

Slang as Social Identity in Stand-Up Comedy Academy Indosiar: A Sociolinguistics Study

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Abstract—The objective of this study is to identify slang words or expressions relating to social identity used on the Indonesian TV show *Stand-up Comedy Academy Indosiar*, and to determine the meaning of slang terms used on the show. The writer uses sociolinguistics and the theory of social identity to analyze the slang words. The slang expressions are analyzed based on four categories of social identity, namely; gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and age. This study will employ the descriptive qualitative method. In collecting the data, the writer applies the purposive sampling technique by taking sentences or phrases from the dialogues that contain slang words, and providing the meanings of these phrases. In analyzing the data, the writer uses the social identity theory to determine the categories and the slang being used. The results of the study show that the slang expressions utilize the four categories of social identity.

Index Terms—Slang, social identity, sociolinguistic, stand-up comedy.

I. INTRODUCTION

‘Slang is language born out of the mainstream, the product of subgroups of people, among them teenagers, students, racial, religious and ethnic minorities, rock and jazz musicians, prisoners, soldiers and gangsters. Each is a group whose members spend a lot of time in each other’s company, living lives often isolated or filled with turmoil, uncertainty, tension, innovation or rebellion. Slang is the group’s verbal distinction.’ (Greenman, 2000:410) [1]

Slang greatly influences today’s society. We see a surprisingly large number of slang expressions used in books, magazines, and other newsprint, as well as spoken in everyday speech. Slang is considered to be the most forceful and expressive way to communicate because it is widely understood and in most cases, it is easier to prove a point with than using regular language.

Slang has played an important role in language. Slang is usually associated with a particular group, and plays a role in constructing our identities [2]. People tend to use slang to differentiate themselves from others, and to show their identity [3]. This is in line with Eble (1996:11) saying that ‘slang is an everchanging set of colloquial words and phrases that speakers use to establish or reinforce social identity or cohesiveness within a group or with a trend or fashion in society at large [4].’ Spolsky (1998:35) also states that the importance of language in establishing social identity is also expressed with the use of slang [5].

Therefore, using the slang of a particular group will associate an individual with that group.

Slang is a phenomenon that is found in many languages, and it is a phenomenon that people in contemporary Indonesia recognise very well too. Although many better-educated people consider slang to be of lower acceptability in society, it is more than obvious that the use of slang expressions in movies, television, newspapers, and magazines is noticeably increasing. *Lebay* (being excessive), *parno* (paranoid) or even *maknyuss* (delicious) are some Indonesian words that you will not yet find in a formal Indonesian dictionary, but many Indonesians commonly use these phrases in daily conversations. Film director Joko Anwar is quoted in the Jakarta Post of 11 September 2009 as saying ‘Slang is an informal language that makes conversation more natural. It means that new words can be taken up in Indonesian, and there is nothing wrong with that. Whatever one’s attitude to slang, it is clear that Indonesian slang is vibrant, and widely used by young people and others [6].’

The word ‘slang’ in Indonesia is called *prokem*, infixed from *preman*, meaning ‘gangster’ (a slang term borrowed from the Indonesian-Dutch *Vrijman*, meaning ‘free-man’). Nancy Smith-Hefner (2007) in Mouton (2013:257) [7] and Alcano (2016:113) [8] demonstrate the use of *bahasa prokem* with *bahasa gaul* (social language), which literally means the ‘language of sociability’.

Indonesian slang is predominantly used in everyday conversation, social milieus, among popular media and, to a certain extent, in teen publications or pop culture magazines. For those living in more urbanized regions of Indonesia, Indonesian slang language often functions as the primary language medium for communication in daily life. While it would be unusual to communicate orally with people on a casual basis with very formal Indonesian, the use of proper or ‘good and correct’ Indonesian is abundant in the media, government bodies, schools, universities, workplaces, amongst some members of the Indonesian upper-class or nobility and also in many other more formal situations.

Comedy shows over the last ten years have become an increasingly popular part of the TV line-up on Indonesian television. Slang develops from the attempt to find fresh and vigorous, colorful, pungent or humorous expressions and generally either passes into disguise or comes to have a more formal status [9]. In 1892, Walt Whitman (Stoval, 1964:577) described slang as ‘the start of fancy, imagination and humor, breathing into its nostrils the breath of life’ [10]. If you are writing a very informal or humorous piece, slang or idiomatic expressions may be appropriate.

Stand-up comedy in particular, one of the most direct and reflective forms of comedy in Indonesia, has become a

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favorite as evidenced by its growing profitability. Every network has many stand-up comedy competitions.

Stand-up comedians often use slang expressions to provide humorous effects. Language features of both sitcoms and comedy programs include ‘use of everyday language with a high level of colloquialisms and slang to give the audience sense that they are watching ordinary people like themselves’ (Lopez, 2000:43) [11].

Slang languages used by comedians mostly construct group identity and identify individuals as members of that particular group. How comedians convey their identities in their routines is an integral aspect of their stage persona.

According to the Social Identity Theory, people tend to classify themselves and others into various social categories, such as organizational membership of an organization, religious affiliation, gender, and age group (Tajfel & Turner, 1985) [12].

The analysis below will show how slang contributes to the construction of different facets of social identity include gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and age from sociolinguistic point of view.

Slang is a kind of speech variety [13]. Speech variety, or language variety, refers to any distinguishable form of speech used by a speaker or a group of speakers [13]. Therefore we can see Indonesian slang is a product of society, it is produced and created by society and people who live in it. A sociolinguistic study of Indonesian slang will help people know more about Indonesian culture and society.

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The data are excerpted from Stand-up Comedy routines presented on Stand-up Comedy Academy Indonesia, Season 1 from October 2015 to December 2015 [14]. The data material has been chosen because it includes a substantial number of slang words and expressions related to social identity.

This study is qualitative in nature, in that it looks at slang language as a social identity as presented in the stand-up comedies routines and it is based on descriptive analysis instead of statistical calculation. This study employed a method which consists of three steps namely, collecting, analyzing, and presenting the data (Sudaryanto, 1993: 5-8) [15]. The data was collected from video broadcasts of Stand-up Comedy Academy Indosiar which were downloaded from Youtube.com [14]. The videos range from three to six minutes in length. In collecting the data, the writer applies a purposive sampling technique by taking sentences or phrases in dialogues that contain slang words. These videos were then transcribed using broad transcription and were loosely translated. After that, the writer classified the slang words into four categories of social identity such as: gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and age. And then, the writer analyzed the data based on the use of those slang words with the four categories.

III. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Research Findings

The result of study identifies and analyzes all words and

phrases considered to be slang that were broadcast in Stand-Up Comedy Academy Indosiar, and then classifying them into four different categories of social identity related to gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and age. The writer tries to tabulate the collected data using the following table:

1. The utilized slang as a corpus.
2. The standard Indonesian meaning.
3. The standard English meaning.

To focus on the discussion, the writer would like to limit the description regarding slang terms or expressions utilized in Stand-Up Comedy Academy Indosiar. The tabulated data is described as follows:

TABEL I: UTILIZED SLANG AS SOCIAL IDENTITY IN STAND-UP COMEDY ACADEMY INDOSIAR

No.	Social Identity Category	Utilized Slang	Standard Indonesian Meaning	Standard English Meaning
1.	Gender Identity	a.cowok	laki-laki	man
		b.bro	kakak (laki-laki)	brother
		c.bokap	ayah, bapak	father
		d.cewek	Perempuan muda	young woman
		e.nyokap	ibu	mother
		f.sis	kakak (perempuan)	sister
2.	Ethnicity	a.horas	halo, selamat	greeting
		b.mak jang	Ungkapan heran, kaget	Oh my God!
		c.bah	ah	huh
		d.mah	sih	that's
		e.beta	saya	I
		f.ale	kamu	you
		g.banget	sangat	very
		h.kagak	tidak	no
		i.ndeso	kampung	tacky
		j.lu	kamu	you
k.gua	saya	I, my, mine		
3.	Sexual Orientation	a.hot	seksi	sexy
		b.nembak	Menyatakan cinta	to express love
		c.ngegombal	merayu	to flirt
		d.cabe-cabean	Perempuan nakal	slut
		e.terong	laki-laki nakal	bad boy
		i.bohay	seksi	sexy
		j.cong	banci	gay
4.	Age	a.coy	teman	friend
		b.bete	bosan	boring
		c.lebay	berlebihan	exaggerated
		d.alay	norak	tacky
		e.kepo	ingin tahu	really curious

B. Discussion

1) The analysis of slang related to gender identity

One's gender — most typically as a man or woman — is one of the first mentioned identities people provide when asked to describe themselves, and it is also one of the categories most often used by others to describe us. Because gender is such a fundamental category, it is perhaps not surprising that a great many meanings and implications are associated with gender. Personality traits (e.g., being competitive or being aware of the feelings of others),

gender-role behaviors (e.g., taking care of children or assuming leadership roles), physical characteristics (e.g., having broad shoulders or a soft voice), and a host of other associations can be linked to gender categories.

The slang found in this part tends to be heavily influenced by Chinese, English, and local dialect [16].

The data are categorized into male and female.

a. Datum 'cowok' [14]

Coba kita berbagi pengalamannya cowok-cowok...
(Let's share our experience **guys**...)

Analysis:

Cowok is an Indonesian slang term for a young man meaning 'guy' or 'man' [16]-[17]. In Indonesian formal *cowok* is 'laki-laki', The use of *cowok* is so common in the speech of educated youths that it can be argued that the label 'slang' is not justified. However, it is highly marked as low style variant. It does not occur in the meetings, nor frequently in the speech of most older people.

b. Datum 'bro' [14]

Eh... gimana ya bro, cara cium cewek gue... apa gua tipu aja... liat sapu terbang
(What do you think **brother**, if I want to kiss my girl, should I make a joke first, see, flying broom...)

Analysis:

'Bro' is a shortened form of the English 'brother', which is also frequently used among males in the youth speech community. In Indonesian formal 'bro' is 'kakak (laki-laki)'. English frequently enters into *Bahasa Gaul* expressions. The entrance of English into *Bahasa Gaul* sometimes occurs with humorous results.

c. Datum 'bokap' [14]

Bokap gua nyanyi... bila kamu di sisiku...
(My **father** sang... if you were by my side...)

Analysis:

The word *bokap* is used to refer to one's own, or someone else's father [16]-[17]. They are from *Prokem* (slang word), the argot common among Jakarta's youth. In formal Indonesian *bokap* is *bapak/ayah*. That's why this word is not used in formal Indonesian.

d. Datum 'cewek' [14]

Cewek metropolitan itu berbeda dengan cewek Cikarang.
(Metropolitan women are different from Cikarang women.)

Analysis:

Cewek is a colloquial term for a woman [16]-[17]. It is mostly used for younger women and girls. It is most prevalent in the Betawi culture/language. Linguists say *cewek* came from *ciwe*, which means female genitals in the Hokkien dialect from China [16]. *Cewek* took hold in the 1970s, and dictionaries define it as a young girl. Nowadays, it's a colloquial term for a young woman or *perempuan muda*. In Indonesian formal *cewek* is *perempuan*.

e. Datum 'nyokap' [14]

Gua bahkan belajar nembak ama nyokap gua.
(I even learnt to express love from my **mother**.)

Analysis:

The word *nyokap* is used to refer to one's own or someone else's mother [16]. It is from *prokem*, the argot common among Jakarta's youth. In Indonesian formal *nyokap* is *ibu*. This word is not used in formal Indonesian.

f. Datum 'sis' [14]

Cantik banget sih sis...
(You're so beautiful **sis**...)

Analysis:

'Sis' is a shortened form of the English 'sister', which is also frequently used among females in the youth speech community. In Indonesian formal 'sis' is *kakak perempuan*.

2) *The analysis of slang related to ethnicity*

For many people, ethnicity is a central element of self-definition and serves as an important social identity. Ethnicity is a social construction that indicates identification with a particular group which is often descended from common ancestors. Members of the group share common cultural traits (such as language, religion, and dress) and are an identifiable minority within the larger nation state.

Indonesian slang language is mostly spoken in urban regions of the Indonesian archipelago [16]. Variations of slang language can be found from city to city, mainly characterised by derivatives of the different local ethnic languages. For example, in Bandung, West Java, the local slang language contains vocabulary from the Sundanese language while the slang found in Jakarta tends to be heavily influenced by Chinese or the old Batavian dialect (i.e. the language of the original inhabitants of Jakarta or *Batavia* as it was known during the Dutch colonial period).

The use of Jakarta/Betawi dialect is common among speakers of Bahasa Indonesia, especially in the capital city. Non-Jakartanese cannot help being influenced by the easy going, friendly and informal style of Betawi dialect.

An ethnic joke is a remark attempting humor relating to an ethnic, racial or cultural group, often referring to an ethnic stereotype of the group in question for its punchline.

Comedians use the slang term dealing with ethnicity to express their cultural identity. It will show the audience that the comedians are connected to the indigenous identity from the language they use.

a. Datum 'horas' [14]

Selamat malam 'Horas!'
(Good evening, **Hallo!**)

Analysis:

Horas is the basic Batak (one of ethnic in North Sumatra) word of greeting, conveying wishes of good luck, approbation, and congratulation. It has a core meaning of good health, and saying the word is thought to have a health-enhancing effect.

Horas is Batak exclamation which means good day, welcome, long life and prosperity to you. In Indonesian formal *selamat* has the same meaning as 'Horas' in Batak.

The comic uses this expression because he would like to let the audience know that he comes from North Sumatra.

b. Datum 'makjang'[14]

Mak Jang...
(Oh my God!)

Analysis:

Mak jangis a term used among Malay or Sumatran people to show surprise coming from the word *alamak* (Oh my, God!). In Indonesian formal *mak jang* is *aduh Mak!*. The comic uses this expression because, since he comes from North Sumatra, he'd like to show his ethnic background to the audience.

c. Datum 'bah'[14]

Mamak ini anaknya kan Stand up Comedian...Sok kali bah...
(Mum has a stand-up comedian son...what a really an arrogant mum, **huh...**)

Analysis:

Bah is a very widely used by Batakese (an ethnic type in North Sumatra). It is a particle to express emphasis, surprise, anger, curiosity, etc. The comic uses this expression because, since he comes from North Sumatra, he'd like to show his ethnic background to the audience. In Indonesian formal *bah* is *ah*.

d. Datum 'mah'[14]

Aku mah apa atuh...
(See, nothing on me...)

Analysis:

Mah is a Sundanese (ethnic in West Java) term for *sih*. *Mah* is a topic marker, indicating given, often resumptive or contrastive information in a statement. The comic uses this expression because, since he comes from West Java, he'd like to show his ethnic background to the audience.

e. Datum 'beta'[14]

Heh...beta dengar..
(Hey, I listen...)

Analysis:

Beta is the normal first person from Ambonese kinship term which means I. The comic uses this expression because, since he comes from Ambon, he'd like to show his ethnic background to the audience. In Indonesian formal *beta* is *saya*.

f. Datum 'ale'[14]

Ricky...ale tu orang Ambon...jangan kasih diam...hantam sudah
(Ricky...you are Ambonese...don't stay calm...kick him off)

Analysis:

In family relation or kinship, Ambonese uses the term *ale* which means you. The comic uses this expression since he comes from Ambon, he'd like to show his ethnic

background to the audiences. In Indonesian formal *ale* is *kamu*.

g. Datum 'banget'[14]

Pacaran di Cikarang itu sulit banget...
(Dating in Cikarang is very difficult)

Analysis:

Banget means 'very' or 'much' [18]. It is from Betawi dialect. In Indonesian formal *banget* is *sangat*. The Betawi dialect is common among speakers of Bahasa Indonesia, especially in the capital city.

h. Datum 'kagak' [14]

Kalo kagak percaya liat ni gambarnya...ada kagak...
(If you don't believe it, just look at this picture...is it true?)

Analysis:

Kagak is a Betawi term meaning no [18]. A short form of *kagak* is *gak*. The comic uses this expression because, since he comes from Jakarta (Betawi), he'd like to show his ethnic background to the audience.

i. Datum 'ndeso' [14]

Saya asli Jogja, saya orang ndeso...
(I originally come from Jogja, and I'm so tacky)

Analysis:

Ndeso is a person from rural Java. It is derived from the Javanese word meaning tacky. In Indonesian formal *ndeso* is *kampung*. The comic uses this expression because, since he comes from Central Java, he'd like to show his ethnic background to the audience.

j. Datum 'lu'[14]

Jadi buat lu-lu pada ni ya, yang pengen study tour ke Cikarang, jadi siapin ajalah body lotion...
(If you, guys, want to take a study tour to Cikarang, please prepare your body lotion...)

Analysis:

The word *lu* is still used, even today in Jakarta meaning 'you' [18]. It is clearly of Chinese origin. In formal Indonesian, *lu* is *kamu*. This word is used a lot in day to day conversation.

k. Datum 'gua'[14]

Mak gua solmet ma gua...
(My Mum is my soulmate)

Analysis:

Gua means 'I, my, me, or mine' in a slang (informal) way [18]. It is clearly of Chinese origin. People use it when they are referring to themselves in conversations with friends and people their own age. People avoid using this word when talking with someone in higher positions, such as teachers or parents. This word is used a lot in day to day conversations.

In Indonesia formal, *gua* is *saya*.

3) *The analysis of slang related to sexual orientation*

Many people use sexual orientation as a central category of social identification. As is often the case, members of a

minority group—in this case, gays and lesbian—are more likely to give prominence to this social identification than are members of the dominant majority group—in this case, heterosexuals.

a. Datum 'hot' [14]

Elo tuh sadar gak...gimana sih cara ngasi tau cewek...yang udah pake hot pants, tapi ga hot...

(You realize or not, how to tell a girl, who is wearing hot pants, but doesn't look **hot**...)

Analysis:

'Hot' is a slang expression taken from English, means very physically or sexually attractive.

b. Datum 'nembak'[14]

Bayangkan, saya sudah bias nembak cowok padahal saya masih TK.

(Just imagine it...I've been able to express love to a boy since I was in nursery school.)

Analysis:

Nembak is a slang expression means to express love or propose a relationship. In Indonesian formal *nembak* is *menyatakan cinta*.

c. Datum 'ngegombal' [14]

Coba cowok-cowok disini, kalian pernah ga ngerayu cewek lu, eh nggak nggak...ngerayu...iya ngerayu ngerayu, bukan ngegombal ya, kalo ngegombal tu kaek dari mulut doing gitu...

(You know guys, have you ever tried to woo girls, yeah woo, not flirt, because **flirting** is not serious)

Analysis:

Ngegombal comes from prefix *nge-* and the word 'gombal'. The prefix *nge-* is to signify activity of 'gombal' (flirting). *Gombal* is an Indonesian slang term for expressing nice things that will not necessarily become reality. In sexual orientation, it means crazy or, as another term flirtatious words. In Indonesian formal *gombal* is *merayu*.

d. Datum 'cabe-cabean' [14]

Trus gimana gitu kalau dia digodain sama cabe-cabean gitu...

(And what about if he is tempted by the **sluts**...)

Analysis:

Cabe means chili pepper but this *cabe* came from the abbreviation of *cewek alay* bisa di *ewe*, which means 'low class/lame girl that can be fucked' [18]. The term derived from teen motorbike gangs/underground racing subculture where the wager for betting was sometimes the racer's girlfriend (the winner could sleep with their opponent's girlfriend). In Indonesian formal *cabe-cabean* is *perempuan nakal*.

e. Datum 'terong' [14]

Dasar cabe! Dasar **terong**!

(What a slut! What a **bad guy**!)

Analysis:

Terong is an Indonesian slang word refers to teen boys [18]. This word sounds negative to be used (bad boys). *Terong* is the male counterpart of *cabe-cabean*, derived from *terong* (eggplant), referring to the similarity of an elongated purple eggplant with penis. In Indonesia formal *terong* is *laki-laki nakal*.

g. Datum 'bohay' [14]

Aku...karena kau cantiklah...bohay, montok, besar...

(Me...because you're beautiful, **sexy**, curvy, big...)

Analysis:

Bohay means sexy, curvy, a bit fat body. *Bohay* is a short of *bodi* (body) and *aduhay* (sexy, great). It is usually referred to sexy girl.

h. Datum 'cong' [14]

Aduh..cong...cong

(What a **gay** man)

Analysis:

Some words originated from LGBT community (especially among transvestites) usually adding the nasal-sounded suffix **-ong** in the end of the base word [18]. This is also an attempt among LGBT community to alter the word to become more "French-sounding" thus sounds more sexy. The word *coy* is a slang term for gay man. *Cong* is a short form of 'bencong' (transvestites).

4) *The analysis of slang related to age*

Slang is also influenced by age background. The slang of younger people plays an interesting role in differentiating social groups. The term slang commonly includes the informal vocabulary of young people, and indicates a certain familiarity with non-mainstream groups (Luisanna Fodde, 2002:37) [19].

a. Datum 'coy' [14]

Telat lu coy...dah kagak jaman BB...sekarang jamannya ngoleksi gambaran...

(You are old-fashioned **man**...it's not the era of Blackberry anymore...but it's the era of collecting pictures)

Analysis:

The Indonesian slang word of *coy* means *teman* (friend). It shows closeness of the comic with his audience. In Indonesian formal *coy* is *teman akrab*.

b. Datum 'bete' [14]

Kalau dia mudah ngeluh, status sibuknya itu adalah keluhan, misalnya bete, galau...

(He likes complaining, his status is about complaining, such as, I'm **bored**, in dilemma of something...)

Analysis:

Bete is used by young people to describe a subjective state of either boredom or irritation [20]. It is used when someone feels fed up about something or fed up to someone or others. In Indonesian formal *bete* is *bosan*.

c. Datum 'lebay' [14]

Dangdut di Cikarangitu, buset dah, emcnya lebay...suaranya dikasi efek bo'ongan...

(Dangdut in Cikarang, you know, the MC is so **exaggerated**, he is given fake sound effect...)

Analysis:

Lebay can be used to refer to anything and everything that's over or excessive [18]. That means, it is used to say someone who act too exaggerated or say something too exaggerated. To be honest, you could use *lebay* for almost anything, but people usually use it in a sarcastic comments or as an insult.

c. Datum 'alay' [14]

Mungkin kalo ga ada Radit di Indonesia ini ga bakalan ada anak alay...

(If there is no Radit, Indonesia doesn't have **tacky guys**.)

Analysis:

Alay comes from the words *anak* (kid) and *layangan* (kite), which means children who hunts the cut-off kites on the streets because they can not afford to buy themselves the kite (*layangan*) [18]. It is often to associate street children with their typical characteristics: smelly, dirty, rarely bathing or brownly/ yellowish hair color that mostly caused spending too much time on the street during the day. On more modern context, this term also used to describe people (usually teenager) that blindly follow the trend, trying to act trendy yet (usually) fail because they overdid it. It is a stereotype describing something 'tacky' *norak* and 'cheesy' *kampungan*. *Alay* literally means 'low class boys/ kids'.

d. Datum 'kepo' [14]

Kita diajarin untuk kepo...

(We have been taught to know everything)

Kepo is Indonesian slang, which comes from Hokkien language, and then became a loanwords in Singlish (Singaporean-English) 'Kaypoh' which means 'really curious', the situation of a person wanting to know about everything. Yet *kepo* stands for 'Knowing Every Particular Object' sharing the same meaning as 'Kaypoh'. Although it comes from a different language, it has the same definition.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis it can be concluded that slang plays an important role in establishing social identity. Even stand-up comics infuse slang expressions into their routines, both as an expression of their social identity as well as to elicit laughter. How they convey their self-identities in their routines is an integral aspect of their stage persona.

The slang expressions found in the analysis have been divided into four categories of social identity, namely: gender identity, ethnic identity, sexual orientation, and age.

The slang expressions relating to gender are: *cowok*, *bro*, *bokap*, *cewek*, *nyokap*, and *sis*.

The slang expressions relating to ethnicity are: *horas*, *makjang*, *bah*, *mah*, *beta*, *ale*, *banget*, *kagak*, *ndeso*, *lu*, and *gua*.

The slang expression relating to sexual orientation are: *hot*, *nembak*, *negombal*, *cabe-cabean*, *terong*, *bohay*, and *cong*.

The slang expressions relating to age, particularly for young people, are: *coy*, *bete*, *lebay*, *alay*, and *kepo*.

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