

## Teachers Perception of Students' Slang Use. A Case Study

تصور المعلمين لاستخدام الطلاب للعامية. دراسة حالة

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### Abstract:

Language is inextricably linked to the social situation of its use. This results in the existence of various linguistic codes. To begin with, slang is an informal variety utilised by students to communicate with their mates. The current study on “Teachers perception of Students' Slang Use” examines slang awareness through taking the case of English language teachers. This study focuses on English language teachers at Khemis Miliana University since my curiosity as a teacher has led me to evaluate their consciousness of their student's code. So, it attempts to provide a clear picture of teachers' perception slang traits commonly employed in their students' interactions. Throughout this study, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used. To investigate this issue, data were gathered through interviewing English language teachers to gain insight on slang

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features knowledge. The findings indicate that English language teachers are unconscious of their students' slang employment.

**Keywords:** perception; students; teachers; slang.

ملخص:

ترتبط اللغة ارتباطاً وثيقاً بالوضع الاجتماعي لاستخدامها. وهذا يؤدي إلى وجود رموز لغوية مختلفة. في البداية، اللغة العامية هي مجموعة متنوعة غير رسمية يستخدمها الطلاب للتواصل مع زملائهم. تتركز الدراسة الحالية على "تصورات المعلمين لاستخدام الطلاب للعامية وذلك عن طريق دراسة حالة مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة خميس مليانة. حيث أن فضولي كمعلم دفعني إلى تقييم مدى وعيهم بطبيعة اللغة المستعملة من طرف طلابهم. لذلك، فهي تحاول تقديم صورة واضحة حول مدى إدراك المعلمين لسمات العامية المستخدمة بشكل شائع في تفاعلات طلابهم.

طوال هذه الدراسة، تم استخدام المنهجيات النوعية والكمية. للتحقيق في هذه المشكلة، تم الحصول على البيانات من خلال إجراء مقابلات مع معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية للحصول على نظرة ثاقبة حول اللغة العامية. تشير النتائج إلى أن معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية غير واعين بتوظيف طلابهم العامية.

كلمات مفتاحية: وعي، طلاب، المعلمين، اللغة العامية.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Being the product of context, slang is only used in casual and informal situations. According to some scholars such as Eble (1996) and Sorning (1981), this variety can be employed by students to meet distinctive discursive demands. Slang is used by

English language students at Khemis Miliana University to meet communication needs, according to the current study. This study investigates whether Khemis Miliana English language teachers are aware of their students' slang use. Before answering the study's main question, it is necessary to define slang variety.

## **2. Literature Review**

Slang has been viewed from a variety of perspectives. Most notably, the majority of the enquiries focus on the phenomenon's sociological side. It is given two contradicting aims in this approach; maintaining unity within a group of people, or excluding out-group member. The former function is associated with the variety's interpersonal feature . The latter emphasizes the anti-social objective, such as generating differences and concealing their preoccupations. Slang is described in terms of the level of usage as being below the neutral style, focusing on stylistic qualities. Accordingly, in his book “Language , its Structure and Use”, Finegan (2005) defines slang as:

The vocabulary sometimes used in situations of extreme informality... signals rebellious undertones or an intentional distancing of its users from certain mainstream values, and it is certainly popular among teenagers and college students...it always signal rebellion or rejection of mainstream values. (pp.352-353)

From the previous quote, it is manifested that Finegan depicts hand, he portrays it as a collection of terms that are only employed in highly informal contexts. On the other hand, it is a means of rebelling or breaching the society's normal norms and standards. This leads one to understand that in-group members

tend to construct their own linguistic repertoire that distinguish them from the rest of the society. Through word-formation processes (Yule, 2006). Using Fowler's words (1926, p. 308), slang

is a diction that results from the favorite game among the young and lively of playing with words and renaming things and actions; some invent words or mutilate, or misapply the old, for the pleasure of novelty, and others catch up such words for the pleasure of being in fashion. (Cited in Barry, 2010: xIviii)

Fowler (1926) states that slang is the outcome of experimenting with words in order to be innovative and trendy. Slang words are the result of transformation or transposition the former happens at the morphological level as shortening, compounding, and derivation. The latter is a semantic process in which certain existing terms' meanings are altered. To study the research central issue, the teachers perception of students slang, certain methodological tools are to be used.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Participants**

The informants of this study are ten teachers of English in English language Department of Khemis Miliana University. They were chosen to determine whether professors are cognizant of their learners' use of slang. More significantly, the concept of integrating them in the current study stems from several personal

conversations during which they began to investigate the topic. In this inquiry, ten teachers were interviewed. They are all English language teachers at Khemis Miliana University. More crucially, the gender equation is not included in the current study.

### **3.2. Materials and Methods**

Data gathering takes place at the end of the year on an unstructured timetable. It is derived from a semi-structured interview organised with teachers to assess their knowledge of their students' slang usage.

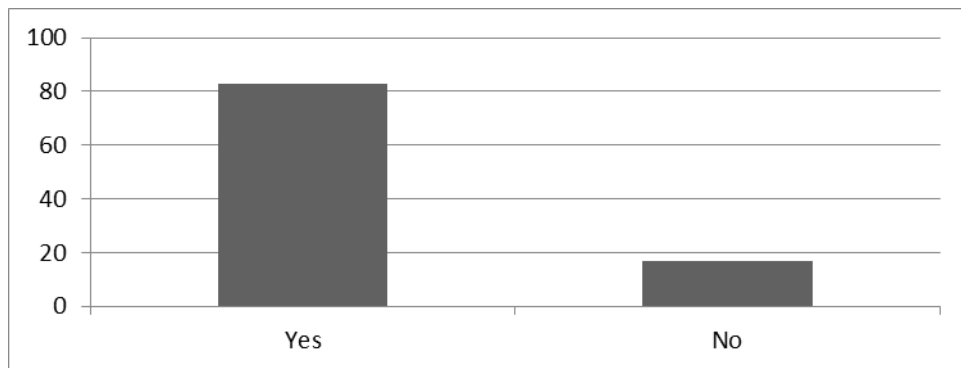
The questions are a mix of open-ended and closed-ended in order to provide a quantitative and qualitative study of the topic. Brown (2001) contends that "closed response questions are also easier to answer and less likely to be skipped by respondents" (p.37). He also indicates that they are fairly easy to analyze and interpret. The open response questions, on the other hand, are designed to allow respondents to express themselves while also gaining a broad understanding of the problem under consideration. The interview contains fourteen questions.

The interview is composed of three sections. The first portion includes teaching experience. The second one revolves around the concept of speech community, and the diversity used in their interactions, through both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The third section focuses on students themselves. It focuses on slang characteristics for which open questions are requested for teachers to provide certain terms if they have them based on the language features supplied in closed response questions.

#### 4. Findings and Discussion

The first question aims from teachers to supply the variety that their students use while communicating with them. The following chart depicts the data gathered from the questionnaire:

**Graph one:** students code used with teachers

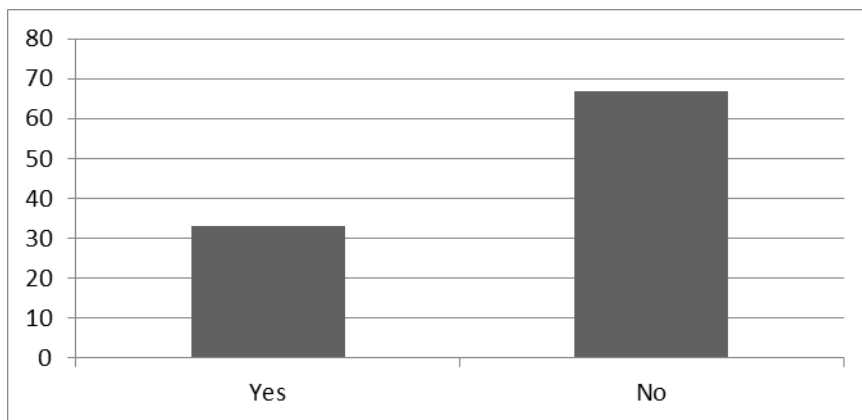


As being manifested in the graph, 19% of teachers reveal that their students use both Standard British English and non-standard English, as one of them states: *"Watching movies and listening to songs of various varieties push students to use a mixture of both varieties."* However, 81% of teachers realize that their students utilize Standard British English because it is the variety from which they learnt and taught. Teachers with less experience are aware that students are impacted by several factors that result in a mix of both sorts. As a result, it is clear that they pay attention to their learners' speech patterns.

When being asked whether they pay attention to the variety students use to interact with their mates, some teachers contend that they pay a close attention to how their students speak in groups. Furthermore, they confirm that the variety employed is completely diverse due to the shift in situation, as one male

teacher mentions; *they are more formal with teachers and the use of a certain variety of language depends on the interlocutors, topic, more importantly on the context.* The remaining category of teachers pays minimal attention to their students' interactions. The following chart summarizes the results:

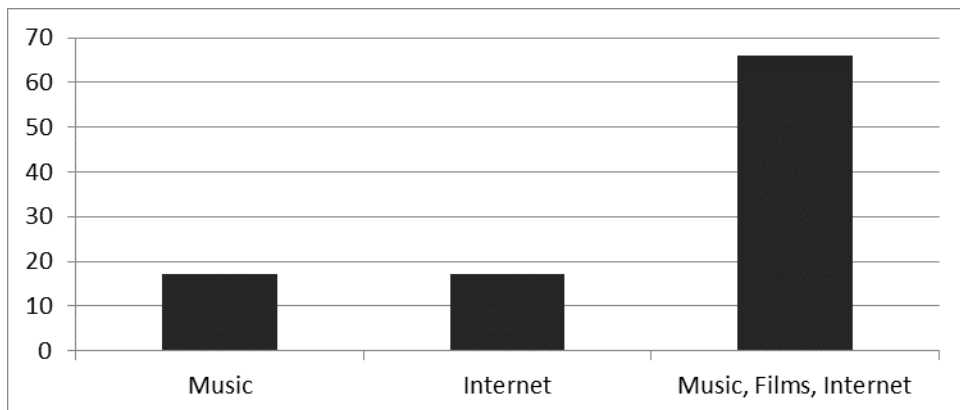
**Graph Two:** Teachers' Attention of their students' language



Question three and four are on students' code and the creation of their own community. Their answers have a connection to the previous two questions. Those who stated that they do not pay attention to their learners variety did not choose from the options presented. They attributed their failure to respond to the inquiry to a lack of communication. Similarly, when it comes to speech community construction, some of them claim to have no knowledge for the same reason. However, the residual group selects all varieties by explaining it as a blend of all sorts and adding that students aim to pervert the standards. Furthermore, they ensure that students develop their own community because they have their own manner of speaking.

Question five demands teachers to provide ways opted for by learners to construct their language. According to the data in the accompanied chart, most teachers use all of the available resources, including films, the internet, and music. However, a minority of professors choose solely the internet and music. In reality, all of the methods have a significant impact on pupils' linguistic abilities. Their reactions are unaffected by experience. The outcomes are as follows:

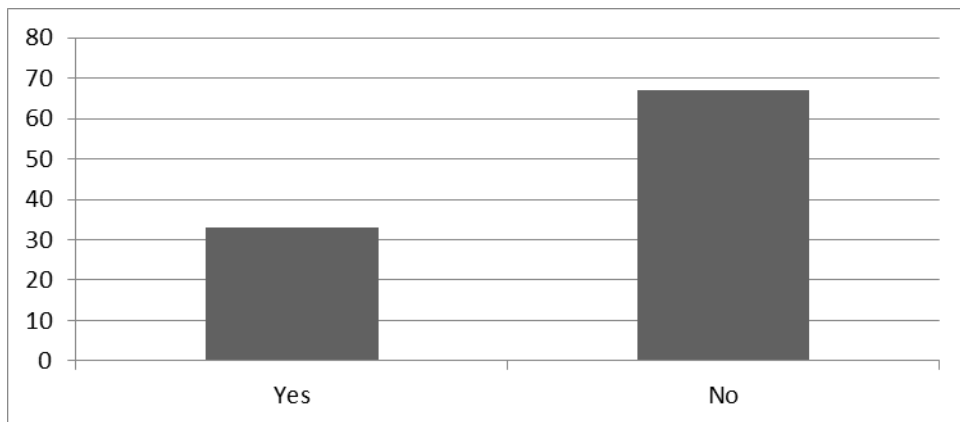
**Graph Three:** Teachers View about the Means which Contribute in the Development of Students Language.



Question six and seven focus on slang's creative element. This graph depicts the information gathered.

**Graph Four:** Teachers perception of their Students' Creation of Words





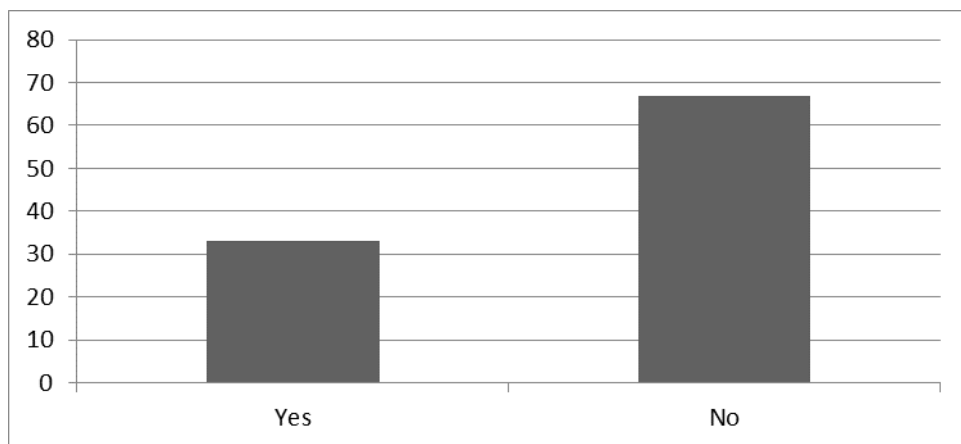
The graph clearly shows that the majority of teachers have no recognition regarding word creation from students' part. However, some of them proved that students develop words by supplying words such as "debation" for discussion, as demonstrated by a female teacher. Others claim that they employ Algerian vocabulary in the English language structure.

Questions eight to eleven are about the pronunciation shift, meaning shift, and reduced forms as slang traits. According to the findings, all teachers are unaware of those aspects. As a result, they are unconscious of their students' usage of slang, particularly its characteristics, because some of them associate the variety solely with music and film.

The remaining question is concerned with borrowing as a component of slang. According to the graph, the majority of teachers claim to be unaware of borrowing. This suggests they are unconscious about the fact employing that feature. Some of them, however, suggest that students borrow from other languages such as Arabic and French. This is the same category

that stated their focus on students' language. The following graph summarizes everything that has been mentioned.

**Graph Five:** Teachers' perception of their Students' word borrowing



#### **4. Conclusion**

Along the present research paper, it is attempted to answer the following question: Are teachers conscious of their students' slang use? The following findings were obtained as a result of this investigation. The examination of the teachers' interview goes from the concept of speech community to slang use. A significant number of teachers are oblivious that students build their communities with them or on their own. When asked to provide the variety of slang used by students in their group, they are all unaware of its use. Teachers acknowledged only the use of borrowed terms, but they claim to be ignorant of the remaining elements. As a result, their responses demonstrate that they are oblivious of their students slang usage.

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## **7. Appendix**

Interview

- 1- How many years have you being teaching ?
- 2- Which linguistic code do students use with you ?
- 3- Do you pay attention to the code used with their mates ?
- 4- What is the linguistic code that students use?
- 5- Do students form an English language speaking community different from that with you?
- 6- According to you, what are the different means that help them construct the English language used with their mates?
- 7- Do you think that students create words in the English language ?

- 8- Would you provide examples?
- 9- Do students adapt English language words through changing their meanings or pronunciation to be employed in their interaction ?
- 10- Would you provide examples that you might hear from them?
- 11-Do your students use shortened expression as acronyms and clippings?
- 12-Would you supply some examples you caught from their discussions ?
- 13-Do students borrow words from different languages other than English to use in their interactions?
- 14-Would you exemplify with some instances?