

## **Transgender Community and Its Slang Words**

### **Siti Asiyah**

English Department of Educational Faculty  
State Islamic Studies Institute (STAIN) Salatiga  
Jl. Tentara Pelajar No. 02 Salatiga, Central Java, Indonesia  
bembybee@yahoo.co.id

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this research is to describe slang words used in transgender community in Salatiga, the meaning, how to form and the functions. This is the descriptive qualitative method. The data are from natural communication taking among transgenders. The source of data is transgender community in the form of oral data. The results of the study shows that transgender slang words is formed by borrowing syllables of Javanese and Indonesian language, adding with specific affixes, or changing into other common words. Transgender community inserts the slang words into Javanese language and use Javanese language structure to form their utterances. They use it as a secret code and also solidarity marker inside the groups or between the group and other groups.

**Keyword:** *Slang Words, Transgender Community, Functions of Slang Words*

### **Abstrak**

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan kata-kata slang yang digunakan oleh komunitas transgender di Salatiga, artinya,

bagaimana membentuknya, dan fungsinya. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Sumber data adalah komunitas transgender dalam bentuk kalimat lisan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kata-kata slang transgender dibentuk dengan meminjam suku kata dari bahasa Indonesia dan Jawa, menambahinya dengan imbuhan tertentu, atau merubahnya menjadi kata-kata lain yang biasa dipakai. Komunitas transgender menyisipkan kata-kata slang ke dalam bahasa Jawa dan menggunakan struktur bahasa Jawa dalam membuat kalimat. Mereka menggunakannya sebagai kode rahasia dan juga sebagai penanda solidaritas sesama anggota atau dengan kelompok lain.

**Kata Kunci:** *Kata-Kata Slang, Komunitas Transgender, Fungsi dari Kata-Kata Slang*

## **Introduction**

There are so many communities in Indonesia and so many variations in language to make the communication easier; one of them is the transgender community. Almost everyone knows transsexual or transgender. The transgenders are minority group in society but the number of transgenders is growing, especially in big cities. The transgender communities are generally unique and exclusive because their code is the result of creativity in language. They usually have specific code which is usually known as slang words.

Kridalaksana (1982: 156) states that slang is a variety of language, it is not official, used by young people or particular social group for internal communications in order to make people in the other groups do not understand, formed in new vocabulary and always changing. Meanwhile, according to Chaer and Agustina (1995:87-88), as the secret and special social variation, slang can only be understood by

certain people in a limited area and may not be known by the people outside the group.

Soeparno (2002:73) argues that slang is a manifestation or realization of the language that is specific and secret. Specific means used by certain groups that is very limited. Secret means people outside their group should not understand. As a step to maintain the confidentiality, slang is always modified or changed, so it is temporal. Meanwhile, according to Chaer and Agustina (1995:87-88), as the secret and special social variation, slang can only be understood by certain people in a limited area and may not be known by the people outside the group. Therefore, the vocabulary used in slang always changes. Slang emphasizes more on vocabulary than the phonology or grammar. Slang is temporal.

According to Keraf (1994:108-109), slang word is a kind of a pure or high conversation word. Slang consists of words that are nonstandard and informal and created exclusively. Sometimes slang is a result of accidental mistake, or sometimes in the form of destruction of a common word to fill in other field meaning.

### ***Transgender***

According to Atmojo (1986:2), in general, transgender is a man who dresses and acts as women. Fassinger and Arseneau in Bieschke (2007:22) argues that the transgenders are people who have gender-variant or gender-"transgressive". They express their gender in a different way from the appropriate behaviors and acts based on their (perceived)

biological sex. Meanwhile, Cook (2004:7) defines a transgender as persons who strongly identify themselves with the opposite sex.

Yustinus (2006:81-82) states, psychologically, the transgenders are included in gender identity disorder. He describes that gender identity is the individual subjective feelings about being a man or a woman. Most individuals have a gender identity in accordance with identification of physiological sex but there are some exceptions. For example, a person may have a penis, has all the features of secondary male sex (eg, high voice and mustache) and play the traditional role of men in public, but may feel that he is actually a woman. If there are incompatibilities between the identification of physiological sex of individuals with gender identity, the individual diagnosed as having gender identity disorder.

### **Research method**

This research used descriptive qualitative research. Sudaryanto (1992:62) argues that the term of descriptive has relation with language study "descriptive linguistic". It is a study based on facts or phenomena empirically exists on the speakers, so the result or noted in form of language used. So it is like portraits (explain as they are).

The data source of the study is transgender community in Salatiga. The objects of this study are slang words, phrases, sentences. To collect the data, the researcher observed and interviewed the transgender community using recording technique. The writer did an interview with the members of transgender community in Salatiga to get information about slang words. According to Moleong (2008:186), interview is a conversation with a certain purpose.

## Discussion

### *Word changes*

The way the transgender create their slang words are not too clear. It seems that they create it and memorize it. Some words can be traced its original words in Javanese language or Indonesian language.

Slang words	Javanese anguage	Indonesian language
(1) skul-skul	<b>Sekolah</b>	- (school)
(2) sinyol	<b>nyolong</b>	- (steal)
(3) sinja	<b>njaluk</b>	- (request)
(4) pulonia	-	<b>pulang</b> (go home)

The bold syllables are part of Javanese or Indonesian language which is borrowed in slang words. Another way to form slang words is by changing the words into different words.

Javanese language	meaning	Slang words
(5) ketemu	meet	ketumbar (food ingredient)
(6) cium	kiss	cumi (sea animal)

Other words seem arbitrary, it is difficult to trace its original word, such as *singer* (understand)

### *Grammar*

The data obtained informs that transgender community in Salatiga is bilingual (Javanese language and Indonesian Language). According to Nur Indah and Abdurrahman (2008:73), the existence of bilingualism affect the existence of code switching and code mixing, switching from one code (e.g language) with another or mixing some codes together. The

pattern or structure of the sentence used by transgender follow the pattern of Indonesian or Javanese sentence. It can be found from the pattern subject – predicate – object and include suffix, affixes, prefixes etc that are usually used in Javanese and Indonesian language.

The data of slang words are from oral communication. According to Widjono (2007:24), oral communication has some characteristics, such as: the diction of vocabularies are informal, there is a tendency not to use affixes, the form of sentences are incomplete (without subject, verb or object). The meaning of sentences is influenced by context when that sentences stated. The meaning can be understood although the structure of the sentences is ungrammatical. For instance:

(7) *Sing* *rembonge* *disisam-sisam* *sing* *sirup'e* *jireng*, *eyes*  
that the hair extended hat the face nice beautiful

*koyo Lidia Kandau*

like Lidia Kandau

(someone whose hair is extended has beautiful face like Lidia Kandau (an actress))

This sentence includes code mixing between Javanese language and slang. *Sing* is Javanese language. *Rembonge* is a slang word from *rembong* + *e*; *rembong* means hair (*rambut* in Javanese or Indonesian language) and *e* is suffix in Javanese language that indicate possessive. *Disisam-sisam* (*di*+*sisam-sisam*) is a slang word constructed of prefix *di-* showing passive voice and *sisam-sisam* showing repeated activity. *Sirupe* (*sirup* + *e*) is slang word for face and *e* is suffix in Javanese language that show possessive.

- (8) “*Neng kene ki iso lima-lima brendi ne sandong ki tinta*  
 in here ki can see young man in there  
 ki not  
*besikan*”  
 can

((I) can see young men here, (I) can not see young men there)

The sentence is constructed by Javanese vocabularies (italic) and slang words (italic and bold). The sentence is incomplete, it does not have subject. Although this is consisting of many words, actually this speech is not complete. When it includes subject such as “I”, it should be:

- (9) *Aku (akika) neng kene ki iso lima-lima brendi ne sandong ki tinta besikan*”

*Aku* is Javanese language for I, meanwhile *akika* is a slang word for the same pronoun. The structure of the sentence follows the pattern of Javanese language. The phrase *tinta* (not) *besikan* (can) reflects it, the negative “not” before “can” is Javanese pattern (compare to English “can not”!).

- (10) “*Lha mau ketumbar ning mandre?*”  
 lha past meet in where  
 (where did (you) meet?)

This is another example of incomplete utterance. The sentence does not include subject and object of the sentence. In fact, this phenomenon is common in daily Javanese or Indonesian languages; a speaker usually omits common information shared with a hearer.

### ***Function of slang words***

According to the informants, the general reason of transgender community to use slang words is to hide the meaning of their

conversation from others. They insert slang words into language of everyday conversation (e.g Javanese language).

- (11) “Ngemese ki gowo bahasa macica  
Speak use language name for transgender group  
we, gen do tinta singer.”  
let not know

((I) speak in transgender language, so they don't understand)

- (12) T3: Aku neng kono ki tinta singer kok.  
I in there not understand  
Aku malah ket mbiyen ki tinta singer nek  
ndekne  
I from the beginning not understand if  
he/she  
gaweane sinyol-sinyol ngono-ngono kui to  
her/his job steal like that  
(I did not know. From the beginning, I did not know if  
she/he stole like that)

- T2: Tapi ndeke ki mbek timong  
But he/she with a guest  
(but he/she was with guest)

- T3: Oo..mbek tamara  
with guest  
(Oh .. he/she was with a guest)

It is clear that there are negative assumptions from society about transgenders community. It is because people assume that the transgender often related with the prostitution. Based on this reason, transgender use the code that different from common society in their conversation. One of their goals to use this code in order to make people outside their group does not understand what they are talking about. They will be more comfortable if they talking about something that important,



or just gossiping someone. So it is like a kind of password that is only understood by that group's members. The transgenders create their own language to communicate especially to hide their conversation from other community.

The use of transgender's slang words can also be extended to other group who also understand the code. The *participants* of the conversation (5) are a man (M1), the member of motor club, and the member of transgender community (T1)

(13) T1: Mawar dadi pecongane? Hahaha kowe ki ndek  
 want become her boyfriend? Laugh you are in  
sandong we,halaah, hahahahaha  
 there laugh  
 (will you be her boyfriend? You are there)

M1: *Hii ya Allah, ya Allah, ya Allah, ya Allah.*  
*Hahahahahaha*

(Hiii .. oh my God, oh my God. Hahaha)

T1 : Dicumi-cumi tho yo...  
 Kiss marker for sugesti3n  
 (kiss her ...)

This conversation expresses close relationship and solidarity between two different member groups. Another function is for self identity. Between the two people, T1 as the member of transgender inserts slang words into her/his language but M1 do not use the slang words. The language used differentiate the member and non member of transgender community.

Solidarity can also be expressed by member of non transgender community by using transgender's slang words.

(14) T2: Pecong-pecongan kie ?  
 Boyfriend / in love question marker  
 (Are you in love relationship?)

- T3 : ***Ember***  
(that's right)
- T1 : ***Mawar, mawar pecong-pecongan?***  
Want                      boyfriend  
(I'd like too)
- M1 : ***Tintaaaaaaa.....***  
(oh, no ....)

Other two persons joining the conversation use transgender's slang words and then T1 also use the slang. It seems that the two group have close relationship and understand the language each other.

## References

- Atmojo, Kemala. 1986. *Kami Bukan Lelaki*. Jakarta: Pustaka Grafitipers.
- Bieschke, Kathleen J., Ruperto M. Perez, and Kurt A. DeBord. 2007. *Handbook of counseling and psychotherapy with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender clients*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association
- Chaer, Abdul dan Leonie Agustina. 1995. *Sosiolinguistik Suatu Pengantar*. Jakarta: PT Rineka Cipta.
- Keraf, Gorys. 1994. *Diksi dan Gaya Bahasa*. Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Kridalaksana, Harimurti. 1982. *Kamus Linguistik*. Jakarta: PT Gramedia.
- Moleong, Lexy J. 2008. *Metodologi penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Nur Indah, Rohmani and Abdurrahman. 2008. *Psikolinguistik Konsep dan Isu Umum*. Malang: UIN Malang Press.
- Soeparno. 2002. *Dasar-Dasar Linguistik Umum*. Yogya: PT Tiara Wacana
- Sudaryanto. 1992. *Metode Linguistik*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Widjono. 2007. *Bahasa Indonesia*. Jakarta: PT Grasindo.