



Secondary Slang Found on Song Lyrics; Drake's World

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Abstract

Slang plays a crucial role in shaping linguistic style and cultural expression in contemporary music, particularly in hip-hop lyrics. Although numerous studies have examined slang in general, limited attention has been given to secondary slang in song lyrics and its contribution to meaning and stylistic expression, especially in Drake's work. This study aims to address this gap by analyzing the use of secondary slang in Drake's song "8am in Charlotte," with a focus on how secondary slang constructs meaning and enriches the linguistic and cultural depth of the lyrics. Employing a qualitative descriptive method, the study identifies 27 slang expressions in the song, of which 5 are classified as secondary slang. The theoretical framework integrates (Kipfer & Chapman's, 2007) classification of slang with (Claire, 1990) theory of meaning to interpret how secondary slang conveys contextual, social, and expressive meanings. The findings indicate that although secondary slang appears less frequently than other types of slang in the song, its presence is recurrent and functionally significant in conveying meaning and stylistic expression. This finding demonstrates that secondary slang functions as a strategic linguistic resource rather than merely informal language, contributing to the reinforcement of social identity and the enhancement of lyrical expression. In conclusion, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the semantic and sociocultural functions of secondary slang in contemporary music and provides a valuable reference for future research in linguistics, popular culture, and music studies.

1. Introduction

Linguistics is the scientific study of language, in which language itself serves as a medium of communication in the social life of society, both verbally and nonverbally. When examined in depth, language has a broad scope of meaning and plays a vital role in social interaction. The relationship between language and society can be seen through its function not only as a means of communication between individuals but also as a medium used in social interactions. One branch of linguistics, sociolinguistics, focuses on the relationship between language and society.

It examines how people use language in various contexts, identifies the functions of language, and explores how language conveys social meaning (Holmes & Janet, 2013, p. 1). This connection between language and society gives rise to a wide variety of linguistic forms, as speakers adapt their use of language according to the context and their interlocutors. Throughout its development, language undergoes various changes, including the distinction between formal and informal registers.

Slang is a prominent feature of informal language use and is commonly employed, particularly among young people, as a way of creating or modifying vocabulary to appear more contemporary or expressive while maintaining existing meanings. As a non-standard variety of language, slang is generally temporary and influenced by social trends and group preferences, and it is used by speakers from diverse social backgrounds (Hotten, 2014, p. 42). Although slang is not completely separate from Standard English, it is rarely used in formal contexts except for stylistic purposes (Spears, 2007, p. ix).

Over time, however, slang has become increasingly widespread in everyday communication, social media, and artistic forms, especially in hip-hop music. Hip-hop is closely associated with non-standard language, including slang, and is characterized by distinctive rhythms and fast paced delivery that appeal strongly to younger audiences, its lyrics often contain informal and group specific expressions that may be difficult for outsiders to interpret (Tom Dalzell, 2008, p. 506) in his book *Modern American Slang*.

In this context, the music of Aubrey Drake Graham, known professionally as Drake, a Canadian rapper whose work frequently incorporates slang, provides a relevant source of data. One of his songs, "*8am in Charlotte*" (released October 6, 2023), is used in this study to analyze and interpret slang expressions, with the aim of helping listeners better understand the meanings conveyed in contemporary English-language song lyrics and contributing to further linguistic research.

Several previous studies have examined slang usage from a sociolinguistic perspective, focusing on its forms, functions, and social meanings in various contexts. (Anjani et al., 2025), in *The Use of Slang Language as Strategy of Communication in Alasrajah Village: A Sociolinguistic Study*, analyzed slang used by teenagers and found that slang functions to express group identity, solidarity, and

informality in daily interaction. Similarly, (Djamereng & Abdullah, 2024) discussed slang as a form of language variation closely associated with youth and informal communication, emphasizing its role in marking social affiliation rather than formal linguistic norms. In an academic interaction context, (Pongsapan, 2022), in *An Analysis of Slang Language Used in English Students' Interaction*, examined slang usage among university students using Allan et al.'s framework and found that acronyms and clipping were the most frequently used forms.

The study also showed that slang was primarily employed to reduce formality, strengthen social bonds, and reinforce group identity. Likewise, Nehru's study on slang used in English students' interactions confirmed that slang is a common feature of peer communication in informal academic settings, highlighting its social and expressive functions.

Other studies have explored slang in media and artistic texts, which are relevant to understanding slang beyond everyday conversation. (Ryanto, 2022), in his thesis *The Function of Slang Expression by Archie Andrews in the Comic Book Archie's Double Biggest*, identified 23 slang expressions and classified them as recently created and newly interpreted slang. The study applied Holmes' theory of social factors and Zhou and Fan's theory of slang functions, demonstrating that slang carries social and communicative meanings shaped by context and character interaction.

In the context of song lyrics, (Rahardi, 2023) analyzed slang in "*Last One Standing*" using a qualitative descriptive approach and focused on word-formation processes, finding clipping as the most dominant type. Additionally, (Az-Zahra et al., 2025) examined slang in TikTok comments and showed that slang functions to express emotions, humor, and group identity, reflecting both global and local influences.

Despite extensive research on slang in sociolinguistic studies, most previous works have primarily examined slang usage in everyday interaction, academic settings, digital communication, or various media texts without specifically distinguishing secondary slang. Studies that analyze slang in song lyrics tend to focus on word-formation processes, frequency, or general classification, with limited attention to systematic semantic interpretation.

Moreover, the combined application of (Kipfer & Chapman's, 2007) classification of secondary slang and (Claire's, 1990) theory of meaning remains underexplored, particularly in contemporary hip-hop lyrics. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by focusing on the analysis of secondary slang in "*8am in Charlotte*" by Drake, employing an integrated approach that classifies slang expressions as secondary slang and interprets their meanings within their lyrical context.

Based on the identified research gap, this study addresses two research questions: (1) what secondary slang expressions are used in the song "*8am in Charlotte*" by Drake, and (2) how are the meanings of these secondary slang

expressions interpreted within their lyrical context? Accordingly, this study aims to classify slang expressions found in the song as secondary slang using Kipfer and Chapman's theory and to analyze their meanings by applying Claire's theory of meaning.

The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on secondary slang in a contemporary hip-hop song and its integrated use of slang classification and semantic analysis. By moving beyond the identification of slang forms or word-formation processes, this study provides a deeper interpretation of how secondary slang functions semantically and contextually in modern song lyrics, contributing original insight to sociolinguistic and semantic studies of popular music.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative research design using a descriptive approach to analyze secondary slang expressions found in song lyrics. The subject of this research was the song "*8am in Charlotte*" performed by Drake, which was selected due to its frequent use of informal and non-standard language reflecting contemporary hip-hop culture.

The data source consisted of the complete song lyrics of "*8am in Charlotte*", retrieved from Genius.com, a widely recognized and reliable online lyrics database. Genius.com provides user-contributed lyrics that are reviewed and verified by artists or authorized contributors, ensuring textual accuracy. The lyrics were accessed in full, and the retrieval date was recorded to document the version used for analysis. The song was chosen because it contains a substantial number of slang expressions relevant to the study of secondary slang.

Data collection was conducted through several stages. First, the researcher listened to the song via Drake's official YouTube channel to gain contextual understanding. Second, the lyrics were cross checked and verified using Genius.com to ensure accuracy. Third, slang expressions were identified by distinguishing non-standard expressions from standard English using reference sources such as the *Oxford Dictionary*, the *Dictionary of American Slang*, and the *Modern American Slang Dictionary*.

The data analysis involved classifying the identified slang expressions using (Kipfer & Chapman's, 2007) theory, which categorizes slang into primary and secondary slang. This study focused exclusively on secondary slang expressions. Expressions were excluded from the analysis if they merely reflected phonological reduction, such as contracted or shortened pronunciations, or if they functioned as general colloquial usage that did not demonstrate distinctive semantic or social characteristics associated with secondary slang. Subsequently, the meanings of the identified secondary slang expressions were analyzed using (Claire, 1990) theory of meaning, allowing for a systematic interpretation of their contextual, social, and expressive meanings within the song lyrics.

Through this analytical procedure, the study seeks to explain how secondary slang operates not simply as stylistic ornamentation but as a meaningful linguistic resource for identity construction and emotional expression in contemporary hip-hop music.

3. Result

This section presents the results of the analysis of slang expressions found in the lyrics of *8am in Charlotte*. The findings are organized into several stages, beginning with the identification of all candidate slang expressions, followed by their classification based on Kipfer and Chapman's framework, and concluding with a detailed discussion of the accepted slang items.

Identification of Candidate Slang Expressions

This stage presents the initial findings of the analysis of the lyrics of "*8am in Charlotte*". The analysis began by identifying all informal and non-standard expressions found in the song. At this stage, no theoretical filtering was applied. All expressions that deviated from formal standard English were treated as candidate slang expressions in order to provide a comprehensive overview of the linguistic features present in the lyrics.

Based on this identification process, a total of 27 slang related expressions were identified in the selected song lyrics, namely: "*niggas, hoes, fuck, fucking, shit, damn, boo-hoo, beef, mob ties, brackin', dyin' at, goin', speakin', fuckin', sittin', tryna, gon', 'bout, crib, hunnid*". These expressions reflect a wide range of informal language features that are characteristic of hip-hop lyrics and urban spoken discourse. They encompass taboo or vulgar terms, colloquial vocabulary, culturally specific expressions, and lexical items associated with in-group identity and street culture.

In addition, several forms exhibit phonological reduction, such as the omission of final consonants or syllables (e.g., *goin', tryna, fuckin'*), which mirrors patterns commonly found in casual spoken English. However, expressions that merely represent phonological reduction without introducing distinct semantic or pragmatic meanings were excluded from further analysis. This exclusion was applied to ensure that the study focused on slang expressions with clear lexical significance rather than general colloquial pronunciation features. Furthermore, although some expressions occur repeatedly throughout the lyrics, each item was counted only once, as this qualitative study emphasizes lexical types rather than the frequency of occurrence.

It is important to emphasize that the identification of these expressions does not imply that all of them qualify as slang under a specific theoretical framework. Rather, this step serves as an initial data presentation prior to further classification. The subsequent section applies (Kipfer & Chapman's, 2007) framework to determine which of these candidate expressions function as slang

based on their social and stylistic roles.

Classification of Slang Based on Kipfer and Chapman

According to (Kipfer & Chapman, 2007), slang is not defined solely by informality or deviation from standard language, but by its social function and communicative purpose. They distinguish slang into primary slang and secondary slang, both of which differ in terms of usage, motivation, and social meaning.

Primary slang refers to slang expressions that develop naturally within a particular social group and are used as an integral part of everyday communication among its members. This type of slang functions primarily as a marker of group identity and solidarity, signaling shared experiences, values, and social belonging. Primary slang is typically employed unconsciously by group members and may sound unnatural or forced when used by outsiders. For example, slang terms commonly used within hip-hop or street communities such as expressions referring to rivals, loyalty, or shared struggle often function as primary slang because they reflect the internal language practices of those communities.

In contrast, secondary slang refers to slang expressions that are used deliberately as stylistic or expressive choices, rather than as indicators of group membership. Speakers may use secondary slang to intensify meaning, express emotion, soften or sharpen statements, or create a particular tone, regardless of whether they belong to the social group from which the slang originated. Secondary slang is therefore more flexible and context dependent. For instance, expressions such as *"my bad"* or *"chill"* can be used by speakers from various social backgrounds to convey apology or calmness, without signaling affiliation with a specific group.

In this study, the analysis focuses exclusively on secondary slang. This decision is based on the observation that most informal expressions found in the lyrics function as expressive and stylistic devices rather than as markers of social identity. By narrowing the scope to secondary slang, the study aims to maintain theoretical consistency and to provide a clearer analysis of how slang operates as a rhetorical tool within song lyrics.

Based on (Kipfer & Chapman, 2007) classification, six expressions identified in the lyrics were categorized as secondary slang: *"fuck, fucking, shit, boo-hoo, brackin"*. These expressions are classified as secondary slang because they are used intentionally to convey emotional intensity, attitude, or emphasis. Their function in the lyrics is not to signal membership in a particular social group, but to strengthen the expressive force of the speaker's message. Other candidate expressions were excluded from this category because they merely reflect phonological reduction, general colloquial usage, or informal vocabulary that lacks clear stylistic motivation under (Kipfer & Chapman's, 2007) framework.

Table 1. Secondary Slang

No	Slang Type	Slang Words
1	Secondary Slang	Fuck
2		Shit
3		Fucking
4		Boo-hoo
5		Brackin'
Total		5

4. Discussion

This discussion section examines the secondary slang expressions identified in the lyrics of *8am in Charlotte* by focusing on their contextual meanings and functional roles within the song. While the previous section classified the slang expressions based on their social function using Kipfer and Chapman’s framework, this section moves beyond classification to provide a deeper interpretation of how these expressions convey meaning in specific lyrical contexts.

The interpretation of meaning is guided by the theory of slang meaning proposed by (Claire, 1990), which emphasizes that slang meanings are fluid, context dependent, and frequently shaped by emotional stance and speaker intention rather than by literal dictionary definitions. From this perspective, slang is understood as a dynamic linguistic resource whose meaning emerges through use, interaction, and pragmatic intent.

To strengthen the analysis and ensure lexical accuracy, dictionary-based meanings from both printed and reputable online slang lexicographical sources are employed as an initial point of reference. These dictionary definitions serve as a baseline for identifying the conventional meanings of each expression, which are then contrasted with their contextual meanings as realized in the song lyrics. This comparative approach allows for a clearer demonstration of semantic shift and pragmatic reinterpretation in slang usage.

By integrating dictionary definitions, contextual analysis, and theoretical interpretation, this discussion demonstrates how certain expressions despite being traditionally categorized as vulgar, taboo, or informal can function as secondary slang. In line with (Kipfer & Chapman’s, 2007) classification, these expressions are shown to operate primarily as stylistic and expressive devices, serving to intensify emotion, convey stance, or reinforce rhetorical effect, rather than to signal membership in a particular social group.

Data 1. "Fuck" (Verse 1, line 10)

"How the Fuck You Need More Chanel?"

According to the (Spears, 2007) in His book *Dictionary of American Slang*, the word *fuck* is primarily defined as a taboo and objectionable term referring to the act of copulation, either as a verb or a noun. The dictionary further notes that English does not possess a single standard transitive verb for this act, and that expressions conveying this meaning are typically classified as slang or colloquial language. In addition to its literal sexual meanings, *fuck* is also recorded as an exclamatory expression used to convey anger or exasperation, indicating a broader functional range beyond physical reference.

In the lyric "How the *fuck* you need more Chanel?" (Verse 1, line 10), the word *fuck* is clearly not used to denote any form of sexual activity. Instead, it functions as a social and emotional reaction, expressing disbelief and emphasis toward the situation being described. This contextual usage demonstrates a semantic shift from the word's original vulgar meaning to an expressive intensifier embedded within spoken interaction.

This shift supports (Claire's, 1990) theory of slang meaning, which argues that slang meanings are highly dependent on context and speaker intention rather than fixed dictionary definitions. In this case, the meaning of *fuck* emerges from its pragmatic role in the utterance, serving to intensify emotional stance rather than convey literal content.

Although *fuck* is fundamentally categorized as a vulgar or taboo word, its function in the lyric is stylistic and expressive rather than referential. It does not operate as a marker of group identity, but as a deliberate rhetorical device to strengthen the speaker's attitude. Therefore, in accordance with (Kipfer & Chapman's, 2007) framework, *fuck* can be categorized as secondary slang, as its primary role lies in emotional emphasis and contextual expression rather than social identification.

Data 2. "Shit" (Verse 1, line 31)

"This *Shit* just Too Enticing Right Now, You Know?"

According to (Spears, 2007) in the *Dictionary of American Slang*, the word *shit* is primarily defined as an objectionable and vulgar term with multiple meanings. Its core meanings include feces or bodily waste, but the dictionary also records extended senses such as trash or unwanted material, lies or nonsense, personal belongings, drugs, and a general exclamation expressing disgust. These definitions indicate that *shit* is fundamentally categorized as a vulgar or taboo word, often associated with offensive or informal usage.

In the lyric "This *shit* just too enticing right now, you know?" (Verse 1, line 31), the word *shit* is not used to refer to feces, waste, or any of its literal meanings listed in the dictionary. Instead, it functions as a general reference to the speaker's

current situation or experience, conveying personal involvement and emotional emphasis. In this context, *shit* operates as a broad evaluative term, allowing the speaker to express intensity without specifying concrete details.

This contextual shift reflects what (Claire's, 1990) describes as the fluid and context dependent nature of slang meaning. Claire argues that slang expressions often undergo semantic broadening, where a word with a concrete or offensive literal meaning is repurposed to convey attitude, evaluation, or emotional stance. In this lyric, the meaning of *shit* emerges from the speaker's emotional engagement rather than from its dictionary definition.

Although *shit* is clearly classified as a vulgar word from a lexical perspective, its function in the lyric is not referential or insulting. Rather, it is used deliberately as an expressive device to intensify the statement and create an informal, conversational tone. Therefore, in line with (Kipfer & Chapman's, 2007) framework, *shit* can be categorized as secondary slang, as it serves a stylistic and expressive purpose rather than acting as a marker of group identity.

Data 3. "Fucking" (Verse 1, line 6)

" I Leave for Tour and My Niggas *Fucking* Go to Jail"

According to (Tom Dalzell, 2008) in *Modern American Slang*, the word *fucking* is primarily defined as a noun referring to sexual intercourse, a meaning that has been recorded in English usage since the sixteenth century. The dictionary illustrates that the term originates from explicit sexual activity and is therefore categorized as a vulgar or taboo expression, commonly regarded as objectionable in formal contexts. This definition establishes *fucking* as a word with a strong literal and offensive meaning at the lexical level.

However, in the lyrics of *8am in Charlotte*, the word *fucking* appears in a markedly different function, as seen in the line "*I leave for tour and my niggas fucking go to jail*" (Verse 1, line 5). In this context, *fucking* does not denote sexual intercourse, nor does it function as a literal noun. Instead, it operates as an emphatic intensifier, reinforcing the speaker's frustration and emotional reaction to the situation described. The word adds force and urgency to the statement rather than conveying its original semantic content.

This shift in meaning supports (Claire's, 1990) theory of slang meaning, which states that slang expressions often detach from their literal definitions and acquire meaning through context, emotion, and speaker intention. Claire argues that vulgar-based slang frequently undergoes semantic weakening or transformation, allowing such expressions to function as emotional amplifiers in informal discourse. In this lyric, the meaning of *fucking* is derived from its expressive role rather than its dictionary definition.

Although *fucking* originates as a vulgar term associated with sexual activity, its usage in the lyric is stylistic and expressive. It does not serve to identify the speaker's membership in a particular social group, but instead intensifies emotional stance and narrative emphasis. Therefore, in accordance with (Kipfer & Chapman's, 2007) framework, *fucking* can be categorized as secondary slang, as it functions primarily as a rhetorical and emotional intensifier rather than a marker of group identity.

Data 4. "Boo-Hoo" (Verse 3, line 22)

"Niggas Steady Cryin' to My Daddy, Well, *Boo-Hoo*"

According to (Merriam-Webster, n.d.) in *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, the expression boo-hoo is defined as an imitation of the sound of loud crying and is commonly used as an interjection to represent or mock weeping. While its literal meaning refers to crying or sobbing, the dictionary also indicates that the expression may function pragmatically as a reaction rather than a description of an actual emotional state.

In the lyric "Niggas steady cryin' to my daddy, well, boo-hoo" (Verse 3, line 22), the expression boo-hoo is not used to describe genuine sadness or emotional distress. Instead, it functions as a sarcastic and dismissive response, minimizing and ridiculing the complaints made by others. The speaker employs boo-hoo to frame those complaints as exaggerated and unworthy of serious attention.

This contextual use supports (Claire's, 1990) theory of slang meaning, which emphasizes that the meaning of slang expressions is shaped by context, speaker intention, and emotional stance rather than by literal definition alone. Claire argues that expressions originally associated with emotional reactions can be recontextualized in slang to convey irony, mockery, or evaluative judgment. In this lyric, boo-hoo shifts from an imitation of crying to a rhetorical device that signals contempt and emotional distance.

Although boo-hoo is neither vulgar nor taboo, its function in the lyric is deliberately expressive. It is selected to convey sarcasm and social evaluation rather than to denote an emotional action. Therefore, in accordance with (Kipfer & Chapman's, 2007) framework, boo-hoo can be categorized as secondary slang, as it serves a stylistic and expressive purpose without functioning as a marker of group identity.

Data 5. "Brackin'" (Verse 3, line 22)

"That's What's Really *Brackin'* Like This Verse in Parentheses"

According to (Green, n.d.) In *Green's Dictionary of Slang*, the expression *brackin'* is recorded as a colloquial form derived from the phrase "*what's brackin'*," which is commonly used in contemporary American English to mean "*what is happening*" or "*what is going on.*" The term is frequently associated with informal

spoken discourse and urban speech communities, particularly within hip-hop culture. Its meaning does not carry a literal reference, but functions as a conversational and situational marker.

In the lyric "*That's what's really brackin' like this verse in parentheses*" (Verse 2, line 14), the word *brackin'* is used to emphasize the current state or significance of the speaker's situation. Rather than functioning as a greeting, the expression operates as a stance taking device, highlighting relevance and immediacy. The speaker employs *brackin'* to assert what truly matters or what is actively happening at the moment.

This contextual usage supports (Claire, 1990) theory of slang meaning, which emphasizes that slang expressions derive meaning from context, speaker intention, and social interaction rather than from fixed dictionary definitions. In this case, the meaning of *brackin'* emerges from its pragmatic role in the lyric, signaling awareness, confidence, and engagement with the present situation.

Although *brackin'* originates from urban and youth speech, its use in this lyric does not primarily function to mark group membership. Instead, it is used deliberately as a stylistic and expressive element to enhance the informal tone of the verse. Therefore, according to (Kipfer & Chapman's, 2007) framework, *brackin'* is appropriately categorized as secondary slang, as it functions as a rhetorical device rather than a marker of social identity.

5. Conclusion

Based on the overall identification process, a total of 27 slang related lexical items were initially identified in the selected hip-hop song lyrics. This number is presented to provide clarity regarding the scope of the data and to avoid confusion in the subsequent classification process. However, this study focuses exclusively on secondary slang expressions, as defined by Click or tap here to enter text.. From the total data identified, only five expressions were classified as secondary slang, namely *fuck*, *fucking*, *shit*, *boo-hoo*, and *brackin'*.

The findings indicate that secondary slang expressions function as significant sociolinguistic resources in hip-hop lyrics. These expressions are primarily used to convey strong emotional meanings, express attitudes such as anger, frustration, or mockery, and reinforce group identity within the hip-hop community. Through the application of Claire's theory of meaning, the analysis demonstrates that secondary slang carries contextual, social, and expressive meanings that extend beyond their literal interpretations.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. The data were derived from a single song, which limits the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the qualitative approach employed did not examine the frequency of occurrence of secondary slang expressions. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted cautiously. Future research is encouraged to expand the data corpus by analyzing secondary slang across multiple songs or artists and to incorporate quantitative or

mixed method approaches to further explore the use and variation of secondary slang in broader sociocultural contexts.

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