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*The use of Slang among students of English department: case  
study BA students at Ahmed Draia University*

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## **Dedication**

*Thank God for his blessings*

*First, we dedicate this humble work to my dear parents, our dear friends and family*

*Second, we dedicate this work to every knowledge seeker.*

## **Dedication**

*In the name of Allah the almighty, for giving me strength and courage to continue this humble work.*

*I dedicate this work*

*To my dear parents, my guardian angels without whom I would not have become the person that I am today.*

*To my Teachers, for their devotion and honesty in accomplishing such a tiring mission in building future generations.*

*To my sisters, the best gift that Allah gave me.*

*And to my dearest friend Fayçal for being such a real source of motivation when I most needed it.*

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*Mona, Hajer, Khawla Somia, Rawya, and Omaima.*

*To my life partner, Kawther for motivating me through the whole process may God bless Her.*

*Lastly, thanks has to go to anyone who has helped me with either a tip, a remark or a Suggestion.*

## **Abstract**

Nowadays, English is considered as the international language of communication, education, technology and other domains. Linguistically speaking, and because of the daily interaction of people, an entire change is occurred in words and sentence's morphology which is known as variant in which any particular, slight difference in the form and structure of words is detected. One of these varieties is conceded as slang, a highly informal substance restricted to a specific group of people based on context, age, and social status.

Entitled "The use of Slang among students in the department of English", the present paper is going to discuss the situation of slang between BA students of English. In addition, we intend to investigate student's motives and knowledge about slang.

We embraced a questionnaire for extracting results, which is a highly effective tool for constructing a descriptive analysis. This research develops the analysis of the usage of slang; the findings are:

- students aim to fulfill a certain purpose or attitude by using slang
- Social media is the perfect platform of producing slang
- Students are aware that slang is the casual version of standard language

To sum up, the results are expected in terms of conceiving slang as the informal form of language. Finally, slang is worth of further studies that would enhance the position of such a provoking variety as slang

## Résumé

Intitulé l'utilisation de l'argot parmi les étudiants du département d'anglais. le présent article va discuter de la situation de l'argot entre étudiants en anglais, mais nous avons également intention d'enquêter De nos jours, l'anglais est considéré comme la language internationale de la communication, de l'éducation, de la technologie et d'autre domaine sur le plan linguistique. Du fait de l'interaction quotidienne des personnes, un changement complet se produit dans la morphologie des mots et des phrases, appelé variante dans laquelle toute légère différence de forme apparait. et la structure des mots est détectée, l'une de ces variantes est considéré comme une substance très informelle, restreinte a un group spécifique de personnes, en fonction du contexte, de l'âge et du statu social.

sur les motivations des étudiants et leur connaissance de l'argot.

Nous avons adopté un questionnaire pour l'extraction des résultats, qui est un outil extremement efficace pour la construction d'une analyse descriptive. Le processus développe l'analyse de l'utilisation de l'argot. Les conclusions sont les suivantes :

- 1- les élèves cherchent à atteindre un certain but ou une certaine attitude en utilisant l'argot.
- 2- les réseaux sociaux sont la plate-forme idéale pour produire de l'argot.
- 3- les étudiants sont conseints que l'argot est la version décontractée de la langue standard

Pour résumer, les résultats sont attendus en termes de conception de l'argot comme forme informelle de la langue, enfin, l'argot merite d'autre études qui améliorerait la position d'une variété aussi provocante que l'argot.

## ملخص

في الوقت الحاضر، تعتبر اللغة الإنجليزية هي اللغة الدولية للاتصال والتعليم والتكنولوجيا وغيرها من المجالات. من الناحية اللغوية، وبسبب التفاعل اليومي للناس، يحدث تغيير كامل في الكلمات ومورفولوجيا الجملة والمعروفة باسم المتغير الذي يتم فيه اكتشاف أي اختلاف طفيف في شكل وهيكل الكلمات. تم قبول أحد هذه الأنواع على أنها لغة عامية، وهي مادة غير رسمية للغاية مقتصرة على مجموعة محددة من الأشخاص استناداً إلى السياق والعمر والوضع الاجتماعي.

تناقش الورقة الحالية بعنوان "استخدام اللغة العامية بين الطلاب في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية"، وضع اللغة العامية بين طلاب بكالوريوس اللغة الإنجليزية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، نعزم التحقق من دوافع الطالب ومعرفته بالعامية.

لقد تبيننا استبيئاً لاستخراج النتائج، وهو أداة فعالة للغاية لإنشاء تحليل وصفي. هذا البحث يطور تحليل استخدام العامية. وكانت النتائج هي:

يهدف الطلاب إلى تحقيق هدف أو موقف معين باستخدام اللغة العامية

وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي هي المنصة المثالية لإنتاج العامية

يدرك الطلاب أن اللغة العامية هي النسخة العادية للغة القياسية

خلاصة القول، النتائج المتوقعة من حيث اعتبار اللغة العامية هي الشكل غير الرسمي للغة. أخيراً، فإن اللغة العامية تستحق المزيد من الدراسات التي من شأنها أن تعزز موقف العامية مستقبلاً.

## **List of abbreviation/acronyms**

**LDOCE** : Longman Dictionary of contemporary English

**OED** : oxford English Dictionary

**U.C.L.A** : university of California



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## List of slang words

Frenemy: friend+ enemy (American English) عدو في هيئة صديق

Epic: awesome (American English) اسطوري

Airhead: stupid (American English) غبي

MDR : mort de rire (French) مضحك جدا

BRB: be right back (American acronym) سأعود حالا

Khallas: enough, OK deal (Arabic) تمام

Yalla: come on (Arabic) هيا بنا

Le kif: dope, cool (French) رائع

La bomb: a beautiful woman (French) امرأة جذابة

Couch potato: a lazy person (American English) كسول

For real! : Seriously (American English) هل انت جدي

Skiving: avoiding school or work التهرب من المدرسة او العمل

Chicken: a coward جبان

“I’m dead”: I am in deep trouble (American English) قضي علي

“Bye Felicia”: goodbye annoying الى اللقاء

Lit: something very good (American English). مذهل

On Fleek: top (American English) في القمة

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## **General Introduction**

Language is a bridge connecting humans altogether. This fascinating tool called language has existed for centuries when humans needed to communicate different wants and needs. Early writings, drawings and paintings are old forms of language; such tools had conveyed a meaning and expressed human's feelings, necessities and thoughts long time ago.

The twenty first-century language, English is invading the sector. This language has been used for most collaborations in the world. Indeed, English is classified among the top overseas languages taught in foreign international locations. Moreover, As every human language that has varieties, which act as language breakdowns, slang is a linguistic breakdown or derivation with its own syntax, vocabulary and phonology.

### **Aims of the study**

Through the present research, we aim to describe the situation of three different slangs (French, Arabic and English) among BA students of the department of English at Ahmed Draia University- Adrar. Our research will cognizance on thee usage of slang in the department of English along with highlighting students 'knowledge about this sociolinguistic variety. We plan to find out the motives and purposes behind using slang by attempting to answer the following questions:

- \* do students use slang?
- \* do they have any knowledge about slang?
- \* Why do they use it? For what purposes?
- \* do they use slang terms in academic writing?

### **The Structure of the paper.**

This paper consists of two chapters; the first one provides a fine description of slang. Definitions, characteristics, history and slang word formation which are the main elements discussed. The subsequent section is the field inquire about, which was held at Ahmed Draia University-Adrar. A survey coordinated to understudies of English was the picked instrument to extricate the discoveries. Concerning investigation techniques, we utilized the Microsoft Word Program.

### **The Hypothesis**

During this research, we hypothesize that students of the department of English use slang in their daily conversation either at the university or outside it. In addition. they use slang terms among their companions or their examination gatherings. The reasons subsequent to utilizing slang are predominantly looking to be novel and keeping their gathering mystery



## **Chapter one**

### **Overview of slang**

## **1.1. Introduction.**

The Algerian society speak multiple languages. The utilization of an alternate language in different levels of interests has created multiple usage of English, Arabic and French slang. Communicating in Arabic, the official language in Algeria, suddenly produces an exceptional and new utilization of Standard Arabic. This new usage is applied among speakers from different backgrounds, ages and levels of education.

Speaking French is mainly influential, in fact it is considered as one of the French colonization leftovers. However, the linguistic impact did not prevent Algerian users of French from creating a personalized language to communicate with each others.

The position of English in Algeria has witnessed a remarkable focus recently. Due to technology and social media, Algerians are integrating with English as a worldwide language that is worth to be scholarly with every one of its varieties, and utilized in various settings.

Throughout this chapter, we will discuss the main concerns about the linguistic phenomenon called slang. We will provide a distinction made by Matteillo of slang and other non-standard varieties as jargon, along with highlighting the usage of slang in the real and artificial society.

## **1.2. The concepts of language:**

According to Merriam Webster dictionary, language is:

- a- audible, articulate, meaningful sounds as produced by the action of vocal organs.
- b- Form or manner of verbal expression
- c- The vocabulary and phraseology belonging to an art or department of knowledge

To the American poet and existentialist Walt Whitman , “language is not an abstract construction of the learned ,or of dictionary markers , but is something arising out of work , needs ,joys, affections, tastes, of long generations of humanity , and its bases broad and low, close to the ground “.

Language is the outcome of all experiences of humans from early ages when the human needed to express his needs and desires, feelings and emotions and his thoughts and beliefs. Language has existed to help the human kind; in fact without this fascinating tool, humans could not have societies or communities to belong to.

David Crystal & Robert Henry Robins view language as being a spoken or written entity that allows humans to express their selves. “Language is a system of conventional spoken, manual, or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture express themselves. The functions of language include communication, the expression of identity, play, imaginative expression, and emotional release.” (Britannica website)

Another distinction of language was made by Henry Sweet: an English phonetician and language scholar who stated that: “ language is the expression of ideas by means of speech sounds combined into sentences, this combination answering to that of ideas of thoughts” (Britannica website).Sweet identified this human phenomenon in terms of how discourse and thoughts formulate the so called language.

Some of the important notions accompanying language are mother tongue, second language and foreign language. These concepts will be clarified in the following lines.

Linguistically speaking, a mother tongue is basically the first language child acquires. Also called home language or native language because the main interactions especially disagreements occurring in one’s house are held in the mother tongue. While a second

language is used in public communication and formal settings along with the first language or the official one of a country whereas the foreign language refers to the language which is not necessarily spoken in one's country but rather taught or learned for any reason.

In the case of Algeria Arabic and Tamazight are the official languages in the country as they are considered the native languages of the population. On the other hand, French is represented as the first foreign language spoken in large parts of the country while English serves as the secondary foreign language.

When talking about languages, it is necessary to highlight what characterizes a language from other arbitrary use of words, sounds or gestures.

Primarily, language is a social tool that helps in the communication process. This tool is featured by a bunch of factors that distinguish it from other means of communications. Productivity is limited to human language. The human race is able to produce an infinite set of words and phrases to convey written and spoken messages

In addition, humans can say the same thing in different ways, with different terms. Creativity is another feature indicating the special trait for human language. Humans are able to recreate old forms of speaking and create new expressions for communicating with each other. Furthermore, human language has the ability to point to things that are not visible like spiritual creatures or past and future events.

Arbitrariness appears in human languages in forms of silent letters. Written words do not have to be pronounced exactly as they are spelt. Moreover, some phones cannot stand alone in a sentence but they still have importance in linguistics; these phones can be prefixes and suffixes, which adds value to the rooted words, and construct new meanings. The duality of these language properties is exclusively a human feature.

### **1.2.1 Language change**

Language is flexible, meaning that it varies according to location, time and social status. Time affects language to change; slang is part of that change in which people become free to express their thoughts using fresh words or playing with the old ones and more interestingly they use language to show a sense of identity and self-recognition.

### **1.2.2 Language variation**

A variation is any regional, social or contextual difference in the ways a particular language is used. Language variation is demonstrated by linguistic differences in terms of sounds (phonetics) and structure (grammar). (Thoughts.Co)

Holmes (2001) defines language variation as “Some features of speech, however, are shared by groups, and become important because they differentiate one group from another”.

Slang is a case of language variation as it varies from a person to another and from a group to another. Variation in slang appears in phonology and structure. Slang terms have peculiar infixes such as -bloody, which are formed by metonymies and abbreviations while the phonological changes are presented in forms of Onomatopoeias.

Furthermore, vocabulary and pronunciation are the main areas infected by variation in slang.

Holmes (2001) asserts that mob was classified as vulgar while it is considered as abbreviation for Mobile that has no bad sense; also, bus was once considered a savage interpretation for omnibus. Concerning sound variations, ‘otel was a usual form of hotel, in New Zealand ‘new’ and ‘nuclear’ were pronounced differently. New Zealanders were uttering the two words with the sound /j/ but after the spread of American slang, the pronunciation developed to eliminate the /j/ sound. Moreover, cool, wicked and neat are slang synonyms for something very good. Any word can cause a change if a certain group used it extensively (Holmes, 2001, -196)

Variation according to age involves the speech of old people. A grandson and a grandfather may misunderstand each other easily due to new, slangy pronunciation of words and weird, sarcastic vocabulary. Parents as well may find it insulting to speak street slang in their presence neglecting proper language learnt at schools, which adds social value to their children. (Yule: 1985:191)

Variation according to sex includes the language used by men and women. Studies have shown that women tend to use prestigious alternatives of language more often than men, an illustration would be the use of *did it* by females and *done it* by males, *isn't* by females and *ain't* by males. Major differences in pronunciation and vocabulary were found in North American Indian languages like Gros Ventre and Koasati between men and women. (Yule: 1985:192)

Variation according to ethnic backgrounds concerns the language of different ethnic groups such as immigrants. A serious issue for educators is Black English used by American blacks. The main features of black English are the use of double negation as in 'I ain't afraid of no ghosts'; such a sentence is conceded illogical; similarly as 'il ne sait rien' (he doesn't know anything) in French. Another aspect of Black English is the omission of the verb *to be* as in 'they mine' instead of 'they are mine'. (Yule 1985:192:193)

Variation according to educational level, social status and occupation consider the characteristics of literate people vs. illiterate, high-class vs. middle class vs. working class and the specialized vocabulary of any profession. People who never been to college usually speak with limited vocabulary unlike college students or high educated people who attained knowledge through their years of study; they chose the right expression for their thoughts and make sure to be clear about their speech. Labov (1972) conducted a study in three stores in New York City between different social classes; the results confirmed that specifically

working class established the use of [n] instead of the original [ng] in going and taking. (Yule: 1985:190:191)

### **1.3. Definitions of slang**

As an independent tool of communication, slang has been suspected and predicted by several linguists over centuries in matter of identification and description.

Linguists like Dumas & Lighter (1978, 14:16) support the idea of slang being lower than the standard language and believe its presence will decrease the level of seriousness and causes in disrespectfulness. Another opinion held by Elisa Mattiello who formed her definition based on a social investigation where she found that most identifications were on a sociological level that inspired her definition “within the sociological approach, slang is ascribed the two opposite purposes of keeping insiders together and outsiders out” (Mattiello,2008:32)

Eble (1996:11) who stressed the social and personal function of slang, which is to gain acceptance in a group and maintain group solidarity, proposed a similar view. He said, “To establish and reinforce social identity or cohesiveness within a group or within a trend or fashion in society at large “.

On the other hand, the linguistic approach focuses on the novelty and innovative character of slang and regards it as the art of using creative words that make new sense or just regular words that have extraordinary meaning. According to Jespersen (1922:298), “slang finds amusement in the creation and propagation of new words and in attaching new meanings to old words”.

J.B Greenough and C.L Kittredge as cited in Partridge (1933,i) assert that “ slangs is a peculiar kind of vagabond language always hanging on the outskirts of legitimate speech but continually straying or forcing its way into the most respected company”. Slang used to be

the language of low status people ( Charkova, 2007 as cited in Lighter and Dumas, 1978) but like any other variety, it keeps changing to be a respectable use of words. Green and Kittredge cited in Partridge (1) who define slang as a peculiar kind of vagabond language always hanging on the outskirts of legitimate speech but continually straying or forcing its way into the most respected company.

The American Heritage College Dictionary describes slang as “kind of language especially occurring in casual and playful speech usually made up of short-lived coinages and raciness”.

To sum up, slang is a variety of language that is attached to other non-standard varieties of language usage but the difference is in its rich, joyful and expressive vocabulary. Besides, slang helps its users to precise their speech while enjoying new, creative expressions that do not tie them or cause misunderstandings but rather unites them to fulfil the ultimate goal of language that is communication.

#### **1.4. Slang vs. non-standard varieties**

Many linguists and lexicographers who tried to synonym the term with other non-standard varieties of language like Cant, jargon and dialect have defined the concept of slang. Only Elisa Mattiello was able to differentiate slang from such variations.

##### **1.4.1. Slang vs Jargon**

As it has been stated previously, slang is the closest equivalent to colloquial speech. However, when defining jargon, the difference would be that jargon is the specialized vocabulary to a certain group in any particular occupation or field while slang is a wider term to include all members of society with different groups and preferences. All human disciplines can have specific aligned words that may not necessarily be from the standard vocabulary but rather unique expressions that are understood only by the in-group using it.



Examples of medical jargon are “agonal” (a term to show a significant negative change in a patient’s condition), FX (a term meaning bone fracture) example of police jargon is code eight to mean (a police officer needs for backup). What characterizes both terms, are the spontaneous and common terminology of slang and the technical prestigious form of jargon that can be used in formal, professional contexts in opposite to slang.

#### **1.4.2. Slang vs Cant**

On the one hand, Cant can be considered as the secret language of thieves, robbers and cut purses unlike slang which is used by all kinds of people even the most respectful ones. On the other hand, Cant is associated with vulgar social groups, like drug dealers, who use slang words like Charlie, rock, speed to refer to drugs and denote to policemen as pigs and fuzzy. In addition, college students and teenagers in general tend to be secretive especially around adults and that is one reason to have a private language while other reasons can be maintaining the group’s spirit and gaining trust among peers.

#### **1.4.3. Slang vs. Dialect**

Although slangs and dialects share the feature of regionalism as slang varies from one place to another, they are not the same thing. Generally, dialect is a variety spoken in a certain geographical area; this variety has its own grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary.

According to Elisa Mattiello, some expressions in American Standard English can be treated as slang in British English. For instance (to go down a bomb) is an idiom for something very successful while in American English the term may be used to mean the exact opposite of a disaster. A prove of the popularity and the expanded borders of slang expressions is the word nerd that refer to an intelligent person.

#### **1.4.4. Slang vs. Vernacular.**

Vernacular cannot be synonym to slang .Vernacular is the speech of the local, native people of a country or region. Vernacular is mostly a variation of sounds. Some areas may mispronounce some words; the example given by Mattiello is clear enough. e.g. Chewing gum & football are two words mispronounced in the Scottish slang as chuggy & fitba (Mattiello: 2005:14). Another example of vernacular and the change of sounds is the expression of (saying) /qaala-lii/ in Algeria; in Tlemcen they pronounce the word as /? alli: /, in other parts of Algeria they say / gaal-lii / such as in Oran while in Adrar it is /gaal-liyya /

#### **1.4.5. Slang vs. accent**

Amongst the non-standard varieties of language, accent is the most clear distinctive variety from slang. An accent is how an individual pronounces words and where he puts stress on vowels and consonants. Accents helps in identifying one's nationality, locality and social class, e.g. the use of 'ah' instead of long i: ( I 'm takin' a book becomes ah' m takin' a book) the sound of thang is the alternative of thing in black English (Mattiello:2005:14)

#### **1.4.6. Slang vs. colloquial language**

Mattiello made a distinction between slang and colloquial language. The main difference to her is that slang is practiced among intimate social groups while the large community can use colloquial language in general. Mattiello exemplified the difference by the usage of "nana" as indication for bananas while the term "nana" means a silly or stupid person.

#### **1.4.7. Specific vs. general slang.**

On the one hand, slang is related to a regional variety, which characterizes a certain area, social variety used secretly among social group members (student slang, medical slang, etc.) Still, slang is divided into specific and general. The former is the unique expressions used by insiders only to maintain their intimacy and solidarity in the case of teenagers or college student also work colleagues like military men or computer users are likely to slang in order to enhance the productivity of their work. Prisoners and criminals who share the same circumstances to be out sighted from the authority use specific wording, also. A word can have the standard meaning found in dictionary and slang meaning found in drug addict's speech; meaning that words like rock and smack are specified as a crystallized form of cocaine and as heroin. In the dictionary, rock is identified as a large mass of stone forming a cliff or peak (Merriam Webster Dictionary). While according to the mentioned dictionary smack is a sailing ship such as sloop or cutter used chiefly in coasting and fishing (Mattiello: 2008:39). On the other hand, general slang is the familiar terms known to the large speech community of the countries or districts. This type of slang is mainly adopted to switch from being formal to be more relaxed in situations that allow so. Thus, general slang words are highly utilized in different, wider contexts; examples of bevvvy (a drink especially beer) and caff (a café) or footy (football) are daily used terms among English speakers from different backgrounds (Mattiello, 2008:40).

#### **1.4.8. Slang vs. standard language**

Linguists refer to the correct form of language used in academic and professional settings as standard language. Furthermore, informal and misuse of language is referred to as slang.

Slang and proper use of language are connected in a way that makes both usages employed in the same situation. Some standard words have slangy equivalents such in the case of drug addict which druggie, junky and pot-head are its slang synonyms. (Mattiello, 2008:11)

Slang is considered more effective in matter of delivering short utterance for the right meaning. Bimbo is an accurate word for a bit long explanation of a physically beautiful female with low intelligence. Moreover, typical slang formation tools include suffixes –s, -o and –ers; clippings such as: C for cocaine and reduplicative such as hells, bells to express a surprising act (2008:12)

### **1.5. Characteristics of Slang**

The independent linguistic tool slang is characterized by certain features that placed it in a good place and made it a fresh way of speaking. “Slang is a language that rolls up its sleeves, spits on its hands and goes to work” (Sandburg, 1959). This is exactly how the American poet Sandburg described slang. From this description it is clear that slang is a unique set of words and expression that its users use as a rebellion on standard language and consider it a free way to communicate.

One of the main features of slang is that to be a group-marked variant or a group-cohesive force that speakers use to separate themselves from others. . Generally, every speaker tends to socialize himself with his specific group so that he feels a sense of belonging. Informality, maybe the top distinct feature of slang, this particular characteristic made slang inapplicable in formal contexts such as academic or business settings unlike jargon which is considered more formal than slang. Another feature is being typically oral without any written form, which explains the reason of using slang on daily basis.

Young people favour slang because it sounds fresh, new, different, and younger “criminals, drug addict and vagabonds is another feature. These groups are the most likely to use slang expressions because of their messy lives they are not required to use a formal language to speak and they tend to sound tough and unstoppable .Originality is a chief feature of slang. Words like “smoker eater ” which mean fireman and “ flying coffin” which is a

slang word for a plane , “pickers” for hands and “think-machine” to say ( brain ) are not easily made; they require a good imagination to be produced . Instability of slang words made it easily to be forgotten and out of use. Fashioned words that used to be popular at a certain period of time happened to be weird and old fashioned for another generation. Slang is short-lived; its vocabulary is frequently changing so that some words evolve to become standard language while others vanish very quickly.

Sumarsono (2007) proposed other characteristics of slang; the utilization of Acronyms and Abbreviations, which are words, composed of the initial letters of each word. Acronyms are popular among the young generation which utilizes it specifically in web communication because it is fast and concise description to what they intend to say e.g. L.O.L (laugh out loud) BTW (by the way) BRB (be right back) KIT (keep in touch)...etc. Reconstruction of existed words: some slang words are derived from existing words but with a different meaning e.g. chick in slang simply means a girl. The use of metaphors and metonymies is normal in slang language unlike in standard language, using such beautifying linguistic tools may decrease the level of formality and seriousness. Further characteristics would be wit and humour; slang words often have funny and sarcastic character which gives it a reputation of lack of seriousness and formality but in return its witty character has gained it remarkable popularity among teens that seek to sound cool and have no time to form sophisticated well-formed expressions. Informality is a solo feature of slang, slang is forbidden in writing and official contexts. As Partridge claims that using slang is intended for decreasing the formality of spoken as well as written discourse.

### **1.6. The origin of slang.**

Slang is under debate as a controversial topic in the sociolinguistic field, its identification and classification is a hard task even for language researchers.

However, the Majority of linguists and lexicographers agree on the uncertain origin of slang. But Skeat was an exception who said that slang (vulgar language) has Scandinavian origins. He claims that the term is derived from the Icelandic words (slyngva) meaning (to sling) which can be considered the comparable verb for the Norwegian verb (slengja) meaning (to sling the jaw) and the Norwegian noun slengjeord (slang word) used for insulting words. Furthermore, the term slang is suggested to be first known among the gypsy. Another view was that of slang having French roots.

Roots of slang are affirmed to go back to the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries where cant was the secret vocabulary used by criminals in gossiping shops and saloons where criminals discussed their illegal deals using special terms ambiguously. Eric Partridge claimed back in the 1850s that slang has been the accepted equivalent for colloquial speech.

Also John Ayto in the introduction of the “Oxford dictionary of modern slang” states that the first time slang was applied in the mid-eighteen century which referred to the special vocabulary used particularly by the low class of society or any disreputable group.

Nowadays, slang is not restricted to criminals and vagabonds only. The mass influence of social media has contributed in the spread of slang as a fun way of talk used mostly by youngsters.

### **1.7. Types of slang**

In his book “Slang today and yesterday”, Eric Partridge identified twenty four types of slang, “the different kinds of slang are numerous, and I propose to treat of only the twenty four most important: after all there are limits” (Partridge, 1954:148)

Some of the treated types is Cockney slang, which is the slang of Londoners. Cockney slang is famous for its different accent. This particular kind of slang is divided into two sub kinds. The first variety of Cockney slang is that spoken by middle class and well-educated Londoners who are considered to be the original locals , while the second type known as

London street speech is used by illiterate people e.g. Eye in a Sling ( means defeated), Adam and Eve ( means believe), Bees and Honey ( to say Money).( Partridge:1954:151)

Workers' slang is another type that concerns the working class of the society consisting of farmers, venders and bakers. They tend to use hidden meanings understood by them exclusively e.g. want an apron (to be out of work), Brass (simply money)

A further sort is slang of business used to build deals in business e.g. take the rate (to borrow the stock).

A wide-spread slang is that communicated among students in public schools and universities , first ,there are two kinds of student slang one that is proper and gibberish and the other is customized for each school e.g. Bones ( head), Bung (lies), mat (matter).

Second, the university's slang is a bit different in a way of showing students as wiser and careful using language, e.g. Leccer (means a lecture).

Society slang is so important to the point that it is the result of society's experiences and interactions. Every social group is distinguished by age, interest, occupation or social and financial status. Most social groups have their own limits. Despite the negative suppositions about slang that show it as a vulgar language limited by low-status and illiterate members of society, high-class people have certain words and phrases they use in their luxury lifestyle. Society slang changes according to new trends and fashion occurring e.g. vogue (means fashion or mode).

Slang in Art: is the artistic phrases that reflect society's problems. According to Partridge (2004) slang in art appeared in stage through Richard Brome's comedy show called a fovial crew .e.g. put the value on mean to sign a picture.

Slang in theatre started to create in the nineteenth century where it witnessed considerable contributions of writers like Plautus and Horace e.g. greedy scene; a scene in a play in which the lead actor has the stage all to him or herself, whooper up; a terrible singer (Jones ,2015)

Soldiers slang is specialized terms for the army to contact each other through regular training or to warn each other during foreign attacks e.g. bohica, which means bend over, here it, comes again; figmo is a person who is not disciplined in his military work.

### **1.8. Linguistic properties of slang.**

Popularity of novel, fashioned slang expressions and the expanded community using it as an alternative of standard language especially in ordinary contexts made slang worth of study. One of the remarkable studies conducted to show the distinctive aspects of slang is that of Elisa Mattiello (2008) who proposed many arguments along with several examples.

From a linguistic point of view, slang is considered a new and creative formation of words. Hundreds of expressions are built either to carry a different, extra meaning or just referring to a whole other meaning of a new word. Jespersen believes that slang is lexically rich by either positive or negative discourse (Jespersen, 1922:299) Similarly, Sornig accentuates on slang being stylish and in vogue which fit each pattern and style that exist in all issues of life (Sornig, 1981:22)

#### **1.8.1 Phonological properties of slang**

Phonology of slang is characterized with using Onomatopoeia and echoism, Mattiello provided an example of the verb 'vomit' which synonyms are onomatopoeic (barf, puck, throw up, spew, etc. ) In addition, slang is featured with using mocks such as hinniey or luvviy, which stands for honey and lovey. Every fink, any fink and summat are just



mispronounced words of everything; anything and somewhat such kind of errors are acceptable in slang.

Assimilation is another way to prove that slang is a different usage in terms of phonology.

The phenomenon of gemination of consonants is forbidden in standard language unlike slang.

In teenagers 'talk, "give it to me" can turn out to be (gimme) and lemme is simply (let me)

These shortcuts help the speaker to communicate faster. The vowel /u:/ has slang variations e.g. shit/ sIt/ its slangy description would be /su:t/ for shoot. voiced consonant /z/ is common in slang pizzazz /pizzaz/ also the consonant /z/ is shown in back clipping of words e.g. spastic / spastik/ becomes spaz / spaz/.

For Mattiello, the most creative type of slang is Cockney rhyming slang because its productive and innovative character. Rhyming slang can form two nouns e.g. dog and bone for telephone or two adjectives or one word e.g. Joanna for piano. Among the weirdest slang formation is that of proper names e.g. rose lee for tea. Concerning morphological properties of slang, Mattiello argues that Eble claims that slang expressions go under the same formation process that standard words go under which are compounding, affixation, conversion, shortening and blending. Mattiello continues to add that slang formation process is characterized by the addition of certain suffixes such as -o in kido (for a kid), or -s in nuts instead of nut and the suffix -ers as in preppers for pregnant. In addition, slang discourse is typed of using infixes like bloody as in absobloodylutly (Mattiello, 2008:43)

## **18.2. Morphological and Grammatical properties of slang**

According to Mattiello, the grammar of slang did not take much interest as morphology and phonology. However, quoted by Mattiello, Munro (1997:19) argues that the grammar of U.C.L.A slang is almost identical to the grammar of Standard English (2008:43)

Thus, plural in slang is constructed by adding the sign of the plural -s in Standard English; as in birds to say girls. In addition to nouns, adjectives follow the comparative and superlative rules of Standard English e.g. daisy which means charming as base form daisier as comparative form and daisiest as superlative form. Verbs in slang take the same rules of past tense, “ing” form and the third person rule similarly to Standard English (2008:43-44)

Speaking of syntax (refer to rules that organize words and sentences), slang is characterized by three features. The first feature is the excessive use and misplaced use of the definite article (the) e.g. I have the mega headache instead of I have a mega headache. Second feature is the deletion of present tense ‘to be’ as in ‘you crazy’ instead of ‘you are crazy’. Thirdly, slang’s syntax is featured by using the adjective total to mean ‘completely’ as in I’m total hungry instead of I’m completely hungry (Munro.1989:13-14)

According to Eble (1996:61-73) and Munro (1997:11-12), the semantics of slang is known for consuming metaphor, synecdoche and metonymy by naming things in a figurative way e.g. a car, is referred to as wheels. Irony is a semantic aspect of slang e.g. “a little bit of all right” is an ironic expression used to address a pretty woman. One more time Eble argues to show that Standard English varies from slang in terms of recognizing the meaning of words such recognition is made through particular semantic operations. Mattiello explains Eble’s point, which indicates slang special usage i.e. the meaning of a typical word in Standard language is different and in some cases the opposite meaning is intended in slang, connotations of thoughts are understood in slang settings by colourful and sometimes outstanding denotations. E.g. grass in standard English and marijuana in American slang, wicked which is a bad word in Standard English means excellent. (2008:45)

### **1.9. Sociological properties of slang.**

Slang has a big influence on society's members. The source of such an influence is mainly due to the role of slang as a communication tool. At the sociological level, slang serves several and remarkable purposes. Mattiello reported these purposes by analysing many studies conducted in this area by linguists and lexicographers as Munro, Eble, and Anderson and Trudgill...etc. The writer noted that to accept an expression as being slang and not by any means a standard word, this expression is not required to contain all of the following features but at a minimum rate, it should require one feature at least. The first property would be group-secrecy, which is the most adopted purpose by slang users. Being characterized as in-group language that is employed by users of common age, occupation, interests or geographical area who seek to keep their secrets in and exclude outsiders from any personal talk. Informality is a purpose of using slang since this latter is synonymized with colloquial discourse meaning that speaking taboo or non-standard language is a sign of awesomeness among teenagers. An example of informal slang is bread which means money (Mattiello: 2008:46-47).

The ephemeral character of slang and its short life helped in the expansion of slangy expressions throughout the world. However, such temporary expressions do not take long to disappear or in the best scenario become Standard words. (Mattiello, 2008:47)

Non-standard varieties of language are treated as errors in language because they act as deviation or misuse of proper talk. Slang in particular is considered to degrade formal speech and turn it into street language. In spite of its disadvantages, slang adds a kind of freshness and liveliness to speech in other words it is preferable by people who seek to express usual thoughts with novel terms. E.g. for yonks which means 'a long time'. In addition, the pronunciation of slang differs completely from standard language as it has no rules but rather requires a sense of creativity and easiness. Taboo vocabulary includes swearing words, which

are forbidden in many societies, this type of language usage is considered normal in slang (Mattiello, 2008:47-48)

Slang is the specific terminology of a particular group. Interactions between members of any group are specialized and sometimes ambiguous in a direct or indirect way. People usually appreciate new, vivid use of language indeed they prefer to hear catchy utterances that would get their attention without mattering to the conventionality of these utterances. (Mattiello, 2008:48:49)

Oddity and bizarreness are slang features, which enable anyone to formulate new words regardless of his background. Instances of strange vocabulary would be 1.bird and chick to refer to a girl 2. Work like a dog to mean working very hard. (Mattiello, 2008:49)

Slang is mostly humorous as Yust asserted, “an element of humour is almost always present in slang usually as humorous exaggerations “(1950:766) Vulgarism has been always connected to slang along with disrespectfulness. Illustrations of impolite implications of slang would be Chinkie, a term indicating Chinese people, while British people use paki to address Pakistani and south Asian people. Consequently, these differentiations are regarded as offensive (2008:50:51)

In order to impress others , it is possible to use slang In light of its esteemed character that best fit the goals .Covert prestige is often associated with toughness and strength, with positive qualities such as independence and naturalness” (Mattiello, 2008:54)

Other social properties proposed by Mattiello were the freedom of speech and the personal tone. Fantabulous is a blend of fantastic and fabulous which is an example of spontaneous formation of slang. Linguists claim that slang users tend to show their belongings and identities. Stenstrom et al (2002:73-76) as cited in Mattiello (2008) found that men use dirty

words more often than females. As for young users, teens are classified first among slang consumers. (Mattiello 2008:54)

### **1.10. The evolution of slang**

Slang is ephemeral which makes it a subject to disappear very easily. Tons of old slang words happen to be old and out of use anymore. Munro (1997:27) noticed that some slang words make it to standard vocabulary while others vanish quickly and some words keep their slangy nature and still used after many years.

In this connection, slang words are simply regular words once used out of their casual meaning; many people carry such new addressing for a long time to become official slang word eventually. The journey of slang started in the sixteenth century and has not ended as long as the members of society seek change. In the sixteenth century, slang was limited by certain subgroups that were considered vulgar such as prisoners and beggars. E.g. Priggers, which means thieves.

In the seventeenth century, slang evolved to be accepted as an innovative use of language but still associated to bad behavior and criminality. Slang become widely used in comedy exactly in the eighteenth century. People attached humor and slang and adopted it as a comfort linguistic tool e.g. whiter-go-ye which means a wife

In the nineteenth century though, slang vastly increased to be used in daily conversation as in burke which means to kill. While some slang saved a spot in the OED since 1918 like “cool” to mean stylish. More specifically, in 1920’s, the cat’s pajamas” meant cool and “hotsy totsy” meant perfect while in 1930’s; a popular slang phrase was “I will be a monkey’s uncle” which used to describe a feeling of doubt. “Cool “appeared in 1940’s after the name of Coolidge’s campaign. In the mid of nineteenth century, “hipster” was trendy and used to point to a fashionable person. Groovy and hippie appeared in 1960’s while “catch you

on the flip side” slang phrase which is still used now was created in 1970’s as well as fly and wicked which have changed their meaning wicked once meant something or someone bad back in 1980’s.

In 1990’s, the slang expression “my bad” was popular use among students in particular. Finally, in the 2000’s slang words were spoken by large parts of society. For example, sweet (good) peeps (people) cherro (classy) were normal in adults and adolescent’s speech.

Slang kept evolving and developing to the point of generating new type of slang, which is Internet slang. The slang of Internet includes abbreviations, acronyms and many new words related to Internet such as “selfie” “follow” and “cyberbullying” consequently, many of these new words get their way to dictionary such as “social network” that joint Oxford English Dictionary in 1973 to refer to the activity of browsing social media.

How do slang words end up in Dictionaries is a fact that only dictionary editors can reveal. To be added in official language documents as dictionaries, slang terms need to function by a large community of speakers, additionally; this usage should stick for a long period so it will not be a onetime usage by anyone. Dictionaries tend to keep up with the changes occurring in language thus, as long as communication needs increase, language is changing, slang is evolving and technology is making the process much faster.

### **1.11. The use of slang in society**

In order to analyze a sociolinguistic phenomenon, this latter should have a remarkable impact on the members of that society. Slang affects its users either by enriching their lexicon and vibrating their discourse or by degrading their level of seriousness and putting their language reputation on line as it may be a barrier, preventing other people from understanding what is being said. Most subgroups of the society have basic terms to utilize within the group.

Nevertheless, typically teenagers and students are the most consumers of this linguistic substance.

### **1.11.1 Context**

The element which determines the use of particular terms in language, is called context. Context serves as identifier or justifier of individual's linguistic choices. Slang is applied in various contexts; such contexts are adapted according to speakers' purposes. For instance, when a teenager wants to fit in and be accepted by his group he would try using bad language just to seem tough and up to the level. Many cases are driven in the public life that picture this phenomenon as an identity crisis.

Linguists identify register as the way individuals speak with certain audience in certain settings. Using slang when addressing a stranger or being at a conference with high educated people would obviously be a bad decision. There are different registers in language but the suitable register for slang users is the casual one, which enables speakers to be more expressive in matter of stating facts, making jokes or being less stressed about other's opinions.(Thoughts.Co)

### **1.11.2 Social class**

Social class is another factor determining our use of language.” The sub-elements of social class include: education, occupation, income and type of housing all of which play a role in determining the people with whom we will have daily contacts and permanent relationships” (Chambers, 2009:6)

This means that high-status people do not use slang, their social identity controls their talk , but this is not universal rule; actually, slang has gained a respectable position in the society which permit even legal and political sides to adopt slang. “Bob's your uncle” is a slang

phrase once used in a political context where the British Prime Minister Robert Gascoyne-Cecil who appointed his nephew Arthur Balfour as Minister of Ireland in 1887, Arthur referred to his uncle as “uncle Bob” people then used the term in a sarcastic character to mean in the event that your uncle is Bob you will have anything so effectively. Moreover, all categories from different backgrounds have the ability to use slang or whatever sort of language as long as they achieve the purpose of language which is communication. In the old days, slang was restricted to criminals and inferior groups but slang has changed the old classification to steal the show lights and become the trendy linguistic equivalent of fashion and mode.

### **1.11.3. Slang in modern technology**

One of the contributing devices that helped in spreading slang is the internet. Internet has changed the way we speak in terms of explicit usage, fast typing and daily communication. Social media users around the globe adopt different slangs just as they tend to learn different languages; also, practicing different slangs enhance their language skills. Numerous expressions used in the net have developed to enter the dictionary, Duckface” for instance joined the Oxford English Dictionary to indicate a person who exaggerates in smiling typically when taking photos.

Radio, television and telephones played a role in creating slang terms that affected the way we interact. For instance, “doh “was known after the television series “the Simpsons” doh is used to note a foolish act by someone.

Social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook have a big influence on language. These social platforms help in taking slang far from where it originates. Most of slang words are taken from social media and the net in general. Internet is considered as the



number one transferring channel of thoughts, beliefs, opinions and the place of exchanging knowledge.

### **1.12. Functions of slang.**

Slang has a different capacity, which fill various needs.

- 1- Slang empower speaker to demonstrate a sort of mentality and make inventive choices of legitimate language.
- 2- Slang consists of vulgar ( disreputable) and taboo(forbidden words according to religion and culture) for that make it unacceptable to be used in formal speech
- 3- Slang helps its users to distance themselves from others.
- 4- Slang maintains group solidarity and keep the secretiveness
- 5- Slang preforms freedom of speech
- 6- Slang accommodates with existing trends and fashions.
- 7- Slang is related to youth culture
- 8- Slang serves a degradation of formality (Charkova:2007:370)

### **1.13. Reasons behind using slang.**

Throughout the world, there is a universal opinion towards using slang that is improving communication. Allen thinks slang as being a sociological entity, which identifies its users, rather than being just a linguistic change (Allen: 1998-878). According to Anderson and Trudgill, it is more likely to use slang in order to preserve group intimacy and exclude outsiders (1990:79). Based on the Swedish National encyclopaedia one of the purposes behind adopting slang is showing a sense of power and indifference or as referred to by Stenstrom et al 'reversed prestige'. Furthermore, slang is used mainly to break the seriousness of any

situation, to express simplicity in any situation and mostly to indicate mastery of language through using innovative bright terms.

Moreover, individuals utilized slang to appear as something else and novel to add a colourful and fresh meaning to their words; however, over using slang and playful words can result in clichés sometimes, as it may lead to bad consequences when used in academic settings. The good deal is to use standard language when it necessary and keep using slang far from serious situations.

#### **1.14. The users of slang**

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE) provides a list of the people using slang. LDOCE mentioned that young people and criminals are the typical users of slang.

However, this does not mean that old people, non-soldiers and other social groups in society do not employ slang. Adams says that no matter what race, colour, age, gender and status you belong to you can always use slang (Adams, 2009:88)

Adams clarifies the stereotype claiming that slang is limited to youngsters and criminals only, because those groups in particular are the most users and adopters of this phenomenon (2009:88)

In the US for instance, slang is associated to African Americans and, high-school and college student. Adams said that African American English is full of slang words but we can't say that most slang is coming from black English (2009:62)

A study on the functions of slang shows that one of the important sources of slang terms is Black English or the African American culture, especially rap and hip-hop music. An illustration of this claim would be "brother" in Standard English, it means "a male from the same parents" but in slang, it means a friend, fellow. Brother and the shortening form "bro" gained popularity among the public in the US (Adams, 2009:70-72)

According to Eble, high school and college students, slang serves as a resistance to the use of standard language, sometimes their slang scratch proper language.

### **1.15. Slang words formation:**

Slang is formulated by several ways:

- 1- By the use of figures of style also known of figures of speech such as Metaphors and Metonymies. An example of metonymy is skirt, which is (an American slang for a woman especially one who is young and attractive (Robert Hendrickson: 2008:775). In addition, the use of hyperboles ( exaggerated statements) and ironies which mean exaggeration in expressions and sarcasm or meaning the opposite of utterances respectively. For instance saying to someone that he is “clear as mud” means that he is actually dirty as mud.
- 2- By using terms that sound exactly like their meaning e.g. yuk-yuk (for disgusting) and a tick-tok (for watch) these expressions are known as Onomatopoeia ( the formation of words from a sound associated with what is named) or echoism ( .
- 3- By using iteration or reduplication, this linguistic process is formed by repetitions e.g. bee knees (excellent), hanki-pankie (misbehavior).
- 4- By using compounding and blending which are simply joining two words to mean one thing e.g. egghead (smart person) black-brain (stupid person).
- 5- By using shortening like abbreviations e.g. Sup (what’s up!) pro for professional, BRB (be right back) MDR (mort de rire)
- 6- By using derivation mainly affixation e.g. megabucks( lots of money), meagwork( lots of work)

7- By inventing new words such as: pranks= Shenanigans = dishonest activity

8- By adding some prepositions to nouns, adjectives and verbs to generate new words like blimp out (overeat), blow of (to ignore).

9- By using the rhyming method, which is popular in British slang, e.g. trouble and strife mean wife, mines-pies for eyes

10- by using acronyms to forms new concise meanings such as : TV( television) , SNAFU( messed up as usual ),OK( yes)

11- By using the suffix –s to form new meaning e.g. afters (desserts) spends (money).

12 -By using infixes such as –bloody- to express the attitude of the speaker

### **1.16. Old and young people's 'slang**

Youth culture is always associated with slang. Young people are creative, they try to make which their speech trendy, precise and comprehensible. Many of youngster's slang is inspired by pop and rap songs, for example, "without me" for Eminem, weed is widely used among youngsters to refer to marijuana.

Rap and Pop music had affected young people's talk. Artists' attitudes had a massive impact as well. As for rap artists in particular, they tend to exhibit their painful experiences through their songs. Theses modern types of songs are full of new and often bad words, which change the way youngsters speak. Most youngsters use specific slang words that would draw a question mark to old people such as crack, junkie, dog, and family to refer to cocaine, drug addict, an informer, the gang respectively. Young people motives to use slang are usually bonding with social groups or separating themselves from older people. Additionally, youngsters intend to use vague expressions to seem tough.

Contrastive opinions claim that the use of slang among youngsters is a natural linguistic process. Youngsters may not be aware of their usage thinking that these words exist in regular languages.

Julie Coleman (2014) claims that young students discuss slang rather than actually speaking it. In fact, students are aware of the consequences of using slang in writing and formal contexts but they do not define them as slang at all. In addition, students do not adopt slang out of a conscious mind. Coleman continued to reinforce her thought by justifying the usage of slang by students. She believes that students tend to use slang for the sake of bonding with friendship groups, and not to exclude others or rebel on society's language. In other words, their slang is about harmonizing and getting social connections rather than being a way of showing off sounding different from other speakers. (Coleman, 2014: 49)

College students as a specific group develop their language to meet their needs in order to be more practical in college life. Usually old people tend to be careful using slang words that would not embarrass them but rather freshen their speech not more. However, some parents use popular slang terms to keep in touch and communicate better with their children.

Among the popular old slang terms were "Jake"; the word is added to OED in 1914 and used to mean "cool", Ticky-boo was also a slang word used in the ninetens which meant okay, skosh to mean a little bit, joint the OED in 1959 . "That is mad nice" is a nineteen-slang sentence, which meant that is very good. Do not go postal is a slang phrase meaning do not get violent.

### **1.17. Comparison between English, Arabic and French slang**

French slang is full of exotic expressions and innovative words. A particular form of French slang called Verlan (à l'envers) or reversed language is mainly made-up by young

generations to escape authorities or to sketch group identity. The formation process of verlan is done by switching syllables of a word. Usually, words with one syllable are reversed to have a different pronunciation and new spelling; words with multiple syllables are changed by rearranging the order of syllables. Bunch of instances would be fou (ouf) femme (meuf) which is a total change in spelling; bonjour can turn to jourbon quite easily.

Verlan is popular in France and widely used among French people as a secret language. A similar slang form in English is called Pig Latin( a secret language formed from English by transferring the initial consonant to the end of words and adding a vocalic syllable) although it is not that much popular among English speakers as Verlan.

Standard Arabic is a sophisticated language, which consists of rich, deep and meaningful vocabulary. Arabic slang is derived from Standard Arabic, which indicates the good and acceptable position it holds.

Wafaa Najar, a writer in “Aoud Nad” magazine defines slang as a linguistic phenomenon found in all languages. She says that most people use slang in special environments as a tool for achieving their various needs. (2012)

Anes Fariha as a defender of Arabic slang has indicated the characteristics of such slang. Fariha thinks that Arabic slang is a lively, simple form of speaking used in casual situations; he recognizes slang as an economical use of language, which do not involve complex words or hidden meanings. On the other hand, Fariha believes that slang is rejuvenated; it changes and develops according to time and place. Anes says that slang enables us to convey right messages and express emotions much better than Standard language. (Fariha,1973:122:123)

English slang is different than French in matter of popularity, English slang in particular American Slang spread around the globe through Modern technology that contributed in making English slang famous. Movies, TV shows and music helped

distributing American culture and American slang. The young people find it hard to distinguish between Standard English and English slang because of the wide use of slang and colloquial language in radio, TV shows, films and music industries. One of the problems with Arabic slang is the lack of technological and modern expressions unlike English slang.

### **1.18. Conclusion**

To conclude, under this chapter, we mainly discussed the literature of slang. The first part was a description of the linguistic phenomenon known as slang from different corners. We progressed with dealing with contradictory thoughts about slang, which were presented as a distinction between slang and other language varieties such as dialect. Furthermore, a detailed view of students slang and other types of slang was dealt with, as well as highlighting the phonological and grammatical differences of slang.

The last section of the chapter included a brief discussion of slang's consumers. Describing the functions of slang was a necessity for proceeding in the next chapter. Slang is an independent variety of language that require specific formation processes.

How slang evolved and how it is used among the members of the society, were questions we tried to answer . Selecting Arabic and French slang to compare with English was due to the historical relationship of French and Arabic in Algeria.

## **Chapter two**

### **The case study**



## **Chapter 2 the case study.**

### **2.1. Introduction.**

Under this chapter, the practical work of the research is presented and the findings are analysed in order to reach the final results. The chapter is composed of four main parts, research design, research instruments, the sample and the analysis of the actual questionnaire. The made up work targeted the students of the department of English, precisely, the BA students.

### **2.2 Research methodology.**

The exhibited work pursues particular procedures that fit the objectives of the examination.

#### **2.2.1 Research design**

Based on the ultimate goal of the study, which is determining the situation of slang among students of English at Ahmed Draia University, the suitable analysis approach to adopt was the descriptive one. In other words, we mainly described the fact of slang along with highlighting the student's knowledge about it.

#### **2.2.2 Research instruments.**

For the current study, we conducted a questionnaire composed of 18 questions. The proposed questions were produced to find out whether our students use new forms of English other than

the standard ones. The questions forwarded to students aimed at discovering the motives behind using slang, which made a questionnaire the best way for students to express themselves.

**2.2.3 The sample**

The sample in this study was composed of 30 informants from both genders with a majority of females (90%) while 10% are males. See table 01. The participants' age ranges between 19 and 27 with a greater part of young students between 19 and 22 years old (see figure 01). First year BA students were the largest category of 95% of the participants. Then comes the second year BA students, who share the 5% with third BA students. See figure 02

Table 01: participant's gender

Gender	Percentage
Females	90 %
Males	10%
Total	100 %

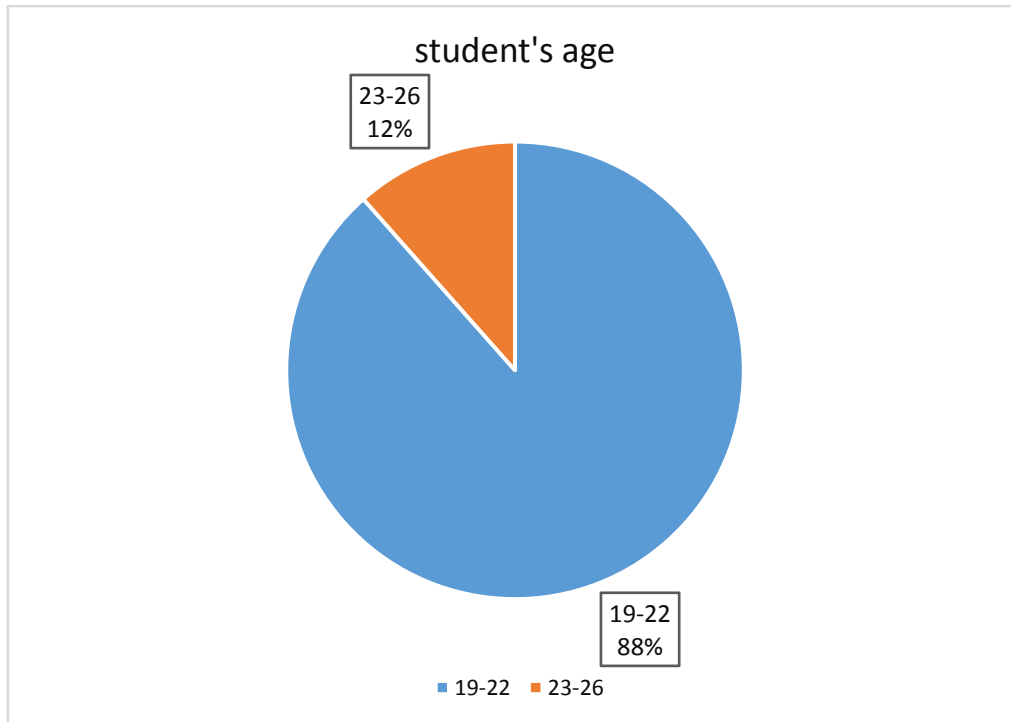


Figure 01: Participant's age

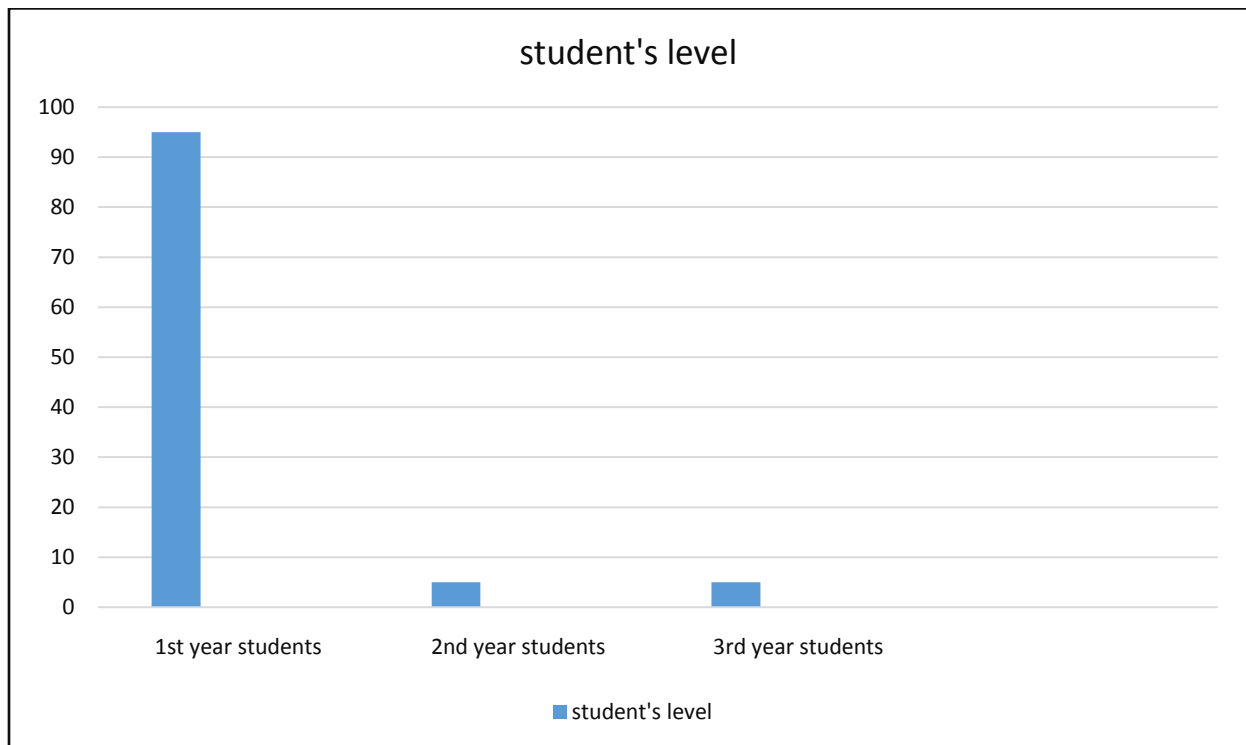


Figure 02: student's level

### 2.3. Data analysis.

The 30 informants were gently asked to fill the questionnaire with valid information, but apparently, most students did not take the matter seriously; in fact, a few understudies gave superfluous answers like yes or no on inquiries that required a conclusion or clarification. The questionnaire included 18 questions among which there were yes/no questions, multiple-choice questions and free questions that might have been the most important ones. Within the questionnaire, three languages were concerned, English, Arabic and French.

Question 01: Are you engaged with clubs or any kind of social gathering?

Out of 30 informants, only eight people happen to belong to clubs while 22 students denied their involvement in any type of social groups like clubs and educational associations.

Table 02: student's club membership.

Answers	Students	percentage
Yes	8	27%
No	22	73%
Total	30	100%

Question 02: Do you have any exceptional words you share with your gathering individuals?

? If yes, mention some.

12 understudies furnished us with extraordinary words they use with their gatherings. 12 others said that they have no uncommon articulations to utilize when being with their gatherings. Seven students had totally ignored the question . Among the special words of the participants we mention ( bvdah, motherdover, soyn, LOL, LAMFO, XD, no coay, that’s that, tahva which means bad smell, mdahmssa to mean someone who is distracted and not focusing, kawvek) to say ” beat you “.

Question 03: Do you know how to call the special words that you share with your peers or group? If yes, define them briefly

Among 30 members, just a single understudy had the option to characterize his utilization of LAMFO and XD in public activity. He really characterized his words as shortenings and road language or alternate routes. Eight students were not able to provide a definition while the majority did not answer the question.

Question 04: For what reason do you utilize such terms?

Students were given choices to answer this question; the majority of participants state that they use special words in order to keep their group’s privacy. Seven students have been using non-standard expressions just to be up to date. Interestingly, two participants have claimed that they use a certain type of words for the mentioned reasons. Some students could not determine quite honestly, why they use such special terms.

Table 03: student’s reasons behind using slang

Reasons	Number of students	percentage
To be up to date	7	23%

To keep group privacy	21	70 %
Other reasons ( to sound cool and modern )	2	7 %

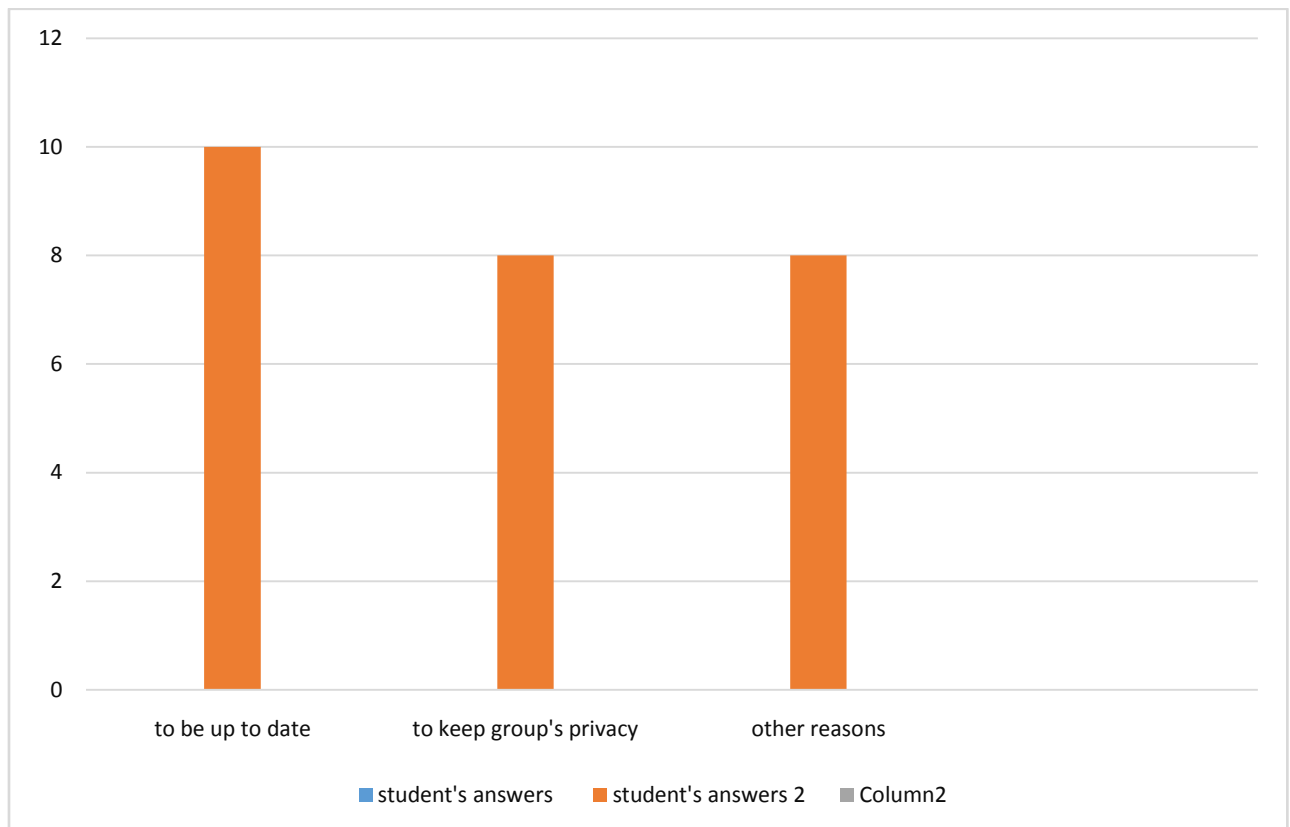


Figure 03: student's motives behind using slang

Question 05: In your opinion, is it suitable to utilize those unique words recorded as a hard copy or in formal settings?

According to 14 participants, using slang in writing or in academic, serious contexts is unsuitable. Six Students justified their opinions by saying that slang or abbreviating belong to the casual street talk between friends and family, they believe that it is hard to communicate

with a changing variety as slang in proper settings. They rather say that slang should remain a creative way to interact between intimates. Other participants agreed that it is fine to use slang in appropriate settings.

Question 6: Do you have any idea about slang? If yes, write down what you know about it

Few participants have provided us with a brief, correct definition of slang. They recognize slang as the informal, secretive language consisting of vulgar words. Others view slang as the language utilized in the road among loved ones, and individuals from society. Strangely a few understudies said that slang is a style of correspondence, received every day to express certain musings, for specific individuals. Slang cannot be utilized at college for being a casual assortment that understudies ought to abstain from using. As indicated by the members, slang clients converse with short and simple to remember terms. Some students capture slang as vulgar and taboo, people who use it are disrespectful and rude.

Question 07: How might you depict your slang terms?

Five students have described their slang terms as creative; other five attached their slang to the taboo and vulgar vocabulary. While the majority of students believe that their slang is just a funny, cool and modern way used to interact with others.

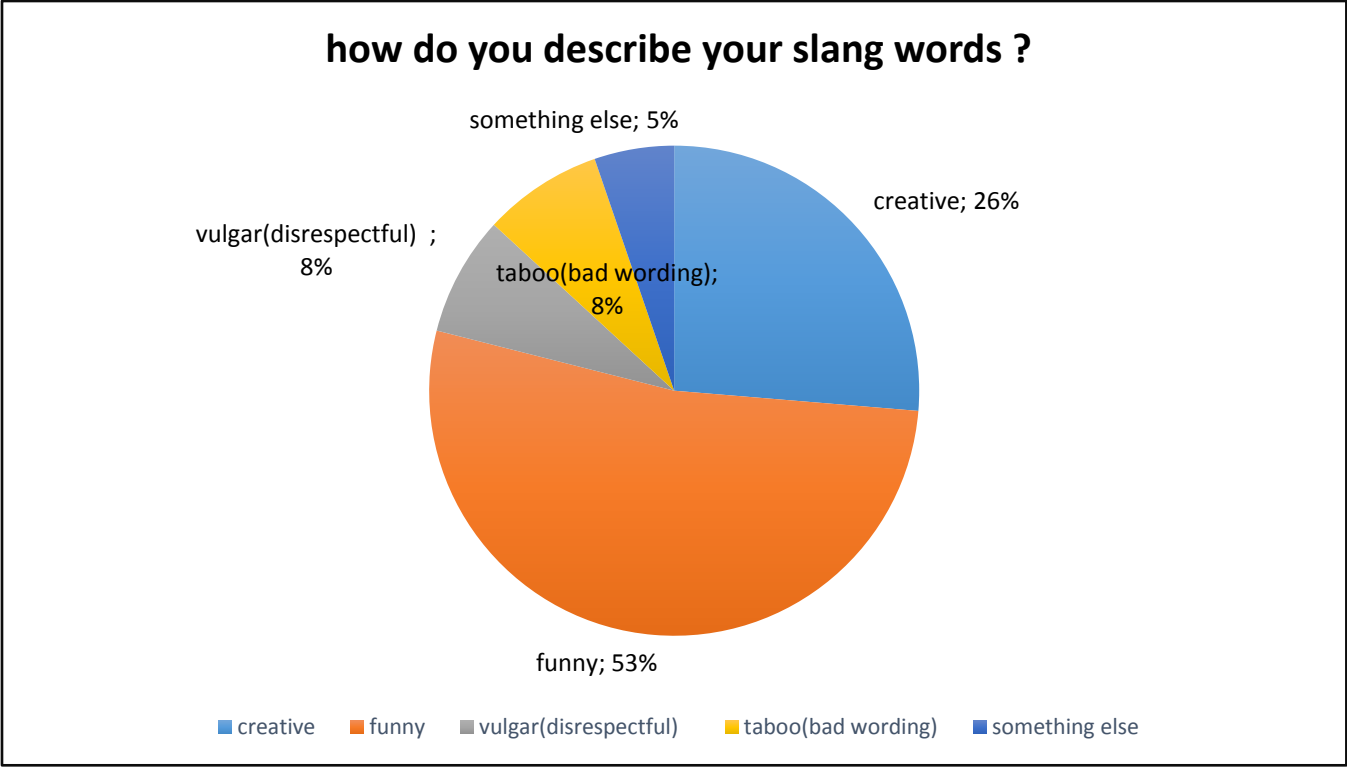


Figure 04: students’ description of their slang terms?

Question 08: which slang do students use more often and which one do they prefer?

Most students use Arabic slang more frequently because it is their mother tongue in the first place, and their daily conversations have to be in Arabic. Other students think that studying English has improved their language level to the point of using a non-standard form of English, which is slang. The effects have confirmed that English and Arabic but ordinarily English turned into the leading slang to apply some of the contributors. Every player has his/her very own motives for deciding on to speak a slang over every other that would be private. Some college students select English for the innovative terms that it consists of.



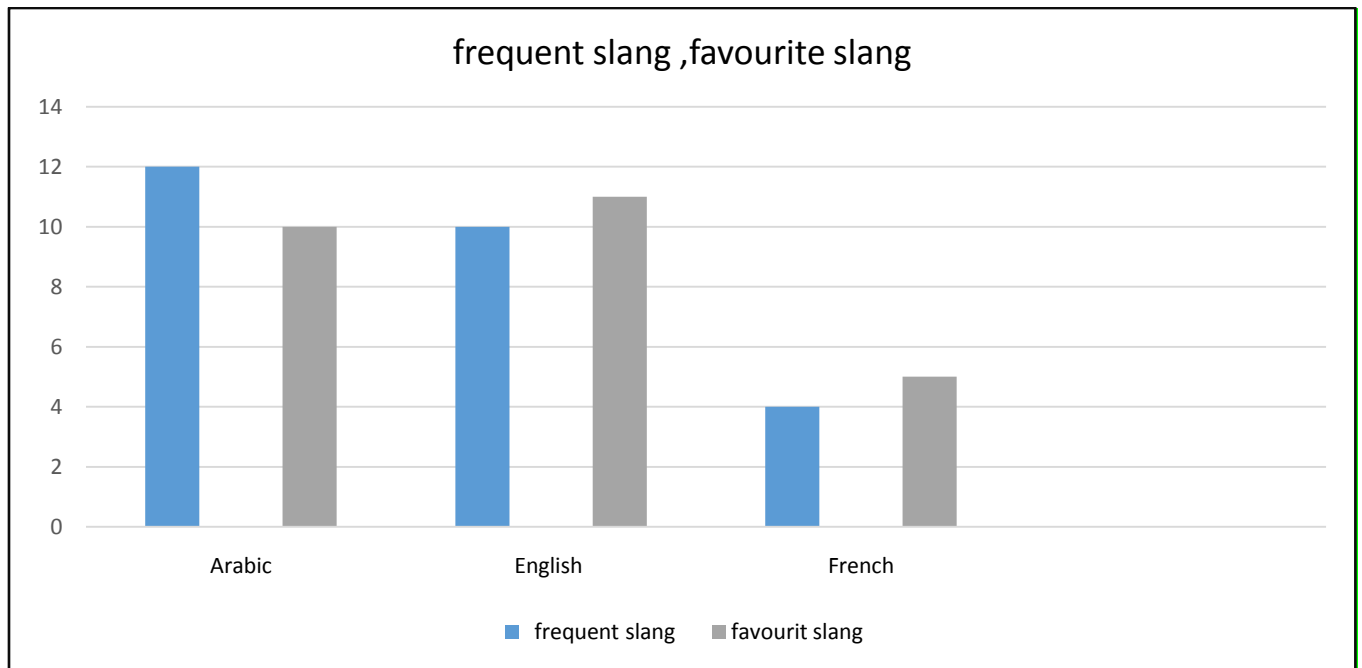


Figure 05: the maximum used and favoured slang to students

Question 09: Can you guess the meaning of popular slang words?

The majority of students failed in guessing the meaning of popular English and French slang terms. “Lit” for instance, was predicted as a lazy rather than a cool person or a thing, and in some cases, it was recognized as an abbreviation of literature. “La bombe” means a surprise for some participants, based on the participant’s identifications “air head” are headphones and chicken is where food is cooked and “le kif” is a type of herbal drug.

Question 10: Can you add some slang words you think are creative which adds a value to your speech?

Lol (laughing out loud), google box (TV), dude, bro, bestie (friend) IDK (I don’t know), knackered (so tired), to be skit (to have no money) are words which add a value to the participant’s speech

Question 11: Do you have words you usually use to express a certain feeling like anger, happiness, fear or any other feeling?

Some of the participants mentioned that they usually use slang to express their happy, angry and excited emotions. “Fire” and taboo or bad slang are used to express anger; LOL is expressed for being happy and “wow”, and “yay”, to say they are very enthusiastic. OMG and oh! Means what a surprise!

Question 12: Do you use slang to show a particular attitude or a kind of style such as toughness?

About thirteen students had admitted using slang words to show a kind of personal style or to indicate a particular attitude as acting tough and strong. A participant said that he uses slang to express his manhood. Five students claimed that using slang to show a certain style does not catch their interest.

Question 13: How would you rate your usage of slang?

Apparently, the young students deal with internet slang more often, social media platforms are full of outstanding slang terms that facilitate communication internationally and help in creating a new type of language. Others believe that the perfect place to use slang is around friends and peers. Even though university is part of the social life, some students think that it is not acceptable to use slang there; instead, slang should be used at home where there are no linguistic boundaries.

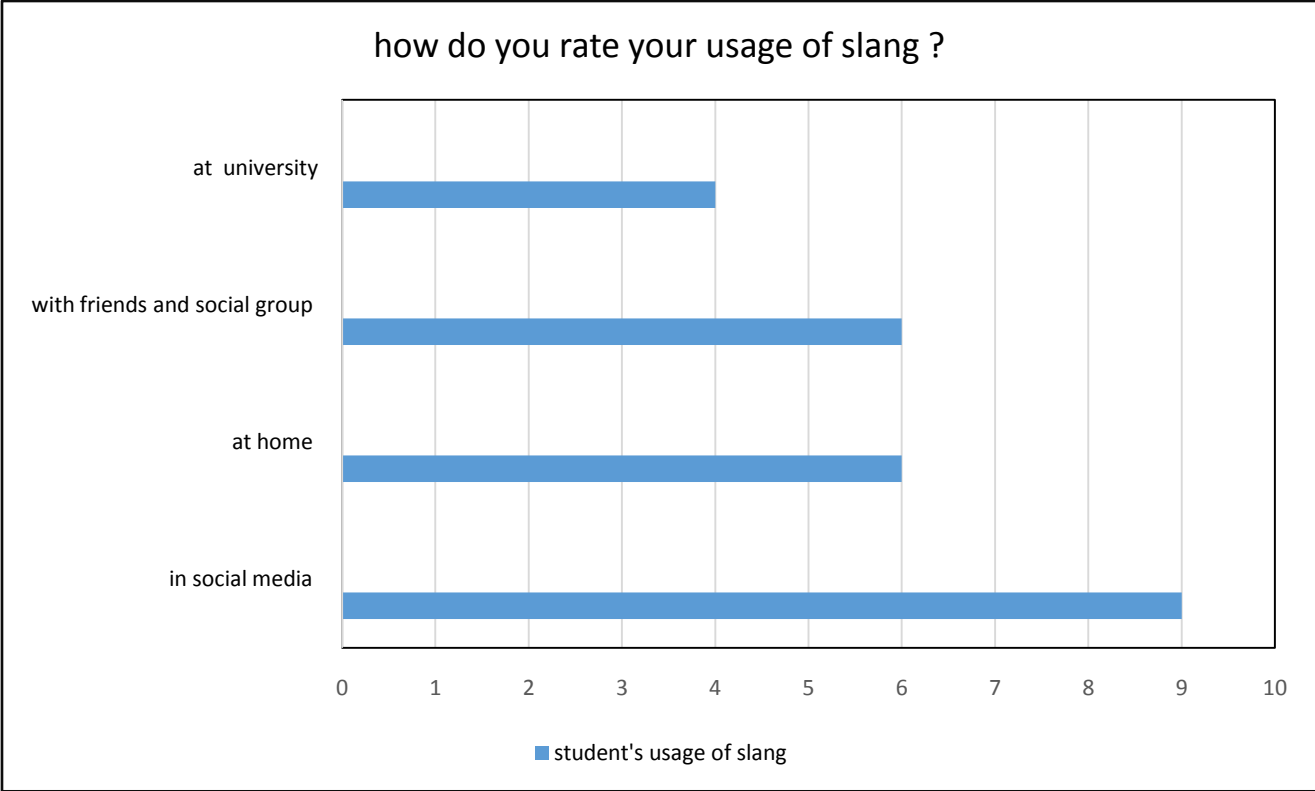


Figure 06: student’s usage of slang

Question 14: Do you think that using slang has a bad or good influence on you as student?

The majority of students assume that adopting slang has a good impact on them as students; learning how to interact in different settings and to convey different messages in a new form of language other than the standard form is actually purposeful. The other category considers slang as a bad influence that could affect students ‘speaking and writing skills.

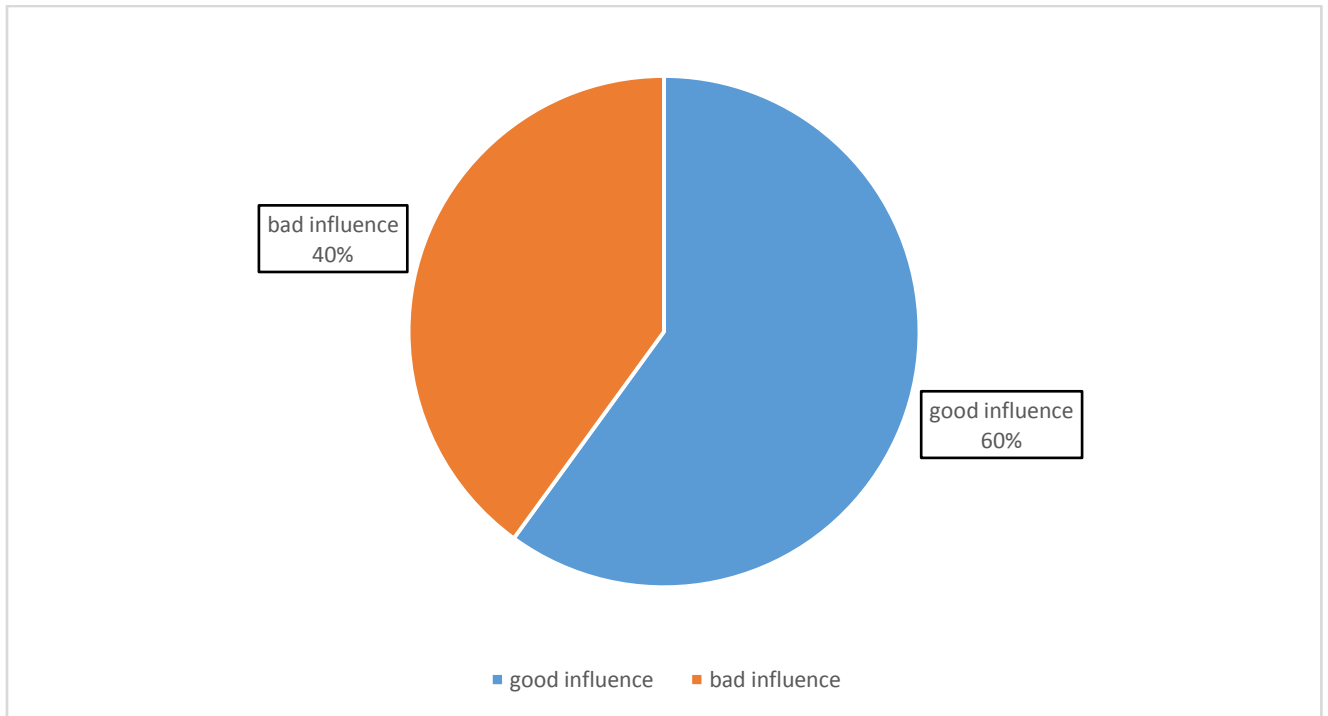


Figure 07: the impact of using slang

Question 15: What do you think about teaching and learning slang as an academic subject?

The mainstream of students disagreed with accepting slang as an academic subject for several reasons; first, they said that using slang cause them to forget the correct and accurate form of language besides pronunciation and grammar issues; second, slang is not important to be studied in academic institutions, it should remain in street, among friends.

Third, since everyone can generate meaningless slang terms, slang has no founded base and rules, which make it appropriate to be taught. On the other hand, students who suggest teaching and learning slang consider it more of cultural subject and creative wording. They believe that developing slang to be an educational subject may help in creating good and decent slang.

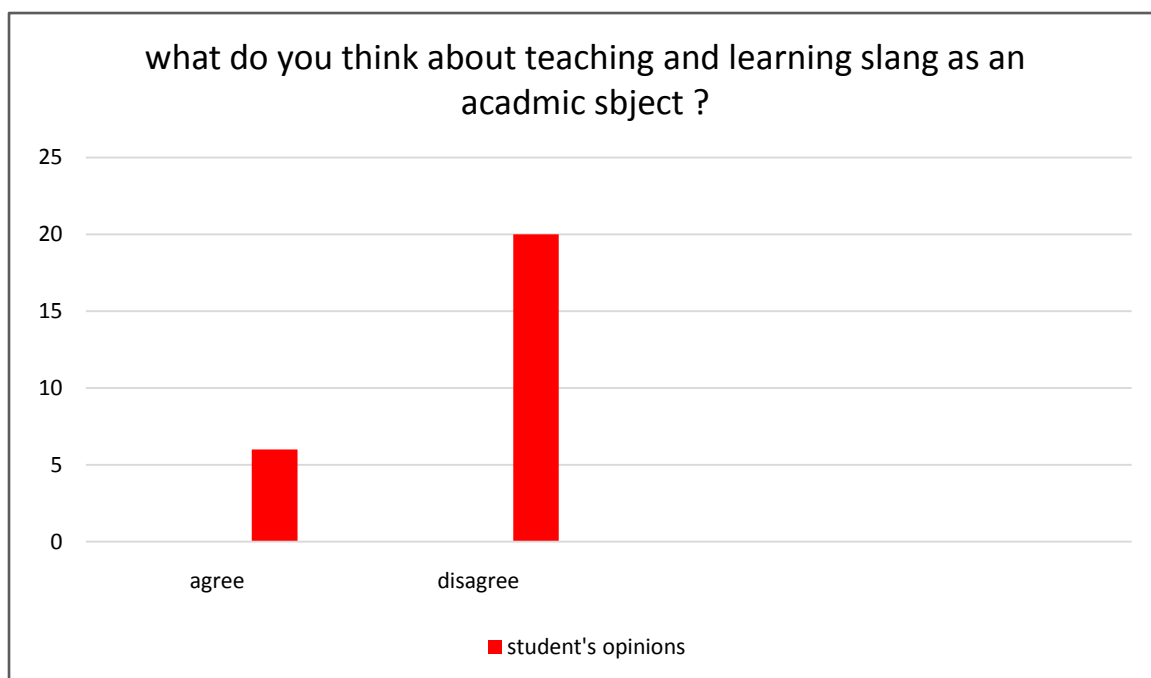


Figure 08: student's opinions about studying slang.

## 2.4. Discussion .

Under this chapter, we investigated the use of slang in the department of English among BA students. The study was conducted in the form of a questionnaire; we relied largely on student's contributions to clarify the situation of slang in the department.

The results have shown that most students have basic knowledge about slang, they maintain the traditional way of using slang mostly Arabic. Concerning English and French slang, students showed a weak contribution, which made us determine that students do not use much slang, and their usage is limited to certain familiar words used among friends and family. In addition, we discovered that students of the department adopt slang to show a particular attitude like sounding tough, cool, and modern.

The participants had shared the most active slang they use in different settings, but a large part of them could not identify the suggested slang words that were mostly English, which proves

that they have no deep knowledge of slang thus, they communicate with Standard English and colloquial Arabic and basic French words.

Making slang, an academic subject was a bit unreasonable for some students who consider slang an extra form of language that does not require much of interest. On the one hand, students admit that slang had a bad impact on their academic performance claiming that using slang especially Internet slang would affect their efficiency and cause them troubles with teachers. In contrast, others argued that slang should be taught as a cultural subject that would help students to communicate effectively particularly with foreigners.

To sum up, the present chapter represents the practical version of the study where we used numbers, figures and tables to clear off the picture of slang in the department of English, and determine certain facts about its users. The findings were as follows:

- Students of English department use much of Arabic slang and bit of Internet English slang with few popular French terms.
- Most BA students use slang for different purposes, as to maintain group's privacy or to show a certain attitude and keep up with the social flow.
- Most Students have no interest in slang, no intentions to study this language variety, which raised many questions and captured the interest of international linguists.
- Among Arabic, French and English, the latter is preferable to students due to the smoothness, colourfulness and freshness of that language.
- Most of slang is used at home and behind screens among friends.
- Most Students utilize slang terms without recognizing the hidden meanings after them.

## 2.5. Limitations

Amongst limitations that may cause a shortage or lead to wrong interpretations where the lack of reliable sources; printed books dedicated to deal with the social phenomenon slang were hardly found in the library instead there were books to identify slang narrowly. Concerning electronic books and online sources, the best copies were not reachable and the website's fees. As for the case study, the questionnaire space was not good due to the past events in the country, University students had a study pause in the middle of the year which affected our time schedules. As researchers and lead us to delay our investigations that reached Ramadan. Thus, fast students had no intentions to answer the questions; in so doing they affected the results negatively.

## General conclusion

Every society has its unique, special and common usage in terms of language where There is appropriate intercourse known as standard usage used in academic settings, while the non-formal language such as slang in which a restricted, new terms that are always changing according to time, context and other social factors.

Based on the findings and discussions, we assume that slang is functioned among students of English. Their insight into slang is very slight. A significant actuality uncovered is that of utilizing slang for gloating, acting intense or keeping gathering's mystery. In addition, it is necessary to mention that the BA students in the department of English are aware of the suitable contexts of using slang.

As a new topic to be searched , research studies dedicated to slang are counted thus, the current contribution has opened entryways for potential examinations.

Further studies are recommended in the future, as well as a deeper investigation on the use of slang in the university or other settings. Such a rich, questionable and consistently changing item as slang, worth of future significant investigations.



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Questionnaire

The present questionnaire aims at investigating the situation of slang in the department of English and at highlighting student’s knowledge about slang as well as discovering their motives behind using it.

We will appreciate it if you would answer the following question.

❖ Read the following questions and chose the answer that fits you best.

1. Your age:

19-22

23-26

2. Your gender:

male

Female

3. Are you:

➤ 1<sup>st</sup> year student

➤ 2<sup>nd</sup> year student

➤ 3<sup>rd</sup> year student

❖ Mind the following questions and answer them carefully.

PS. the languages concerned are English, Arabic and French.

4. Are you involved in clubs or any type of social group?

• Yes

• No

5. Do you have any special words you share with your group members? If yes, mention some.

.....  
.....

6. Do you know how to call the special words that you share with your peers or group? If yes, define them briefly

.....  
.....  
7. Why do you use such terms?

- To be up to date
  - To keep your group's privacy
  - Any other reasons
- .....

8. In your opinion, is it appropriate to use those special words in writing or in formal settings?

.....  
.....

9. Do you have any idea about slang? If yes, write down what you know about it

.....  
.....  
.....

10. How can you describe your slang terms?

- Vulgar (disrespectful)
  - Taboo (forbidden terms)
  - Funny
  - Creative
  - Something else
- .....

11. Among English, Arabic and French, which slang do you use more frequently?

.....

Which one do you prefer?

.....

Why?

.....  
.....  
12. Can you guess the meaning of these slang words?

Frenemy .....

Epic .....

Air-head .....

MDR.....

BRB.....

Khallas.....

Yalla .....

Le kif .....

la bomb.....

Couch potato.....

For real .....

Skiving .....

Chicken .....

I 'm dead.....

Bye Felicia .....

Lit .....

LAMFO .....

On fleek .....

13. Can you add some slang words you think are creative, which adds a value to your speech?

.....  
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14. Do you have words you usually use to express a certain feeling like anger, happiness, fear or any other feeling?

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15. Do you use slang to show a particular attitude or a kind of style?

.....

16. How would you rate your usage of slang?

- In Social media 0/10
- At home 0/10
- With friends and your social group 0/10
- At university 0/10

17. Do you think that using slang has a bad or good influence on you as a student?

.....

18. What do you think about teaching and learning slang as an academic subject?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Justify

.....  
.....  
.....

