



Slang and Informal Language in the Disney Film "Encanto": A Sociolinguistic Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the presence and types of slang in the animated film Encanto, with the aim of identifying the categories of slang expressions and determining the most frequently used type. While previous research has often focused on slang in youth subcultures, music, or everyday interaction, less attention has been given to how slang is embedded in family-oriented animated films that reach global audiences. Using a descriptive qualitative method, the data were gathered through repeated viewings of the film and analyzed with Allan and Burridge's (2006) framework, which classifies slang into five types: fresh and creative, flippant, imaginative rhyming, acronymic, and clipping. The analysis revealed 125 slang expressions, distributed as follows: 8% fresh and creative slang, 6% clipping slang, 27% imaginative rhyming slang, and 59% flippant slang, with flippant slang emerging as the most dominant. These findings highlight how Encanto relies on informal, humorous, and playful language to engage younger audiences. Beyond entertainment, this study contributes to sociolinguistic discussions of language variation in media and provides insights for educators into how popular films mirror and influence children's exposure to informal language.

Introduction

Language serves as both a means of communication and a dynamic system that embodies social identity, cultural values, and group affiliation. Sociolinguistics, a subfield of linguistics, investigates the variation of language among social groups and circumstances, highlighting the impact of age, gender, class, and culture on communication patterns (Holmes, 2023). A significant facet of sociolinguistics is the examination of slang, an informal and frequently ephemeral linguistic variety that conveys originality, humor, and community cohesion. Slang offers insights into how speakers modify language to create in-group identity, delineate social boundaries, and express opinions in daily interactions (Damirjian, 2024).

In recent years, scholars have increasingly explored slang in popular culture, particularly in music, television, and digital media, because these domains both reflect and shape everyday language practices. However, research focusing on slang in family-friendly animated films remains limited. Animated films such as Encanto reach diverse global audiences, including children and young adults, and therefore serve as an important site for understanding how informal language is packaged for entertainment and educational purposes. Unlike studies that emphasize slang in youth subcultures or digital communication, this research highlights how slang functions in an international film context, where informal expressions are strategically used to entertain and engage audiences while maintaining accessibility.

By examining the types and frequency of slang in Encanto, this study not only contributes to the documentation of language variation in media but also provides sociolinguistic and pedagogical insights. Understanding how slang is incorporated into popular films can help educators and learners

recognize informal expressions in authentic contexts, bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world language use.

Despite the growing body of research on slang, much of the existing scholarship has centered on its use in music lyrics, youth conversations, and social media platforms, where slang often functions as a marker of identity and resistance. Comparatively little attention has been paid to how slang is embedded in films targeted at family audiences, particularly in animated productions that combine entertainment with moral and cultural messages. This gap is significant because films like *Encanto* not only entertain but also serve as linguistic input for younger viewers, shaping their exposure to informal expressions in English.

The purpose of analyzing slang is to help students understand how people really speak in daily life (Agustiani et al., 2023; Rafiqoh, 2023). By examining slang, students can comprehend how language evolves over time, how culture and technology influence the way people speak, and how slang can reflect the identity, unity, or creativity of a group. Analyzing slang can prevent misunderstandings in communication, especially with individuals from different places, ages, or backgrounds. Additionally, learning slang is beneficial for expanding vocabulary, grasping the social meaning of a conversation, and understanding the linguistic-based classification of slang.

Allan and Burridge (2006) classify slang into five categories. Fresh and creative slang includes new and imaginative words or phrases that make language more colorful. Young people often invent these expressions to express themselves in unique ways. Flippant slang consists of word with a playful or humorous meaning. These expressions are often used to make conversations more relaxed or funny. Imaginative rhyming slang uses rhymes to create unique expressions. This type of slang often replaces a common word with a phrase that rhymes with it. Acronymic slang comprises shortened words or phrases formed from initials. These acronyms are commonly used in texting and online communication. Clipping slang involves shortening longer words into more concise forms for easier speech. This type of slang simplifies words by removing parts of them.

These slang types are not only popular in everyday conversations but also play a significant role in movies, particularly in animated films. The incorporation of various slang words makes the dialogue more dynamic and relatable, reflecting the vibrant, modern culture portrayed in the film. By analyzing the type of slang used in animation movie viewers can understand how informal language enhances character development and emotions, showing the power of slang in storytelling (Maha et al., 2023).

In other hand also slang makes characters sound more realistic and relatable in movies, especially animated films that reflect modern culture, in this study the writer want to conduct the research related to the used of slang in *Encanto film*. By analyzing the slang used in *Encanto film*, language users can gain insights into how informal language is utilized in storytelling and how it helps shape character identity and emotions.

Furthermore, analyzing slang in the movie *Encanto film* is valuable for both linguistic and educational reasons. It helps learners recognize and interpret informal speech, enhancing their understanding of the linguistic aspect (Sitorus et al., 2024). Additionally, it demonstrates how slang shapes communication styles in animated films. Since movies are widely used as tools for language learning, understanding the slang in the movie can benefit students by exposing them to real-life conversational English (Prajnyawedanta et al., 2024; Shera, 2022). This study will examine various slang terms used in the film and their meanings, in other to understand the characters and the interactions in the movie.

Several studies have analyzed slang in various films. A study by Jakob (2018) examined the use of American slang in *The Blind Side*, categorizing expressions into neutral, informal, and creative types, highlighting how these choices reflect characters' backgrounds and personalities. Similarly, Robert and Sarah (2023) analyzed slang in the Mid90s movie, identifying slang types like fresh and creative, flippant, and clipping, and exploring their functions in expressing teenage identity and group solidarity. Furthermore, Richard (2022) investigated the translation of slang expressions in movies, emphasizing the challenges translators face in conveying the nuances of slang while maintaining cultural relevance and audience comprehension. These studies highlight the significance of slang in cinematic dialogue, not only as a linguistic device but also as a means of conveying more nuanced social and cultural meanings.

This study aims to examine the types of slang used in the animated family film *Encanto*, which highlights cultural and linguistic diversity. Unlike previous research that has primarily focused on action or romance films, this study investigates how slang is employed in a children's movie to create dialogue that feels natural and relatable to young audiences. By analyzing the types of slang in *Encanto*, the research provides new insights into how informal language is adapted for family-friendly storytelling while maintaining authenticity in communication. Accordingly, the study addresses two main questions: (1) What types of slang are used in the film *Encanto*? and (2) Which type of slang appears most frequently?

Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method to analyse type of slang in the movie of *Encanto film*. Data is collected through careful observation of character dialogues, ensuring that all instances of slang are accurately identified and categorized. According to Bogdan and Biklen in (Sugiyono, 2020), the descriptive qualitative research method collected after analysis is then described so that it is easy for other people to understand. The analysis follows a qualitative descriptive approach, where each slang expression is documented, described, and examined based on its type and function. To achieve this, the study utilizes the slang theory by Allan and Burrige (2006), which classifies slang into various categories and explains its social and linguistic roles. The researchers used a purposive sampling method because the researchers chose the *Encanto film*, meet the purpose of the study. According (Creswell, 2017) purpose sampling technique is a technique for sampling data sources with certain considerations.

Data was obtained from the *Encanto film* as they communicated with people of the same age and older. The data collection technique was carried out by watching it repeatedly, then researchers transcript all the slang words contained in the *Encanto film* movie, then the researchers group the slang words according to the type.

The data analysis technique used is thematic analysis. According to Terry, Hayfield, Clarke, & Braun (2017), thematic analysis involves a systematic process to identify the main themes that emerge from the data, organize these themes into a meaningful conceptual framework, and prepare a report that clearly describes the findings. After data analysis, the researchers will describe all the data in the results and discussion. Each slang expression is noted, classified, and analyzed based on the theory of slang types proposed by Allan and Burrige (2006), which includes fresh and creative, flippant, imaginative rhyming, acronymic slang, and clipping slang.

Finding and Discussion

The following is a data analysis type of slang in the film *Encanto* film, researchers obtained 5 types of slang words, namely Fresh and creative slang, Flippant slang, Imaginative rhyming slang, Acronymic slang and Clipping slang (Allan and Burrige, 2006). After that, the researcher grouped the type of slang words used on the film *Encanto* film that the researcher choose as researcher sample.

1. Fresh and creative slang

Fresh and creative slang refers to new or innovative slang terms that are often characterized by cleverness, imagination, and informality. These terms can be existing words used in a novel way to express something unique. This type of slang often reflects current trends and can be specific to certain communications or social groups. In the film *Encanto* film there are 34 types of fresh and creative slang, below are three examples of fresh and creative slang in film *Encanto* film:

- a. “*Abre los ojos*”, can be considered fresh and creative in the context of *Encanto* film because its delivered in a meaningful moment that invites both the character and the audience to look beyond the surface, and embrace the deeper emotional message.
- b. “*Mi vida*”, can be considered fresh and creative slang because, although its common Spanish phrase, its use in the film feels filled with love, softness, and deep meaning. It’s not just a nickname its powerful emotional expression, which makes it feel special and heartfelt.
- c. “*Adios!*”, can be considered fresh and creative slang because, it’s not just used for saying goodbye-it’s used to express strong emotions like disappointment, frustration, or defiance. This simple but meaningful word choice makes it feel fresh and emotional in modern text.

2. Flippant slang

Flippant slang is describes someone or something that is not taking a serious situation seriously enough, often in an attempt to be humorous or clever. It implies a lack of proper respect or seriousness, and can be considered disrespectful or shallow. In the film *Encanto* film there are 74 types of flippant slang, below are three examples of fresh and creative slang in film *Encanto* film:

- a. “*Hey, coming through!*”
The phrase “hey, coming through!” can be considered flippant slang if it’s said in casual, arrogant, or unserious tone, especially when interrupting something important. In *Encanto* film, characters like Camilo or the kids might say it playfully.
- b. “*We don’t talk about Bruno*”
“We don’t talk about Bruno” functions as flippant slang because the phrase turns a serious family issue into the light, gossipy rule used casually almost like a family meme or inside joke- rather than acknowledging or truth behind it.
- c. Camilo (mocking his mom during a family argument) : “*I don’t know why your mad*”. You’re the one who doesn’t care (while mimicking her voice. Is an example of flippant slang because its delivered in a way that dismisses serious emotions and is used to muck someone during a real conflict not to genuinely communicate.

3. Imaginative rhyming slang

Imaginative rhyming slang is a type of slang that replaces common words with rhyming phrases, often cutting off the rhyme, and is used in creative, funny, or ironic ways. It adds flavour, identity, and often a sense of playfulness to everyday language. In the film *Encanto* film there are 57 types of Imaginative rhyming slang, below are three examples of Imaginative rhyming slang in film *Encanto* film:

a. “*If you’re impressed*”

The phrase “If you’re impressed” is not technically rhyming slang, but it can be considered part of imaginative rhyming because it’s used in creative and musical context with rhyming structure, typical films like *Encanto* film.

b. “*The beauty and the brawn do no wrong*”

The beauty and the brawn do no wrong, is an example of imaginative rhyming a creative, poetic, and expressive use of rhyme. While it’s not technically slang in the traditional sense, it fits within the musical, lyrical style of language found in *Encanto* film.

c. “*Can’t make you feel better with just one area*”

The sentence “Can’t make you feel better with just one area” is not traditional rhyming slang, but cannot be considered part of imaginative rhyming if used in a musical poetic, or theatrical setting. It contains emotional weight and rhythm that supports the expressive narrative style of *Encanto* film.

4. Acronymic slang

Acronymic slang is a type of informal language where words or phrase are shortened into acronyms that is, using the initial letters of each word and then used as slang in everyday speech or writing. There is never acronymic slang used in *Encanto* film because, The film’s word is based on tradition, not digital or internet culture. It’s language is more poetic and heartfelt, rather than based on abbreviated slang.

5. Clipping slang

Clipping slang is a form of slang that comes from shortening (clipping) longer words. In this case, part of the original word is cut off to create a shorter, more casual, and informal version. In the film *Encanto* film there are 10 types of clipping slang, below are three examples of clipping slang in film *Encanto* film:

a. “*I really gotta go*”

In “really gotta go” the word “gotta” is clipping slang from of “got, to” used to express obligation informally.

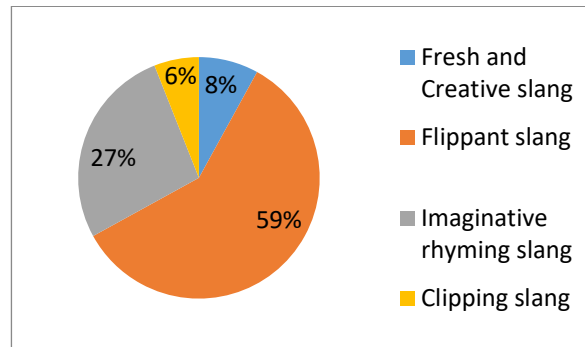
b. “*Careful sis!*”

In the phrase “careful sis!”, the word “sis” is an example of clipping slang because it comes from the word “sister” shortened into a more informal and friendly version.

In total, there are 125 slang words or phrases used in *Encanto* film, showing that the movie uses a wide variety of informal language to make the story more lively and relatable. Based on the results of data analysis, the slang found in the *Encanto* film movie is predominantly flippant (59 %). This type of slang often sounds funny, casual, or disrespectful, and it helps to make the conversations more relaxed and entertaining. Imaginative rhyming slang is (27%). This kind of slang is new, original, and adds a fun or unique touch to the way characters speak. Fresh and creative slang, which is made by shortening words (like “info” from “information”), is used (8%) in the *Encanto* film Movie. The least used types are clipping slang (5%) and acronymic slang (0%). These types are not very common in the movie.

The following table summarizes the frequency and percentage of each slang type found in the films:

Table 1. This is a diagram of the types of slang



Based on the diagram, the most dominant slang used in the *Encanto* film movie is flippant slang, with a total of 74 slang which is 59% of all the slang found. This means more than half of the slang in the movie is flippant. Flippant slang is often used to sound funny, casual, or playful, and it helps show the characters' relaxed or humorous way of speaking. Its high percentage shows that the movie uses this type of slang more than any other, likely to make the dialogue more entertaining and appealing to viewers, especially younger audiences.

The analysis of slang usage in the *Encanto* film movie reveals that flippant slang is the most dominant type, with 74 instances, accounting for 59% of the total slang used. Flippant slang typically includes casual, humorous, or irreverent expressions that are used in informal speech to convey light heartedness or familiarity. This finding suggests that the language style in *Encanto* film is strongly characterized by relaxed and playful communication, which aligns with the movie's target audience, primarily children and young viewers. For example, characters might use words like “cool,” “chill,” or “lame” to express feelings in a fun and relatable way. According to Eble (1996), flippant slang is commonly used in popular culture and entertainment to make conversations more natural and to connect better with younger audiences. Its dominance in *Encanto* film reflects the movie's intention to present modern, accessible dialogue that resonates with contemporary viewers.

The second most frequent slang type found in the film is Imaginative rhyming slang, making up 27% 57 instances. Imaginative rhyming slang is a type of slang that replaces common words with rhyming phrases, often cutting off the rhyme, and is used in creative, funny, or ironic ways. Rhyming slang, which is more common in British English (e.g., “apples and pears” for “stairs”), is less likely to be understood by a global audience, which may explain its limited use in a Disney film aimed at a broad demographic. The Third most frequent slang type found in the film is fresh and creative slang making up 8% type 34. Fresh and creative slang refers to new or innovative slang terms that are often characterized by cleverness, imagination, and informality.

Clipping slang, which includes shortened versions of longer words (e.g., “info” from “information” or “bro” from “brother”), appears in about 6% of instances. This type of slang is often used for efficiency and informality, enabling characters to communicate quickly and casually. This study demonstrates that flippant slang emerges as the most dominant form of informal language in *Encanto*, constituting 59% of the total slang identified. Such prevalence is not incidental but reflects the film's communicative strategy: to create a playful, humorous, and relatable atmosphere for its young audience. In the context of children's media, this dominance highlights how informal and light-hearted language becomes a tool to bridge generational gaps, enhance character likability, and foster emotional engagement. By normalizing casual registers, *Encanto* presents young viewers with linguistic input that

resonates with everyday interactions, subtly shaping their awareness of language use beyond formal contexts.

In addition to flippant slang, the presence of imaginative rhyming slang (27%) illustrates how creativity and humor in language contribute to building cultural connection and maintaining audience engagement. According to Yule (2016), clipping is also a common linguistic process in everyday spoken language and widely used in digital communication. Its use in *Encanto* reflects modern speech patterns that align with the experiences of a generation immersed in social media and digital culture. Conversely, acronymic slang does not appear in the film. As Partridge (2004) notes, acronyms tend to be culture-specific or situational, often linked to written or online contexts. Their absence in *Encanto* is consistent with the film's grounding in tradition and oral storytelling rather than digital or internet-based discourse.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, these findings underscore the role of animated films in reproducing and circulating everyday speech patterns. Instead of portraying language in standardized or prescriptive forms, *Encanto* demonstrates how informal varieties—especially flippant slang—carry social meanings of solidarity, intimacy, and cultural authenticity. This has direct pedagogical implications: films such as *Encanto* can be used as authentic resources for language teaching, offering students exposure to natural speech beyond textbooks. As Eble (2018), Holmes (2023), and Yule (2022) observe, slang in family-oriented films often functions not merely as a linguistic feature but as a narrative device that enhances storytelling and audience connection. Teachers can therefore draw on films like *Encanto* to help students reflect critically on how and why informal registers are used in different contexts.

At the same time, the multilingual and multimodal nature of *Encanto* complicates the analysis. The film blends English and Spanish, spoken dialogue and song, in ways that resist neat categorization within existing slang typologies. This suggests that while slang frameworks provide useful insights, future research should expand to include approaches from code-switching, translanguaging, and multimodal discourse analysis to capture the hybridity of global children's media. Ultimately, the study demonstrates that animated films are not only sites of entertainment but also linguistic and cultural artifacts, where informal language becomes central to creating relatability, fostering cultural representation, and enriching pedagogical practice.

Conclusion

This study reveals that among the different types of slang identified in *Encanto*, flippant slang emerges as the most dominant form, shaping much of the film's informal and playful dialogue. More importantly, the findings demonstrate how a family-oriented animated film strategically employs informal speech patterns to create relatability and humor, making characters' interactions feel natural for younger audiences while still accessible to broader viewers. By highlighting the role of slang in animated storytelling, this research contributes to sociolinguistic discussions on language variation in media and emphasizes how popular films serve as a medium through which informal expressions circulate globally. Furthermore, the results carry pedagogical implications, as they provide insights for educators on integrating authentic language materials into classroom practice. Analyzing slang in films like *Encanto* can help learners recognize the dynamics of informal English, bridging the gap between formal instruction and real-world communication.

Future studies could extend this work by comparing the use of slang across different film genres, such as action, comedy, or romance, to examine how audience and context influence the choice of informal expressions. Cross-cultural research on dubbed or subtitled versions of *Encanto* could also provide valuable insights into how slang is translated and whether the same sense of playfulness and

relatability is preserved. In addition, investigating audience perceptions of slang in animated films may further illuminate how young viewers interpret and adopt informal language encountered through media.

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