbish* in Old English meant only as broken stones; but at present it covers all unwanted things or left-over property; *camp*, it was usually used in military term, such as *military camp*, at present it is used for any kind of activities, such as camping ground that refers to be used for public.

b) Narrowing, meant specification or restriction. The new meaning created is more precise. It covers only the part of the original meaning. The examples for this are: *crap* that means a dirt, this is denotative meaning that can be found in dictionary, but there is a shift of meaning which is restricted only when this word is used in social media. The transfer of meaning becomes something useless or a lie.; for the word *junky* refers to someone who is addicted to drugs. At present, it is used in social media, the meaning is low-quality goods. Therefore, a drug addict can be categorized as a person of a low quality.

c) Branching. In this process, the lexeme becomes polysemous. The newly developed sememes coexist, such as: head-mind and mental abilities, part of the body like in this sentence: it cost him his head that refers to life.

Semantic shift resulted from connotative meaning are: pejoration which means the new meaning is negative, or the word acquires derogatory negative change such as counterfeit, today: fake, originally: copy. The second aspect is that semantic change can be approached from the nature of the change. This involves metaphor that is the meaning can be transferred from the original to the new position such as through metaphor. This meant that a semantic change based on the basis of the fact that the two referents resemble one another. These semantic changes are the most important in all classification of semantic shift. The contraction and the expansion known respectively as the specification and generalization of meaning, are two types of semantic and lexical changes, where one of the new lexical unit develop a new meaning (Daiu, 2015).

Conclusion

Based on the on the findings discussed above, the most common morphological process is the morphological process do not occur. This due to the users of English Internet Slang created the new words from the old words that have been existed and reused them again without any changes of the parts of speech such as when the word is a noun, it remains the same as noun, adjective takes the same parts of speech as an adjective. The following is an example: the word *Hella*, is used in social media as an adverb that means very or extremely. According to Merriem Webster Dictionary, this word had been used since 1987, the netizen reused it again with exactly the same meaning as an adverb. Therefore, both morphological and semantic process do not occur. For coined that is regarded as a totally new word. Thus, the development of this word is still in progress, and it is often this word hardly found in the dictionary. In addition, both semantic change and morphological process do not occur.

The type of Semantic shift that occurs in 18 words or 72 are narrowing. The shift of meaning that occur is from denotative to connotative meaning, The shift of meaning is mostly found from denotative which contain general meaning turn to the specification

of meaning , it is due to the use of these words by netizen mostly in social media and often can not be found in the dictionary. The rest 7 words, they do not change the meanings so it is 28 %. It is due to those words are regarded as old words but the netizen reused them again without changing their meanings.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, the finding for the type of semantic shift on the finding are dominantly narrowing. This meant, the changes are from denotative to connotative or from general meaning to specific. The reason for this the usage of those words are in a more specific one that is in social media. Whereas The rest 7 (seven) words, the netizen thought those words contained new meaning, conversely they were the words that have been existed for a long time, and the netizen use them with the same meaning. Those findings explained above are very important to be acknowledged especially lecturers, students, language learners or people who are interested in linguistic field on morphology and semantics. The mixture of Morphology and semantics becomes morphosemantics is rarely used in students reseach. Thus, it is necessary to socialize morphosemantics. Moreover, one aspect of those findings proved that new vocabularies have been being emerged and still going on until at present time. Therefore, it will be beneficial for language leaners, or everyone involved in language learning especially it is due to a shift of meaning contains new meaning that also give an impact to translation, if the translators do not follow those changes of meaning as the development of language, it will cause a misunderstanding.

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Acknowledgment


No financial support for conducting this research.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest happened during the execution of the research.

Authors' Biography

Oon Suzana Rahman is one of UGJ lecturers of English Faculty of FKIP, majoring in linguistics. She is in charge of Semantics, Speaking and Introduction to Linguistics. She had ever worked in Consulate General of Republic Indonesia in Perth, Western Australia,, as an executive secretary. To get more knowledge, at present she is studying in Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung to get doctoral degree in Linguistic study.

 5977828.

Cece Sobarna was born in Bandung on July, 28th 1964. He completed his study in bachelor in 1988 and master degree in 1995. Then, in 2003, he completed his doctoral degree majoring in Linguistic Study, Universitas Padjadjaran. He is also active in various scientific activities either national or international. In March 2018, he joined

Regional Training Program in Manila. He had ever been in charge as the Head of Development and Protection Center, Board of Language Building and Development, Ministry of Education and Culture in Jakarta (2011). His position at this time is the Head Of Doctoral Study Program of Literary Study, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Padjadjaran.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3214-3191>

 6068110

Prof. Dr. Eva Tuckyta Sari Sujatna, M.Hum is a Professor in linguistics at Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung, Indonesia. Her books are Understanding Cohesion (2019), Nilai-nilai Kearifan Lokal dalam Permainan Anak Tradisional di Jawa Barat (book chapter) in Menjejaki Integrasi Sosial di Jawa Barat (2018), Transitivitas dalam Advertorial Pariwisata (2018), Metafora Teks Pariwisata Alam Jawa Barat: Pengantar Bahasa Pariwisata (2017), Understanding English Syntax (2014), Menyusun Artikel Ilmiah (2014), Understanding Systemic Functional Linguistics (2013), Object Complement in English (2012), Causative Verbs in Material Process of the English Clause: Functional Grammar Approach (book chapter) in Pelangi Budaya (2011), Tata Bahasa Fungsional (2008), and English Syntax for Beginners (2008). She is also active in publishing her articles in national and international journals.

Scopus ID 56951090400,

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6254-5714>,

Lia Maulia Indrayani completed in bachelor (1987), master (2004), and doctoral(2010) program in Universitas Padjadjaran. She has been working as Associate Professor in English Linguistics Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Padjadjaran. Her research interests are phonetics & phonology, syntax, semantics, culture, psycholinguistics, discourse analysis, pragmatics, and applied linguistics. In addition, she is also being active in some researches related to linguistics interfaces with other disciplines in both national and international journals.

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3778-5406>.

Google Scholar: <https://scholar.google.co.id/citations?hl=en&user=uv6HldcAAAAJ>