

An Analysis of Slang Words in Netflix Series *Never Have I Ever*

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the slang word used in Season 1 of the Netflix series *Never Have I Ever* Season 1. The purpose of this study is to identify and categorize slang words based on their word formation processes and social functions. The writer applied qualitative descriptive approaches to analyze the data. The writer found 53 slang words used by the character in the Netflix series *Never Have I Ever*. The writer identified seven distinct processes out of 16 words formation process from Mattiello's theory: 7 instances of compounding, 10 instances of clipping, 4 instances of acronym or abbreviation, 27 instances of semantic shift, 1 instance of reduplicative formation, 1 instance of variation, 1 instance of prefixation, and 2 instances of fanciful formation. The majority of data comprises slang term that have undergone a semantic shift, with total 27 slang term.

Keywords: *Slang, Word Formation Process, Social Function*

INTRODUCTION

It's common knowledge that language is the most crucial communication tool for information sharing. Language is critical in human social life, not just for communication, but also for aspects of culture and society evolution. According to [1] languages are classified by their level of formality, ranging from frozen, formal, and consultative to intimate and casual forms. Language diversity, which refers to the type of language used by speakers, is distinguished by this formality scale, from the most formal and official frozen language variant to the most relaxed casual style. Casual language, defined as used in informal contexts, includes slang, which Wardhaugh describes as a

unique and secretive social variety. According to [2], slang words often pertain to a specific age group or adhere to a particular trend, defining group identity through short-lived expressions. These words emerge from a societal need for novel, creative, humorous terms, enabling individuals to express themselves uniquely, provocatively, and amicably. [3] defined slang as a language used in "intimate" group talks. Slang is a type of jargon distinguished by its refusal to follow formal conventions, relative freshness, and ephemerality, and is used to claim solidarity. Slang frequency is connected with peer communication as well as gangster communication. Renowned linguist [4] explains that morphology is not only concerned with the

rules that govern the structure of words but also with the way these rules interact with other components of grammar, such as syntax and phonology. [4] emphasizes that morphology plays a critical role in understanding how words can be systematically varied and combined to express different meanings and grammatical functions. Based on the background above, the writer formulated research questions such as what are the slang word formation process and what are the social function of slang words. This study was conducted to describe the word formation process of slang words and to identify and analyze the social function of slang words.

METHOD

The research undertaken in this study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach, emphasizing the significance of research tools in elucidating the phenomena under investigation. Operating within the realm of qualitative methodology, the study engages in a thorough examination of data results through the prism of descriptive elements, encompassing a diverse array of linguistic artifacts such as words, phrases, and utterances. The writer chooses to use the Netflix Series *Never Have I Ever Season 1* as a source of data to analyze slang words and presents a fascinating opportunity to explore contemporary language usage within a specific cultural context. The research's data consists of characters' slang words and phrases depicted by the characters in the Netflix Series *Never Have I Ever Season 1*. To analyze slang usage in *Never Have I Ever Season 1*, the writer engages in multiple viewings to immerse in the dialogue and interactions, focusing on slang terms, colloquialisms, and other linguistic features, noting their frequency, context, and connotations. Systematic note-taking is crucial, documenting specific examples of slang words and phrases along with their

contexts and interpretations. Following the meticulous collection of data, the next stage of the research process covers a detailed examination of the gathered material. This analytical attempt is carried out methodically, to create a full description and establish the complex connections that exist within the issue under consideration. One aspect of representing data involves organizing and categorizing slang word formation process terms identified within the series according to predefined criteria, aligning with qualitative methodologies proposed by [5]. This includes grouping terms based on their linguistic characteristics, contextual usage, or thematic relevance into categories such as Acronym, Blending, Clipping, Compounding, and others as outlined by [6]. This approach emphasizes thematic coding and narrative analysis, which can be applied to classify these terms and provide detailed explanations alongside contextual information.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Example of compounding data 1 *Never Have I Ever Season 1* Ep. 1

Slang Word	Type of Slang Formation	Social Function of Slang	Meaning
1. Shit-fest	Compounding Noun + Noun	Expression of Attitudes and Emotional	A chaotic or unpleasant situation

Formation Process:

Shit (bad/unpleasant) + Fest (clipped form of Festival) celebratory connotation = Shit-Fest (Compounding with Semantic Shift)

In the context of slang formation, the term "shit fest" can be categorized under compounding with elements of semantic shift and clipping. Compounding involves combining two or more words to create a new term with a specific

meaning. In this case, "shit" is a vulgar term often used to describe something bad, unpleasant, or of low quality, while "fest" is a clipped form of "festival" or "festivity," usually indicating a large event or gathering with a celebratory connotation. When combined, "shit fest" forms a new phrase that vividly implies a situation or period characterized by unpleasantness, chaos, or poor quality.

Table 2: Example of clipping data 1 Never Have I Ever Season 1 Ep. 2

Slang Word	Type of Slang Formation	Social Function of Slang	Meaning
1 Uggo	Clipping + Suffixation -o	In group communication (to insult someone's appearance)	Unattractive or ugly people

Formation Process:

Ugly (clipped and modified) – ugg + Suffixation -o = Uggo + Suffixation -s (plural) = Uggos (someone or anything that is physically ugly)

The term ' Uggo' is a combination of clipping and suffixation slang formation process, although the word ' uggo' has no meaning in standard English dictionaries. This term means "unattractive," hence it can be drawn. The closest conclusion is derived from the root word ' ugly,' which begins with ' ug,' (clipping process) and adds the diminutive suffix ' -o,' (suffixation process). The meaning of the term "uggo" is slang for someone or anything that is physically ugly. It is commonly used as a pejorative phrase to mock people's appearances. The term's origin is unclear, although it became popular in the early 2000s.

Table 3: Example of acronym data 1 Never Have I Ever Season 1 Ep. 1

Slang Word	Type of Slang Formation	Social Function of Slang	Meaning
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1. UN (yu-en)	Acronym	Creativity and Innovation (to demean or insult a group)	Outsiders who do not meet the social or attractiveness standards.
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Formation Process:

UN (a standard abbreviation for United Nations) >> UN (Shifted as abbreviation for Unfuckable Nerds)

"UN" is an abbreviation for "unfuckable nerds."

The term "UN" serves to reinforce group boundaries by creating an "us vs. them" dynamic. This labeling is not just a personal insult but a social signal that communicates to others who belong to the "in" group and who are excluded. The term "UN" acts as a boundary marker.

Table 4: Example of semantic shift data 3 Never Have I Ever Season 1 Ep. 1

Slang Word	Type of Slang Formation	Social Function of Slang	Meaning
3 Sucked	Semantic Shift (Metaphorical Extension)	Expression of Attitudes and Emotions (to convey dissatisfaction)	To Be Bad or Unpleasant or to have a Bad Experience

Formation Process:

Base word: Sucked (past tense from suck) draw something into the mouth

Meaning shifted to To Be Bad or Unpleasant

The slang term "sucked" is used to express dissatisfaction or disappointment with something.

It is an informal term used to describe something disappointing, unsatisfactory, or otherwise negative in experience or quality. This informal, colloquial expression vividly conveys her negative emotions and reinforces the severity of her experiences.

Table 5: Example of reduplicative data 1 *Never Have I Ever* Season 1 Ep. 7

Slang Word	Type of Slang Formation	Social Function of Slang	Meaning
1. razzle-dazzle	Reduplicative (rhyming reduplicative)	Creativity and Innovation (to describe showy behaviour)	To impress or extravagant

Formation Process:

Base Word: Razzle

Reduplicated Form: Dazzle

Difference only in the initial (R-D)

In the case of "razzle-dazzle," the process involves repeating a similar-sounding sequence to form a catchy and memorable phrase. This occurs when a word or part of a word is repeated with a change in the initial consonant or vowel, creating a rhyming effect. In "razzle-dazzle," the two parts of the word rhyme with each other, with "razzle" and "dazzle" differing only in their initial consonants ("r" and "d").

Table 6: Example of Variation data 1 *Never Have I Ever* Season 1 Ep. 8

Slang Word	Type of Slang Formation	Social Function of Slang	Meaning
1 Dang	Variation	Expression of Attitudes and Emotions (to express mild anger or annoyance)	Expression of mild frustration

Formation Process:

Base word: Damn

(An exclamation of frustration or disappointment.)

Varied Form: Dang

(It retains the essence of expressing mild frustration or surprise but in a less offensive

manner, making it suitable for casual, everyday use.)

The analysis revealed that 8 different types of slang word formation processes were identified from 16 processes found in Season 1 of the Netflix series *Never Have I Ever*. These processes include compounding, clipping, acronyms or abbreviations, semantic shift, reduplicative formation, variation, affixation, and fanciful formation. Additionally, the data was categorized into 6 distinct social functions.

Table 7. Slang Word Formation Process Findings

	Word Formation Process	Frequency	Percentage
1	Compounding	7	13.2%
2	Clipping	10	18.9%
3	Acronym or Abbreviation	4	7.5%
4	Semantic Shift	27	50.9%
5	Reduplicative	1	1.9%
6	Variation	1	1.9%
7	Prefixation	1	1.9%
8	Fanciful Formation	2	3.8%
	Total	53	100%

Based on the data in the table of slang word formation processes, it was found that there are a total of 53 slang terms from the Netflix series *Never Have I Ever* Season 1. Using Mattiello's theory, these terms were categorized into 8 slang word formation processes with percentages: 13.2% compounding, 18.9% clipping, 7.5% acronyms or abbreviations, 50.9% semantic shift, 1.9% reduplicative formation, 1.9% variation, 1.9% prefixation, and 3.8% fanciful formation. However, out of the 53 terms, only 8 slang word formation processes were identified, and 7 other processes were not found in the characters' utterances in the series, such as blending, infixation, back-formation, conversion, word manufacture, final combination, and reverse formation.

Table 8. Slang Social Function Findings

No.	Social Function	Frequency	Percentage
1	Group Identity	8	15.1%
2	In-group Communication	10	18.9%
3	Group Solidarity	2	3.8%
4	Expression of Attitudes and Emotions	15	28.3%
5	Rebellion and Resistance	6	11.3%
6	Creativity and Innovation	12	22.6%
	Total	53	100%

Based on the data found in the Netflix series *Never Have I Ever* season 1, 53 terms were analyzed and categorized into 6 social function categories of slang words. The results identified the following categories: 15.1% group identity, 18.9% in-group communication, 3.8% group solidarity, 28.3% expression of attitudes and emotions, 11.3% rebellion and resistance, and 22.6% creativity and innovation.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In the analysis of slang terms from Season 1 of the Netflix series *Never Have I Ever*, a total of 53 slang terms were identified and categorized based on their word formation processes according to expert theories and social functions. By analyzing data from Season 1 of the Netflix series *Never Have I Ever* to examine slang word formation processes according to Mattiello's theory, it was observed that not every slang word formation process is represented in the data. The limited variety of data in this source is reflected in the findings. In the series, only 8 types of slang word formation processes were identified: The majority of the data comprises slang terms that have undergone a semantic shift, a process in which the meaning of a word evolves, resulting in

a novel meaning that diverges from the conventional definition, with a total of 27 instances documented.

Utilizing Murray's theory of slang, which divides social functions into six interconnected categories, it is noted that a single slang term may fulfill multiple functions. The majority of the data consists of slang terms that fulfill the social function of expressing of attitudes and emotions, where slang is employed to vividly communicate emotions that standard language cannot convey, totaling 15 instances.

Based on the findings from the analysis of slang terms in Season 1 of the Netflix series *Never Have I Ever*, several suggestions for future research can be made to enhance the understanding of slang word formation processes. First, broadening the dataset to include a wider range of sources—such as different media forms, films, social media, and various television genres—could provide a more comprehensive view of slang and its formation processes. Additionally, future studies should examine slang formation processes that were not represented in the current analysis, this would offer a fuller picture of the methods by which slang terms are created and evolve.

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