



Slang as a Communication Strategy Employed by Jay and Jake of ENHYPEN in the Daebak Show Podcast

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Abstract

This study examines the use of English slang by Jay and Jake from Enhypen during their guest appearance on Eric Nam's Daebak Show Podcast. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, it investigates the morphological forms, semantic shifts, and pragmatic-social functions of slang terms used in the podcast. The primary data comes from the episode titled "ENHYPEN's JAY & JAKE had 'FATE' to join Eric Nam | DAEBAK SHOW S3 EP12" released on August 8th, with a duration of 52 minutes. The analysis focuses on spontaneous, informal English expressions from the idols, revealing how slang terms such as *gotta*, *kinda*, and *vibe* signal group membership and a sense of belonging among youth and fans. This research demonstrates that slang functions not only as a tool for informal communication but also as a form of emotional expression and a means of establishing social identity and relatability within a global audience. The study emphasizes how slang reflects contemporary youth culture and the impact of media platforms in shaping language use. A total of 12 distinct slang terms were identified, several of which served multiple linguistic functions across three analytical categories, resulting in 14 instances of categorized usage. While the sample is limited to two speakers in a single episode, the focused analysis offers valuable insights into language use among K-Pop idols. This research contributes not only to understanding the role of informal linguistic practices in cross-cultural communication, but also offers practical insights for English language teaching (ELT), such as integrating contextualized slang into classroom instruction, as well as for media discourse analysis and studies of global youth identity in digital environments.

Keywords: *English slang; K-Pop; informal communication; sociolinguistics; podcast*

Introduction

Language is a fundamental element of human interaction, serving as a bridge between individuals and the societies in which they live. It plays a central role in shaping thought, constructing identity, and facilitating cultural transmission across generations. As the most powerful medium of expression, language reflects not only what people say but also how they relate to one another in various social contexts. People can talk, interact, express new ideas, and achieve their goals through language (Lumbantobing & Pardede, 2020). Language is one of the numerous modes of communication that distinguish people from animals. Its three modes of expression are speech, writing, and sign language for the deaf. The social structure and culture of a nation whose citizens speak a language are closely related to it (Meyer, 2009).

In this context, sociolinguistics becomes essential in understanding how language functions within society. Sociolinguistics is concerned with determining the social function of language and how it is used to convey social meaning, it is also interested in explaining why people speak differently in various social contexts (Sutikno, Gunawan, & Firdaus, 2023). The multidisciplinary scientific area of sociolinguistics examines language in connection to how it is used in society (Utami, Syamsudduha, & Maman, 2022). Building on this understanding, language is not only a communication tool but also a marker of social identity and expression of culture. Language is individuals' tool to communicate with each other in order to show their feelings, ideas, and thoughts (Pongsapan, 2022).

Among the many variations of language that reflect this social function, slang emerges as a distinct feature of informal communication. Slang language or slang words are a type of language spoken by certain social groups informally (Cahyani & Jafar, 2020). Slang refers to the usage of non-standard words and phrases that are not considered standard within a certain language but may be considered more acceptable when used socially (Adams, 2012). Slang is a group or community owned private language and not owned by other communities and also often takes the form of abbreviations in social media communications (Napitu & Suhardianto, 2020).

Additionally, slang has been described as a private language of English, recognizable to many but difficult to define precisely (Pongsapan, 2022). Slang consists of words or phrases replacing standard expressions, particularly among youth and communities (Napitu & Suhardianto, 2020). This aligns with the way Jay and Jake of ENHYPEN utilize slang to connect with global audiences and express shared group identity in informal settings such as podcast conversations.

Slang constantly evolves along with social dynamics and technological advancements. (Megarani & Dini, 2021) analyzed 24 slang vocabularies in the drama *Her Private Life* originating from the K-Pop fandom community. The results show that the morphological processes that dominate the formation of these slangs include borrowing foreign vocabulary, combining words either in whole or in part, shortening phrases, and adding prefixes or suffixes. Slang words represent social

solidarity and dynamics and serve as a vehicle to convey social identity and membership (Melissa, Siregar, Shakira, Haz, & Rangkuti, 2024). Slang emerges from social interaction, yet it also actively shapes how individuals communicate within specific social contexts. Due to the growth of social media among fan communities, slang is a language that is utilised on a daily basis and is expanding (Megarani & Dini, 2021). The younger generations such as Gen Z and Gen Alpha also employ slang in order to speak but, above all, express social trends and group membership on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and podcasts.

Slang is typically unofficial and non-standard. Slang words are usually used in ordinary conversation, but they go out of fashion very soon. Slang highlights socioeconomic differences and tends to reflect a person's background. Modern literature, for example, song lyrics, novels, articles, magazines, newspapers, and movies, tends to use slang. This is supported by the notion that slang is not merely a collection of colloquial expressions, but a form of language that holds the cultural and social nuances of its speakers (Wahyu Nuraeni & Pahamzah, 2021).

Slang can operate as a communication strategy when speakers experience challenges in conveying their intended message using standard language (Irshad, 2022). A communication strategy refers to the deliberate efforts employed by language learners to address communication breakdowns that occur during interaction, aiming to achieve successful and effective communication (Widiarini, 2019).

To analyze the slang expressions found in the Daebak Show Podcast, this study applies three analytical indicators derived from a linguistic framework outlined in (Yule, 2010). The first focuses on the morphological structure of slang, encompassing word formation processes. These are common strategies in casual English where words are shortened or combined to create new terms (Yule, 2010). The second indicator examines the semantic development of slang terms how meanings shift or expand in informal usage. Changes in grammatical category can lead to new or even opposite meanings, such as the verb to doctor differing from the noun a doctor (Yule, 2010). The third indicator addresses the pragmatic and social function of slang.

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that discusses how meaning can be understood even when it is not explicitly spoken or written. Its main focus is on hidden or implied meanings, which can only be understood through context and shared knowledge between speaker and listener (Yule, 2010). Slang is often used within specific groups to signal belonging, express shared attitudes, or distinguish insiders from outsiders, particularly in youth subcultures.

In this study, the researcher chooses the podcast medium as a context to observe slang use in a natural and spontaneous environment. Podcast is a portion of episodic, downloadable or streamable, mainly spoken audio content that is made by anyone and published online, it can be listened to at any time and from any location (Rime, Pike, & Collins, 2022). Slang itself is part of informal language,

characterized by its relaxed, spontaneous, and often rule-defying structure (Akhtursunova & Aubakirova, 2024). Slang is being used more and more in mainstream culture, particularly on social media, in streaming music, movies, and other media.

One good example of this is the K-Pop entertainment industry, which had a significant impact on how stars used English to communicate with global fans and introduced Korean language and culture to the global community. The use of English, particularly of slang, by K-Pop stars is an interesting phenomenon that demonstrates a unique style of cross-language acquisition and accommodation. English is a language often used by K-Pop idols in interviews, song lyrics, and daily chats. One of the formats that is commonly used is podcasts, where stars speak more colloquially to fans, permitting a more informal and individualistic use of language. One widely used podcast wherein K-Pop stars speak casually and share experiences is the Daebak Show Podcast, which is presented by Eric Nam. In that episode, Jake and Jay, both members of the boy band Enhypen, speak in English and slang. As they have come from mixed cultural backgrounds, the English use of Jake and Jay has some connotations, including the use of slang.

Building on this context, the choice of Jake and Jay is particularly relevant because both idols have multicultural upbringings. Jake was raised in Australia, while Jay lived in the United States during his formative years. Their proficiency in English and exposure to Western youth culture may influence their frequent and natural use of slang in informal settings like podcasts. Their language use thus becomes a reflection of bilingual competence and cultural hybridity, making them ideal figures for examining English slang in a Korean pop culture context.

Despite the growing interest in K-Pop as a global cultural phenomenon, most existing sociolinguistic studies have primarily focused on the reception and interpretation of language by fans, particularly in online spaces such as social media, fan forums, and subtitling communities. These studies tend to examine how fans adopt, adapt, or translate slang and informal expressions used by idols. However, there remains a lack of research that centers on the actual linguistic production of K-Pop idols themselves, especially in spontaneous, unscripted settings such as podcasts. This is a critical gap because the way idols use informal language, particularly English slang, reveals not only their personal linguistic styles but also broader cultural negotiations between local and global identities. By shifting the analytical focus from fan consumption to idol language production, this study contributes a fresh perspective on how celebrities participate in shaping transnational vernaculars and fostering intercultural communication.

The study of the utilization of slang in colloquial language in the context of podcasts offers a fascinating glimpse into contemporary linguistic practices, particularly in the context of the K-Pop community. As K-Pop continues to gain ascendancy globally, utilization of English slang among K-Pop artists offers a fascinating case study of cross-cultural language convergence. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the interactions between K-Pop celebrities and their

global fanbase, where English is often utilized in interviews, song lyrics, and casual chat. Language contact and cultural blend reflect broader social phenomena and cultural exchange characterizing the global K-Pop phenomenon (Cruz, Seo, & Binay, 2021).

Podcasts such as the Daebak Show with Eric Nam show this phenomenon in the sense that they are a platform for K-Pop idols to engage with their fans in a casual and authentic manner. On episodes when members of the boy group Enhypen are the guests, the use of English and slang is not only a means of communication but also evidence of their international upbringing and cultural exposure (Mysyk, 2024). The impact of K-Pop extends beyond entertainment, it is a broader process of globalization of culture. Through K-Pop idols as cultural ambassadors, their language especially their use of slang helps to overcome cultural differences and build a sense of connection and belonging among fans worldwide (Chen, 2023).

The deep fan-idol connection in K-pop culture, which promotes self-confidence and global engagement, may also lead to emotional-driven behaviors, including excessive spending and language adaptation (Chen, 2023) as seen in the way Jay and Jake of ENHYPEN employ slang to connect with their audience. This is not only a linguistic phenomenon but also an emotional exchange of culture, wherein fans interact with the personalities and stories of their idols and tend to replicate their language and behavior in their own lives (Safithri, Sahrani, & Basaria, 2020).

Building upon a theoretical lens in the field of sociolinguistics, as discussed in (Yule, 2010), this research aims to enhance the understanding of slang in K-Pop podcast discourse by examining the spontaneous English utterances of Enhypen's Jay and Jake in the Daebak Show Podcast. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, the study classifies slang expressions using a morphological, semantic, and pragmatic framework outlined in (Yule, 2010). Contextual interpretation further supports the analysis by uncovering the sociolinguistic functions of each expression. Through this integrated approach, the study seeks to identify distinctive patterns of slang usage that may inform future research in sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and cross-cultural communication, particularly within globalized media contexts.

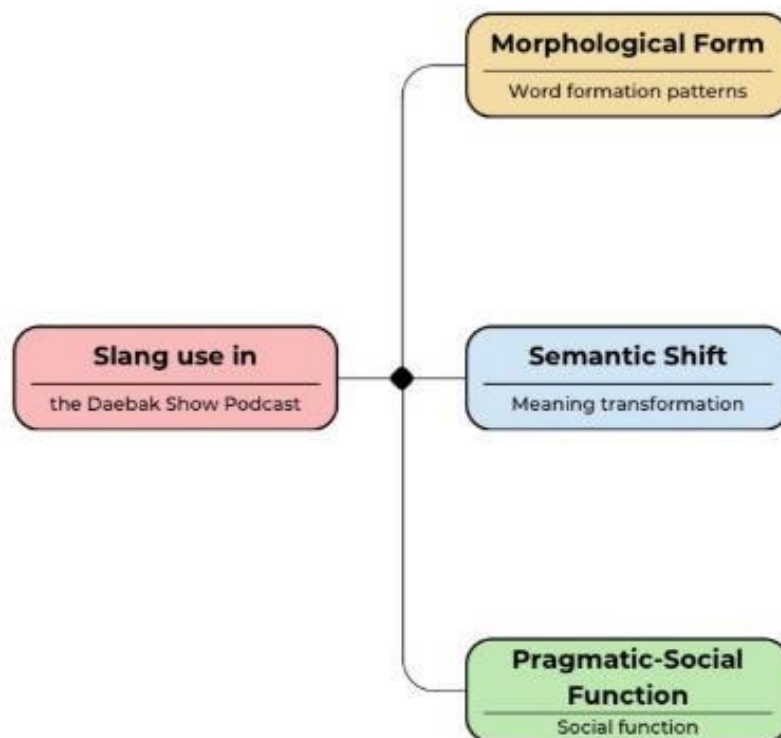


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Based on the background and theoretical framework outlined above, this study is guided by the following research questions. First, what kinds of English slang are used by Jay and Jake in the Daebak Show Podcast, specifically in terms of morphological forms, semantic changes, and pragmatic-social functions? Second, how do these slang expressions reflect each speaker's identity, emotional expression, and their social positioning in the context of globalized media communication?

Method

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach, suited for examining the sociolinguistic features of informal language in media contexts. Assumptions and the use of interpretive and theoretical frameworks are the foundation of qualitative research, which studies the meaning that people or groups assign to social or human issues (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The goal of qualitative research is to increase and enhance our comprehension of how our social environment came to be as it is (Hancock, Ockleford, & Windridge, 2001).

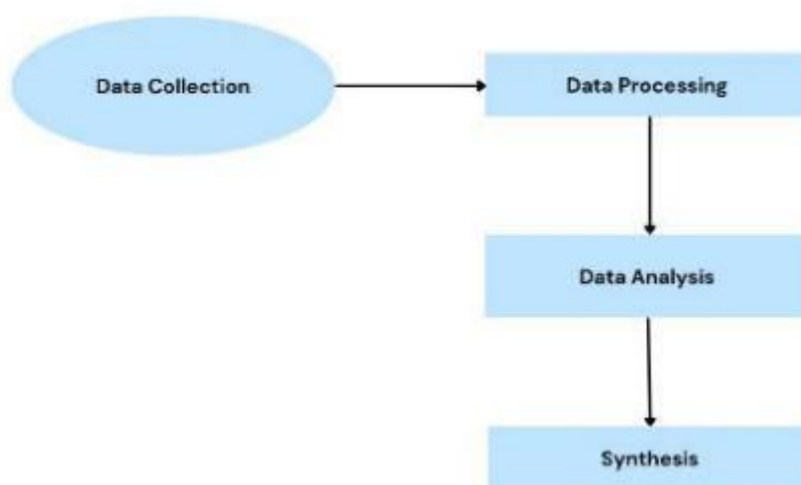


Figure 2. Research Process Workflow

The primary data source was a single episode of the Daebak Show Podcast featuring Eric Nam with Jay and Jake from Enhypen as guests. This particular episode was chosen due to the richness of spontaneous and informal English, including high occurrences of slang. Jay and Jake were selected as the focus of analysis due to their bilingual and multicultural backgrounds; Jake grew up in Australia and Jay in the United States which likely contributes to their high proficiency in English and natural use of slang in informal discourse. The selected episode, approximately 52 minutes in length, was listened to five times by the primary researcher to ensure accurate transcription of all utterances, with special attention to instances of slang usage.

After the initial transcription, inter-rater reliability was established through independent cross-checking by a second coder fluent in English and familiar with sociolinguistic terminology. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion to ensure transcription accuracy and consistency of interpretation. From an ethical standpoint, this research complies with norms for using publicly available data. Since the Daebak Show is freely accessible podcast, no formal consent from the participants was required. However, respectful citation and contextual representation of the speakers' statements were maintained throughout the analysis.

This study adopted a three-part framework for analyzing slang: morphological form, semantic shift, and pragmatic-social function (Yule, 2010). The coding process was conducted manually without software assistance, as the dataset was relatively small. However, a coding matrix was created to organize the slang items under each linguistic indicator. Slang words were identified, grouped, and coded based on their linguistic structure and contextual use. To ensure accurate interpretation of contemporary slang, the meanings were validated through consultation with a

linguistics expert specializing in sociolinguistics and informal language. Additionally, each slang term was cross-verified using the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) to confirm its recognition and classification as a slang expression. Each slang term was interpreted contextually and categorized thematically under its respective type. The categories were as follows:

1. Morphological Form

Including processes like clipping, blending, and abbreviation.

2. Semantic Shift

Analysing how traditional meanings evolved or changed in informal use.

3. Pragmatic-Social Function

Evaluating how slang is used to perform interpersonal functions, including building social connection, expressing emotional states, and signalling group identity or belonging.

Themes were identified inductively by examining recurring patterns across the transcription. These themes were validated through comparison with existing literature and cross-checked by the secondary coder to reduce subjective bias.

The sample size for this study one podcast episode was selected intentionally due to the intensity of data derived from spontaneous speech and the manageable scope of analysis for a qualitative study. Although limited in breadth, the single-episode deep analysis allows for richer linguistic interpretation and contextual accuracy. This focused sampling strategy follows the principle of purposive sampling, which prioritizes data relevance over quantity in qualitative research. This study acknowledges its scope limitation in analyzing only one podcast episode involving two speakers. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to the entire K-Pop industry or to all K-Pop idols' use of English slang. Additionally, the analysis was conducted manually, without the support of qualitative data software, which may pose challenges in coding scalability for larger datasets. Nonetheless, the study offers a valuable snapshot of slang use in real-world informal discourse and provides groundwork for further research in this field.

While the manual coding process proved effective due to the relatively small size of the dataset, it may also introduce certain limitations in terms of analytical consistency and scalability. Without the support of qualitative data analysis software, such as NVivo or Atlas.ti, the categorization and retrieval of data relied heavily on the researchers' judgment and organizational rigor. Although cross-checking by a second coder helped to enhance reliability, manual coding remains more susceptible to subjective interpretation compared to computerized coding systems, which allow for more systematic tagging and frequency tracking. Future studies involving larger datasets or comparative analysis across multiple episodes would benefit from integrating digital tools to improve analytical precision, enable more complex queries, and support better data visualization.

As the primary researcher is a fan of K-Pop and a casual listener of Enhypen's music and podcast appearances, a degree of cultural familiarity and personal interest may have influenced the interpretation of data. This positionality provided useful contextual insight when identifying and analyzing slang expressions, especially in understanding tone, nuance, and pop culture references embedded in the idols' speech. However, to reduce potential bias, several measures were taken, data interpretation was cross-checked by a secondary coder with no fan affiliation, and a linguistics expert was consulted to ensure academic rigor. Acknowledging this reflexive position allows the research to be transparent about the interpretive nature of qualitative inquiry while highlighting the benefits and boundaries of insider perspectives in sociolinguistic analysis.

To enhance the credibility of the findings, the study applied methodological triangulation, which included investigator, expert, and theoretical triangulation. First, investigator triangulation was used by involving a secondary coder who independently reviewed the transcribed data and coding scheme. Any discrepancies were discussed collaboratively to ensure consistency. Second, expert triangulation was conducted by consulting a linguistics specialist with expertise in informal language and sociolinguistics, to validate the categorization and interpretation of slang expressions. Third, theoretical triangulation was applied by comparing the patterns found in the data with concepts from a sociolinguistic framework (Yule, 2010) and with supporting findings from previous related studies. Although the study analyzed a single podcast episode, the integration of these triangulation strategies contributes to analytical rigor and reduces interpretive bias.

Results

The analysis of the speech of Jay and Jake on the Daebak Show Podcast produces some key findings regarding the employment of slang. The data were coded in relation to the three indicators established in the methodology (Morphological Form, Semantic Shift, and Pragmatic-Social Function).

Morphological Form

The first linguistic feature analyzed in this study is the morphological form of slang, which refers to how words are structurally altered or abbreviated for use in informal spoken English. In this category, four instances were identified in the 52-minute podcast episode, making it the most prominent type of slang among the three categories analyzed. These included two examples of clipping and two examples of informal verb usage, with all four expressions produced by Jake.

One of the most frequent morphological processes observed was clipping, where longer standard expressions are shortened for casual speech. A notable example is Jake's use of the term "*gotta*", a clipped form of "*got to*," which he said during a conversation about his fear of needles. He stated, "*I gotta like be prepared*,"

referring to his mental readiness before receiving an injection. This clipped form removes grammatical rigidity and exemplifies a relaxed, spontaneous speech style. It also reflects his emotional state and urgency, which are often conveyed more naturally in informal expressions.

Another clipped form, “kinda” (shortened from “kind of”), was used by Jake in the sentence “A lot of people just looking up to me, sort of, kinda like...” This occurred as he reflected on the pressure of being admired by fans. Here, “kinda” softens the assertion, introducing nuance and reducing the speaker’s, certainty a common function of such slang in youth and online culture. It demonstrates how clipped forms are not just grammatically altered but also pragmatically loaded to convey relatability and vulnerability.

Interestingly, none of the morphological slang terms in this category were used by Jay, suggesting possible differences in speaking style or comfort with informal English. Jake’s dominant use of clipped forms and casual verbs may reflect his greater fluency and ease in expressing personal stories using relaxed and idiomatic language likely influenced by his Australian upbringing and bilingual competence. Jay, in contrast, tended to speak in more standard constructions, which may signal a more cautious or formal speech register.

Table 1. Morphological Form

Form	Word / Description	Original Dialogue / Context
Clipping	“Gotta” shortened from “got to”	Jake : “I gotta like be prepared.” (discussing mental preparation before an injection).
	“Kinda” shortened from “kind of”	Jake : “A lot of people just looking up to me, sort of, kinda like...” (talking about being in the public eye).

Semantic Shift

The second analytical category in this study is semantic shift, which involves changes in the meanings of words when used in informal or non-standard contexts. Rather than inventing entirely new terms, slang often redefines existing vocabulary by assigning them new connotations, usually metaphorical, exaggerated, or emotionally expressive. In this podcast episode, four instances of semantic shift were identified three, produced by Jake and one by Jay.

A clear example of semantic evolution is Jake's use of the word "vibe" in the phrase "I love his like vibe," referring to artist Post Malone. Originally derived from "vibration," the word "vibe" has evolved in colloquial English to indicate emotional atmosphere, energy, or style. In this case, Jake used it to express his appreciation for the mood or artistic identity conveyed through Post Malone's music. The term not only communicates admiration but also signals Jake's alignment with contemporary pop culture norms, where aesthetic intuition is often encapsulated in simplified terms like "vibe."

Another example is the adjective "raw," used by Jake in the sentence "I feel like his voice is kinda raw." Originating from its original sense, "uncooked" or "unprocessed" here, it refers to authenticity, genuineness, or emotional nakedness in voicing. The slang use resonates with youth cultural sensitivities, preferring content unfiltered, emotionally authentic. By characterizing a voice as, say, "raw," Jake is calling upon an aesthetic of imperfection that is, nevertheless, strong, one that resonates with international Gen Z audiences.

Another is the use of "sick" which in formal application describes bodily sickness. Jake employed it to show how nervous he was of receiving injections, "Almost, I get really sick." Although this is still very literal in its application, its placement and context indicate a difference between physical response and affective hyperbole. In other nonstandard contexts, most notably among youth, "sick" is frequently appropriated to describe something as "amazing" or "cool".

The final example is Jay's use of the adjective "creepy" while recounting a supernatural experience during his trainee days "and then some kind of weird and creepy, some laughs was in..." Although the term retains its standard meaning (inducing fear or discomfort), its placement in a dramatic narrative serves to amplify suspense and listener engagement. This use reflects a common strategy in youth-oriented storytelling, applying emotionally charged adjectives to evoke shared reactions and heighten the impact of personal anecdotes.

Each of the four examples illustrates how semantic shift in slang serves not just to economize language, but to enhance expressiveness, relatability, and emotional resonance. Jake's usage tends to draw from popular music discourse and youth slang trends, emphasizing tone and feeling, while Jay's single use of "creepy" aligns with narrative drama and atmospheric storytelling. This subtle contrast reflects different stylistic leanings. Jake often engages with slang for commentary and evaluation, whereas Jay uses it for emotional coloring in anecdotal contexts.

Each of the four examples serves to demonstrate how semantic transfer in slang both conserves words and adds expressiveness, recognizability, and emotiveness. Jake's frequency is more likely to replace popular music and youth slang style discourse, being tone and affect oriented, whereas Jay's one time use of "creepy" is story friendly drama and atmospheric telling. This subdued form indicates differing stylistic tendencies, Jake tending to use slang to comment and

judge, whereas Jay uses it for affective coloring in anecdotal setting.

Table 2. Semantic Shift

Word / Shifted Meaning	Original Dialogue / Context
"Vibe" from "vibrations" to "emotional atmosphere"	Jake: "I love his like vibe." (discussing admiration for Post Malone's musical style).
"Raw" from "uncooked" to "authentic, sincere"	Jake: "I feel like his voice is kinda raw." (commenting on vocal performance).
"Sick" from "illness" to "emotional exaggeration"	Jake: "Almost, I get really sick." (describing fear of needles with possible exaggeration).
"Creepy" From "discomfort" to "narrative dramatic emphasis"	Jay: "and then some kind of weird and creepy, some laughs was in.." (retelling a ghost story from training).

Pragmatic-Social Function

The third analysis categorization in this study is the pragmatic-social function of slang. It is a way of explaining how colloquial speech isn't merely employed to access meaning, but to accomplish social acts, including rapport-building, affect-expression, and indicating membership in a particular group. In the Daebak Show Podcast episode under analysis, eight uses of slang were found to be pragmatically functioning. These were spontaneous speech statements in dialogue and had different interpersonal purposes. Jay produced three pragmatic slang expressions, whereas Jake contributed five, enabling a comparative analysis of their stylistic differences.

One key function observed was building social connection through brief but emotionally resonant reactions. Jay's utterance of "Yeah!" in response to a shared story exemplifies this, though minimal, the affirmation maintains interactional flow and signals engagement. Similarly, his exclamation "*No way, what are you talking about?*" while responding to Jake's story about medical fear illustrates empathic disbelief, a common device in casual storytelling. In another moment, Jay described a failed audition with "*The result was I was out,*" which, instead of saying "*I didn't pass,*" adopts an informal register that softens the emotional impact and makes the story more relatable to listeners. These expressions highlight Jay's use of pragmatic slang to enhance shared experience, narrative rhythm, and listener connection.

Conversely, Jake's use was centered on the expression of self and building group identity. Such slang words as "vibe," "raw," and "solid" are indicative of shared codes among youth subcultures and online forums. For instance, Jake explained Justin Bieber's "Love Yourself" as a "solid song," with "solid" expressing strong approval in an understated, hip manner. Similarly, his application of "raw" and "vibe" communicated not just personal preference but cultural conversation competence that values authenticity and emotional intelligence. These words place Jake within a transnational Gen Z identity, aligning with viewers who employ the same words on sites such as TikTok or YouTube.

Emotional language was another essential work of slang in this episode. Jake emphatically reported his needle sensitivities by uttering, "If I see the needle, I almost throw up." While this sentence is not in formal language, its vivid imagery expresses emotional vulnerability informally. In the same way, he employed "They hit me a lot" to explain teasing or hurtful criticism by staff or audience. "Hit" in this context is figuratively employed to mean psychological or emotional impact. These remarks enable Jake to articulate personal emotion in an emotionally open but socially appropriate voice that balances rawness and informality.

In combination, the slang between Jake and Jay pragmatically closes the gap between their public selves and inner emotions. Jay's words favored relational and interactive uses, like sustaining flow or sympathetic response, while Jake's words registered greater individual risk and identification with youth language. This contrast implies contrasting functions of slang, one more social in response to the situation, the other more reflective and performative. This also shows how slang is not uniformly distributed, but modulated according to the speaker's intent, personality, and situational circumstance.

In addition to the use of slang, it is equally important to highlight the presence of negative cases, moments in which the speakers, particularly Jay, deliberately opted for standard or formal English constructions despite the casual and informal setting of the podcast. For instance, when discussing his nervousness about using English in Korea, Jay stated "I didn't have any chance to use English well in Korea because I didn't have any friends or some person to use English a lot." Similarly, while describing his trainee experience, Jay explained, "I just thought that was a good chance, so I just did it not with any passion or something." These statements, although conversational, maintain full syntactic structure and avoid slang contractions such as "didn't have any" instead of "ain't got" or similar informal variations.

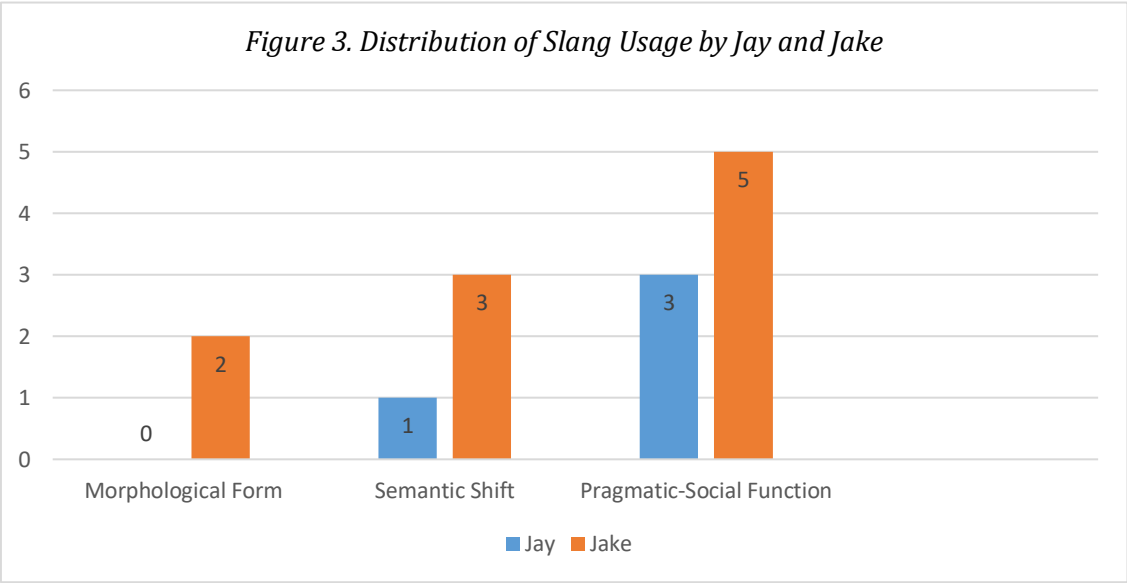
Jake also exhibited moments of formality. When recounting his motivation to become an idol, he used expressions like "I had to give up everything in Australia to just come to Korea" and "I just knew that I really wanted to do this." These are structurally intact sentences, indicating conscious linguistic choices rather than automatic use of informal speech. Such examples suggest that the use of slang is not habitual or constant, but rather strategic, depending on the topic, emotional

context, or intended impression. Their selective formality reflects audience awareness, especially given the podcast's international reach and public visibility, and reinforces the idea that language choice in media settings is performative and context-driven.

Table 3. Pragmatic-Social Function

Function Category	Word / Phrase	Original Dialogue / Context
Social Connection	Yeah	Jay: "Yeah!" (agreeing casually during a memory-sharing moment).
	No way	Jay: "No way, what are you talking about?" (reacting to Jake's story).
	Out	Jay: "The result was I was out." (recounting an audition rejection).
Group Identity	Vibe	Jake: "I love his like vibe." (describing Post Malone's artistic style).
	Raw	Jake: "His voice is kinda raw." (commenting on vocal authenticity).
	Solid	Jake: "Yeah, it's a solid song." (complimenting Justin Bieber's Love Yourself).
Emotional Expression	Throw up	Jake: "If I look at the needle, I almost throw up." (reacting to seeing a needle).

	Hit me a lot	Jake: "I always tell them I'm really scared of needles. And they just... They hit me a lot." (on teasing and emotional reaction).
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This bar chart illustrates the frequency of slang usage by Jay and Jake across the three analytical categories (Morphological Form, Semantic Shift, and Pragmatic-Social Function). Jake demonstrated a higher overall frequency, particularly dominating the Morphological Form category. Jay’s usage was more concentrated in pragmatic expressions aimed at building social connection. The visual comparison highlights stylistic contrasts in the use of informal English by the two speakers.

Discussion

The examination of slang words that occur in Jay and Jake's uses in the Daebak Show Podcast gives us instructive understandings on why colloquial English is not merely a linguistic means but also an identity marker, an emotional icon, and a group identifier. The findings confirm essential principles in sociolinguistics, such as the use of language variation and context meaning to coordinate interpersonal relations and build speaker identity. Slang types, such as morphological reduction and semantic creativity are also commonly used to express subtlety, increase identifiability, and achieve social positioning (Yule, 2010).

Its pattern of distribution, as illustrated in Figure 3, is opposite. Jake was more frequent in all, especially morphological and semantic ones, while Jay's was more apparent in pragmatic ones like responding or acceptance of conversational continuity. The contrast could be a reflection of cultural background and exposure to the language. Jake's Australian background would have been accustomed to non-standard, colloquial English, while Jay, being proficient, was apparently set on usage of standard forms and gave signs of being more conservative or context-sensitive in usage of slang. These tendencies are the measure of how far background impacts usage of informal speech even in everyday situations.

Communication style choices in intercultural settings are often influenced by cultural norms regarding directness, expressiveness, and social hierarchy (Nargis & Imtihan, 2018). Their study found that American speakers tend to use more direct and elaborate styles, while British speakers favor indirect and context-dependent expressions. This aligns with how Jake's speech in the podcast reflects a more expressive and spontaneous communication style, indicative of a low-context culture, whereas Jay demonstrates more measured, sometimes indirect turns, reflecting his Korean background and its high-context communication norms.

The contrast between Jay and Jake's use of slang becomes even more evident when analyzing their conversational styles in autobiographical segments of the podcast, particularly when discussing their migration histories. In a section where they recount their life transitions between Korea and English-speaking countries, their choices of words and sentence constructions highlight deeper linguistic preferences rooted in their upbringings.

Jay, while fluent in English due to his childhood in Seattle, tends to speak in more structured and standard forms. For example, in the utterance, "Yeah, I was born in the States. Exactly, Seattle. And I moved to Korea when I was about 9 or 10.", he uses grammatically complete and relatively formal structures. Even when the tone is conversational, he avoids clipped forms or idiomatic reductions, opting instead for clarity and precision. This pattern suggests a higher tendency toward cautious or intentional code selection, likely influenced by his longer exposure to formal education in Korea and heightened awareness of linguistic correctness in public contexts.

Jake, on the other hand, demonstrates a more spontaneous and informal use of English. His sentence "So, for me, it was like completely opposite of Jay," contains the informal filler "like", which is typical in casual Australian English and Gen Z speech. He also uses a relaxed tone in "I lived there until like four years ago to become a trainee and I moved to Korea," showing a conversational rhythm that favors fluidity over grammatical completeness. The repeated use of "like" serves not only as a discourse marker but also as a stylistic feature that enhances relatability and aligns with informal, youth-centered English discourse.

These differences support the earlier findings regarding their slang use. Jay's fewer slang instances and more cautious language patterns reflect a speaker who is more conservative with informal speech, whereas Jake's frequent use of clipped, semantically shifted, and affectively charged slang mirrors a speaker comfortable with casual, expressive, and trend-driven English. Thus, even when no explicit slang terms are used, their speech choices signal differing linguistic identities and social alignment: Jay leaning toward structured bilingualism, and Jake embracing a more naturalized, youth-coded English style.

In comparison to other research, the present findings support those of previous studies that emphasized how slang operates as a linguistic marker of group membership and affiliation within online communities (Megarani & Dini, 2021; Napitu & Suhardianto, 2020). Speakers of Gen Z utilize slang not just to be informal but also to convey shared values and emotional sincerity (Melissa et al., 2024). This research reinforces and extends those findings by exploring how public figures, K-Pop idols engage in such dynamics within popular media like podcasts. Unlike most work on fan discourse, this research sheds light on the language production aspect of fandom communication.

Engaging speaking techniques such as storytelling can significantly enhance students' ability to express themselves confidently and fluently in real-time conversations (Arjulayana & Nargis, 2023). In the context of Jay and Jake's podcast appearance, the use of spontaneous, informal slang functions similarly, serving not only as expressive tools but also as a way to explore identity and increase listener engagement through authenticity and relatability.

Aside from linguistic form, cultural interests are also at stake. Culturally, Jay and Jake's use of English slang is an intercultural accommodation between global youth culture and Korean identity. Slang is not just colloquial use anymore, but a performative sign of relatability, relevance, and trendiness according to global aesthetic senses. Slang such as "vibe," "raw," and "solid" expresses Jake's alignment with newer pop culture lexicon, while Jay's reactive and affirmative slang represents a focus on audience involvement and dialogue balance. Both their options indicate various but inclusive approaches towards communication with a global audience.

The results also possess significant pragmatic significance. In English Language Teaching (ELT), the results provide the justification for using authentic materials like samples from podcasts in the teaching of listening comprehension, pragmatic sensitivity, and sociolinguistic skill. Slang phrases employed by high-profile individuals like K-Pop stars could be employed in highlighting everyday usage patterns of informal utterances, emotional tone, and everyday conversation strategies.

For instance, instructors might utilize some of the Daebak Show Podcast audio samples in order to assist students in recognizing clipped forms such as "gotta" or meaning-shifted words like "vibe," and then legitimize use and meaning

through roleplays or class discussions in various social contexts. This does not only augment participation but also connects textbook learning to modern, global English use. To media and communications research, findings point out how media such as podcasts facilitate a glocal linguistic hybrid, in which speakers switch between national identity and global youth argot. To fan studies, findings point out how idols' language use can facilitate perceived nearness, authenticity, and imitation, facilitating fan-idol relationship across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

From the fan's perspective, English slang may filter as much as facilitate. English-speaking fans will enjoy the familiarity and closeness expressed by using slang, but others will find some words vague or exclusionary. Fans, though, tend to interpret or even assume the same words in plain sight, so slang is not only representational but reproductive in fan culture. There are a number of shortcomings of this study despite its value. It is derived from only a single episode of one podcast show with two hosts, and this sets narrow scopes of generalization to other K-Pop idols or media. Manual coding also allows room for arbitrariness in determining if there are certain expressions that can be coded as idiomatic use or slang. Additionally, contextual meaning, e.g., the identification of sarcasm, metaphor, or literalness, is qualitative and culturally relative.

Methodologically, the research was enriched by a limited qualitative design and cross-coder check, enabling the enrichment of data interpretation reliability. Advisory meeting with a linguistics expert also guaranteed that new slang expressions were interpreted accurately. Future research could however be enriched by extending the dataset, utilizing several podcast episodes or various idol groups, and combining mixed methods, e.g., corpus analysis or fan interviews for triangulation and improved comprehension.

Technically, the study demonstrated the value of intensive, qualitative analysis using purposive sampling. Single-episode design enabled careful attention to linguistic specificity so rich contextual inference of slang use could occur. Manual coding, while labor-intensive, enabled responsiveness and flexibility to serendipitous themes. Inter-coder validation and expert consultation added strength to the coding and interpretation process. But design was not without limitation either. It is possible that the absence of qualitative data software might have constrained systematic frequency tracking and data visualization. The sample size of one episode and two speakers constrains generalizability of results. Future research could extend this with digital means, larger dataset size, or with mixed-methods study in order to construct depth and range of investigation.

This research brings to the forefront the critical role of slang in organizing discourse in entertainment contexts of globalization. Rather than a non-standard or marginal form of language, slang proves to be a survival mechanism for identity formation, expression of emotion, and solidarity in intercultural discourse. Jake's and Jay's variation in usage patterns represents the function of internal context,

bilingualism, and audience sensitivity in employing informal language even in a single communicative situation.

Explained in an accessible podcast, the study fosters sociolinguistic insight into colloquial English, particularly in its role as a marker of identifiability and authenticity among public speakers. What the findings highlight is the discursive potential of slang in fostering cross-cultural connections, shaping speaker-image, and strengthening social bond. The findings also offer pedagogical implications for language learning, media discourse analysis, and fan studies, stressing the value of incorporating informal language into academic and pedagogical contexts.

Conclusion

This research concludes that English slang used by Jay and Jake of Enhypen in the Daebak Show podcast functions as more than casual speech it serves as a meaningful tool for identity construction, emotional engagement, and social interaction. The study found that slang expressions like *gotta*, *kinda*, and *vibe* illustrate linguistic creativity and flexibility in informal communication settings. These expressions reflect both morphological simplification and semantic innovation while contributing to the speakers' connection with their fanbase.

By applying a sociolinguistic lens, the research contributes to the understanding of how media, especially podcasts, serve as spaces where language use reflects cultural exchange and evolving norms among global youth audiences. However, the study is limited in scope due to its reliance on a single podcast episode and two speakers, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. The observed patterns may not fully represent slang usage across the broader K-Pop industry or among fans with different cultural backgrounds. Ultimately, the study contributes to sociolinguistic scholarship by offering concrete evidence of how slang operates as a tool for identity negotiation, emotional connection, and cross-cultural communication in globally consumed media formats such as podcasts.

For future research, it is recommended to analyze multiple episodes involving different K-Pop idols to identify broader patterns of slang usage and variation. Comparative studies involving diverse media platforms, such as YouTube, TikTok, or fan forums, may also provide a more comprehensive understanding of how slang spreads and evolves within digital fan communities. Additionally, research focusing on the reception of slang by non-native English-speaking fans could offer insights into language learning, identity alignment, and intercultural communication. Exploring generational differences or regional variations in slang adoption would further enrich the sociolinguistic discussion surrounding language use in globalized entertainment media.

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