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AN INVESTIGATION INTO MORPHOLOGICAL, SEMANTIC AND CULTURAL FEATURES OF SLANG IN ENGLISH HIP HOP SONGS

Field : The English Language
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M.A. THESIS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
(A SUMMARY)

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1. RATIONALE

Slang is a subject that provokes strong emotions. It is spoken by people in daily speech, and a large number of them can even be found in magazines and literary works. With the development of the society, slang is widely used by more and more people. It is accepted by both upper-classes and lower-classes, and especially college students who tend to use up-to-date words that form a kind of characteristic style of themselves.

However, people’s attitude toward slang varies greatly. Some people think that slang cannot be used on formal occasions, for it is spoken by the people of lower classes only and the slang terms are so coarse. Some even think that slang is the rude language, and avoid using it. However, others hold the opposite idea. They think that slang plays an important role in the language because of its fresh, lifelike, humor and adequate expressions. One must admit the undeniable fact that slang is spoken by more and more people.

In the modern time, if one is not familiar with slang, he or she could not capture the slang expressions in the movie, fictions and even in their favourite songs and, what is worse, one would make mistakes when they are talking with foreigners. An example will clarify the fact. A guide asks the tourist “Anybody wants to take a leak?” (Does anybody want to go to the restroom?), and, of course, what the guide said would make the tourist surprised. It is an expression of vulgarity. Therefore, one should bear in mind that it is very important to study language in a socio-cultural context; the language has existed in a close contact with culture. From the example one can see that misusing slang would result in misunderstanding in the communication. It can not tell others that one is good at English. It is not thus; moreover it shows that one just has half-back knowledge about slang.

Nowadays, more and more hip hop artists tend to use slang to express their feeling. Although the sentences of a certain lyric in the hip hop songs are often shortened and unfinished and sometimes, they are not grammatically correct either, composers try to arrange a group of words correctly so as to get beautiful lyrics. Hip hop songs usually tell us about human activities, violence or social criticism. In those songs, the sentence structures and the choice of words are not really paid attention to. These songs mostly present non-standard English, which tends to be vulgar, lazy in pronunciation and it is often talked about as bad, incorrect and poor English. Most of the words in the lyrics are slang words. However, it is slang that can help composers to verbalize from the bottom of their heart.

Two to the one from the one to the three. I like good pussy and I like good trees. Smoke so much weed you wouldn’t believe. And I get more ass than a toilet seat …. (Relax).

[185]

There are a number of slang words used in the above song such as pussy ‘a woman as a sexual object’, trees, weed ‘marijuana’, ass ‘buttocks’. Reading or listening to these words, some people who use English as a second or a foreign language may get confused in comprehending the meaning of the song lyrics because the slang words have the specific meaning.

It could be seen that studying slang is one of the interesting ways to ameliorate and develop language learners’ vocabulary. And
in respect of culture, language learners can get acquainted with the past and present social life of people and understand their way of living, thinking as well as their tradition through slang. Therefore, studying slang is very important to teachers and learners of English not only to improve their comprehension but also to understand different cultures.

For the reasons above, the topic entitled “An Investigation into Morphological, Semantic and Cultural Features of Slang in English Hip Hop Songs” has been chosen for my MA thesis with the hope that it will contribute something valuable to the English teaching and learning, as well as communication and translation.

1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.2.1. Aims

This thesis is carried out with an aim to investigate some morphological, semantic and cultural features of slang in English hip hop songs (SEHSs)

1.2.2. Objectives

This paper is designed to reach the following objectives:
- to investigate morphological and semantic features of SEHSs
- to discover typical cultural characteristics of SEHSs affecting the interpretation and communication of non-native learners of English
- to provide non-native learners of English with a basic knowledge of slang help them understand, use slang in speaking, and in translating effectively and naturally.
- to suggest some implications for English teaching and studying, translation as well as communication.

1.3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Through an investigation of morphological, semantic and cultural features of SEHSs, the study meaningfully contributes to slang research. Besides, it can be used as a reference for the readers who are interested in EHSs.

To be equipped with the knowledge of slang, non-native learners of English in general and Vietnamese learners of English in particular will be able to comprehend such interesting and popular hip hop songs whose lyrics contain a lot of slang. Also, it is possible for learners to gain a better insight into various cultural aspects of native speakers. They can, to some extent, use slang for better communication

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To achieve the above objectives, the study tried to answer the following questions:
1. What are morphological and semantic features of SEHSs?
2. What are cultural features of SEHSs?
3. What are the suggestions for teaching and learning English slang especially slang in EHSs?

1.5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study was confined to dealing with 300 samples of slang words in English hip hop songs, mainly from such famous hip hop stars or bands as Eminem, Dr.Dre, 50 Cent, Missy Elliott, Snoop Dogg and 2Pac. The study will focus on the morphological, semantic and cultural features of slang words in EHSs.

1.6. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This research paper was organized as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction
Chapter 2: Literature Review
Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology
Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion
Chapter 5: Conclusions and Implications

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW
AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been a lot of researches on slang before. Widayanik [48] studied the characteristics of non-standard English used in Missy Elliot’s songs and gives explanation to the meaning of slang words in the songs as well as identifies the aspect of contextual meaning. Oksiana [34] described the slang words and slang meanings used in D12 song’s lyrics related to race, drugs, and violence. Wismandira [49] examined types of syntactic structures found in the six rap songs of “Rage Against the Machine” and found the most predominant type of syntactic structures in these songs. Mattiello [30] fully described slang in terms of features of its morphology, semantics and sociology. She gave the overview of slang compared with standard words used in English.

In Vietnam, up to now, some authors have paid attention to slang. Bùi Phùng [56] provided a useful collection of American-Vietnamese slang and colloquial expressions. Besides, there are some dictionaries on slang such as “Sổ tay từ ngữ lóng tiếng Việt” by Đoàn Từ Huyền & Lê Thị Yến [52], “Tiếng lóng Việt Nam” by Nguyễn Văn Khang [54] and “Từ ngữ giải thích tiếng lóng Anh ngữ hiện đại” by Nguyễn Dương Khur and Phạm Duy Trong [55].

Also, Dinh Quang Trung [16] investigated the syntactic, semantic and cultural features of english slang containing words denoting animals.

Although some various aspects of slang have so far been investigated, no attention has been paid to the morphological and cultural features of slang words in EHSs. This is the reason why “An Investigation into Morphological, Semantic and Cultural Features of Slang in English Hip Hop Songs” came into being as an attempt to find out the morphological, semantic and cultural features of SEHSs.

2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1. Definition of Slang

According to Eble [17, p.11], “slang is an ever changing set of colloquial words and phrases that speakers use to establish or reinforce social identity or cohesiveness within a group or with a trend or fashion in society at large.” Despite the difficulty of precise definition of the term, Eble [17, p.12,13], stressed novelty and ephemerality as principal characteristics of slang.

Leech and Svartvik [27, p.26] presented slang in the following way, “slang is language which is very familiar in style, and is usually restricted to the members of a particular social group, for example ‘teenage slang’, ‘army slang’, ‘theatre slang’. Slang is not usually fully understood by people outside a particular social group, and so has a value of showing the intimacy and solidarity of its members.”

Slang has also attracted the interest of many Vietnamese linguistic researchers. Nguyễn Văn Khang [54, p.14] cited Nguyễn Thiện Giáp [53] and said that “Tiếng lóng là những từ ngữ được dùng
han chê về mặt xã hội, tức là những từ ngữ không phải toàn dân sử dụng mà chỉ một tầng lớp xã hội nào đó sử dụng mà thôi” (Slang is a term which has social restrictions. It doesn’t belong to all the people but a particular social group).

Nguyễn Văn Tu [57] stated that “Tiếng lóng chỉ gồm có một số từ. Nó không phải công cụ giao tiếp của xã hội mà chỉ là một số từ với ý nghĩa bí hiểm của một nhóm người với mục đích không cho người khác biết” (Slang consists of only a few words. It’s not a tool of social communication but a term used by a group of people with the sense of secrecy in order not to let others understand).

From all above, though people have different ideas about slang, one still can find out some common characteristics of it. Therefore, in this study, the definition by Leech and Svartvik [27] has been chosen as the working definition of slang. In our opinion, it is by far the most sufficiently comprehensive, satisfying and necessary conditions of slang.

2.2.2. Slang and Other Similar Language Units

2.2.2.1. Slang and Jargon

2.2.2.2. Slang and Cant

2.2.2.3. Slang and Dialect

2.2.2.4. Slang and Vernacular

2.2.2.5. Slang and Accent

2.2.2.6. Slang and Colloquial Language

2.2.2.7. Specific and General Slang

2.2.3. Definition of Hip hop

According to website: [62] “Hip hop music, also called hip-hop, rap music, hip-hop music, is a musical genre consisting of a stylized rhythmic music that commonly accompanies rapping, a rhythmic and rhyming speech that is chanted.” and it consists “four key stylistic elements: MCing/rapping, DJing/scratching, breaking/dancing, and graffiti writing. Other elements include sampling (or synthesis), and beatboxing”

In the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary from the website: [71], hip hop was defined as “a type of popular music with spoken words and a steady beat played on electronic instruments, originally played by young African Americans”. From the definitions above, the one from the website: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hip_hop_music [59] is supposed to be the clearest of what hip hop is. In which, we know that hip hop is a stylized rhythmic music that commonly accompanies rapping. Therefore, that definition has been chosen to be the working definition in this study.

2.2.4. The Morphological Properties

In Plag’s opinion [38], word-formation processes consist of compounding, blending, clipping, back-formation, conversion, acronyms, prefixation, suffixation and so on.

2.2.4.1. Suffixation

2.2.4.2. Prefixation

2.2.4.3. Infixation

2.2.4.4. Conversion

2.2.4.5. Truncation (Clipping)

2.2.4.6. Diminutive

2.2.4.7. Blending
2.2.4.8. Abbreviations
2.2.4.9. Compounding

2.2.5. Concepts of Semantic Field

According to Fisiak [24, p.283], a semantic field is “a set of lexemes which cover a certain conceptual domain and which bear certain specifiable relations to one another”.

In Akmajian, Demers, Farmer, Harnish [1, p.240] ’s viewpoint, “the words in a semantic field, though not synonymous, are all used to talk about the same general phenomenon, and there is a meaning inclusion relation between the items in the field and the field category itself”.

2.2.6. The Relationship of Language and Culture
2.2.6.1. Concepts of Culture
2.2.6.2. The Relationship of Language and Culture

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY
3.1. OVERVIEW
3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

McMillan and Schumacher [31, p.31] described research design as “the plan and structure of the investigation used to obtain evidence to answer research questions. The design describes the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom, and under what conditions the data will be obtained”. In other words, research design indicates how the research is set up: what happens to the subjects and what methods of data collection are used.

As stated by Houser [21, p.15], quantitative research methods have been considered to be the traditional approach to research in counseling and psychology. It is defined as “research that is based on measurement and qualification of the data. Whatever the dependent variable of interest in quantitative research, there must be a way to transform it into numbers”.

Houser [21, p.12] defined qualitative research methods in terms of “how data is analyzed and which research designs are used. Data is collected and analyzed more descriptively than numerically. Also, qualitative methods include research approaches such as case study methods and ethnographic approaches, along with other designs.”

3.3. DATA COLLECTION
3.3.1. Sampling

316 samples of slang are expected to be collected for examining the study. They are taken from 150 famous EHSs of such famous hip hop stars as Eminem, Dr.Dre, 50 Cent, Missy Elliott, Snoop Dogg and 2Pac. Among 316 samples which are used for investigating into semantic and cultural features, only 229 samples are chosen for analysing morphological features because of their own properties.

3.3.2. Instrumentation

- A significant number of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries of slang in both languages
- Google search.

3.3.3. Data Collection

Firstly, in order to make the corpus for the study, a large number of slang are collected as many as possible from English hip
hop songs of famous hip hop artists such as Eminem, Dr.Dre, 50 Cent, Missy Elliott, Snoop Dogg and 2Pac.

Secondly, thanks to slang dictionaries, some other similar language units are excluded from the list.

Finally, the corpus of 316 samples of slang words are chosen for the investigation.

3.4. DATA ANALYSIS

Morphologically, the classification of the data was mainly based on the word-formation of slang, namely compounding, prefixation, suffixation, blending, truncation and so on.

Semantically, the collected data were processed in terms of meaning they showed. Then, they were put into the different semantic fields to which each sample belongs.

Culturally, the study presented the cultural features of slang in EHSs by discovering the implication of slang through the lyrics of those songs.

After that some findings and discussion were presented, a statistical table was set up to show the frequency of the pattern of slang in the EHSs. The statistics were presented in numbers and in percentage.

3.5. RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The research procedures are carried out as follows:

- Identifying and choosing the research topic by reviewing the previous studies thoroughly. It was to select the relevant materials such as books, theses and researches relating to our topic in English and Vietnamese.

- Choosing the appropriate approach to the problem.

- Collecting the slang words from the transcripts of the Hip hop songs by marking them in the bold type; Checking the words whether they are slang or not by using some dictionaries of slang such as Unconventional English and Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, The Routledge Dictionary of Modern American Slang, The Concise New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English, NTC’s Dictionary of American Slang and Colloquial Expressions and so on.

- Calculating the frequency of occurrence to decide on the focus of the study, i.e., which slang was chosen to be investigated.

- Generalizing the linguistic features of slang in the field of Morphology and Semantics.

- Studying the culture of slang in EHSs.

- Making tables of classifying the slang words to know the frequency of the pattern of slang in the songs.

- Pointing out some problematic situations in foreign language teaching and learning facing Vietnamese learners of English in identifying, performing and translating slang and then putting forward some suggestions for the problems.

3.6. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

3.7. SUMMARY

CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. OVERVIEW

4.2. MORPHOLOGICAL FEATURES OF SLANG IN ENGLISH HIP HOP SONGS

4.2.1. Suffixation
4.2.1. Nominal Suffixes
4.2.1.2. Adjectival Suffixes

4.2.2. Prefixation
Slang words in this study are produced from the combination between a prefix and a verb.

4.2.3. Compounding
4.2.3.1. Nominal Compounds
4.2.3.2. Adjectival Compounds
4.2.3.3. Verbal Compounds

4.2.4. Truncation (Clipping)
4.2.4.1. First Syllable Survives
4.2.4.2. Primarily Stressed Syllable Survives
4.2.4.3. Secondarily Stressed Syllable Survives

4.2.5. Conversion
4.2.5.1. Noun to Verb
4.2.5.2. Verb to Noun
4.2.5.3. Noun to Adjective

4.2.6. Blending
4.2.7. Back-formation
4.2.8. Abbreviations
4.2.9. Diminutive

Table 4.1. Frequency of Morphological Features of Slang in EHSs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morphological Features</th>
<th>Occurrence</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suffixation</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Nominal Suffixes</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Adjectival Suffixes</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefixation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compounding</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truncation</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. First syllable(s)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Primarily Stressed Syllables</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Secondarily Stressed Syllables</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Noun to Verb</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Verb to Noun</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Noun to Adjective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blending</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back-formation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diminutive</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3. Semantic Features of Slang in English Hip Hop Songs

4.3.1. Slang Relating to Drugs
(1) I used to stick closer to your side then a beeper
    Till you smoked that cheaper reefer. [101]
    In hip hop artists’ terminiology, “a marijuana cigarette” is called reefer.

4.3.2. Slang Relating to Sex
(2) Soft punk looking for some nookie or bosom
    Go ahead, fucking hater push me. [96]
(3) So what you had your little coochie in your dad’s mouth? [154]
The hip hop artists often turn out to be obscene when they make use of words refer to various types of the vagina (coochie, bush, pussy, nookie).

4.3.3. Slang Relating to Crime

(4) Go in and **gaffle** the money and run to one of your aunt’s cribs. [123]
(5) You wacker than the motherfucker you **bit** your style from. [139]

**Gaffle** means “to steal something” and **bite** is used to indicate “copy or steal another person’s style, especially a breakdancing move or a rap lyric or sound”

4.3.4. Slang Relating to the Police

(6) He don’t want it with me, he in PC
I can have a nigga run up on him with a shank. [173]
(7) **Coppers** try to kill me
But they didn't know this was tha wrong street. [211]

The examples above show that **PC** and **coppers** imply the police. If a British and Canadian person is called **PC**, that means she/he is a police constable and if they are called “**coppers**”, they are police officers.

4.3.5. Slang Relating to Money

(8) Not to fuck with his cheddar, his man pack a beretta
He won't hesitate to squeeze that, over that **green back**. [175]
(9) My back shot to help Ashanti hit them high notes
And **Big Ben** taught Charli B'More to deep throat (yea).[145]

**Greenback** is a U.S. dollar bill. **Big Ben** in the example above is a hundred-dollar note minted in the late 1990s.

4.3.6. Slang Relating to Weapons

(10) Nigga holla if there’s a problem, and your niggas got drama,
I got **burners** for sell and shit. [210]

**Burner** has several meanings. **Burner** as a slang term is commonly used to describe a weapon of some kind, usually a pistol.

4.3.7. Slang Relating to Body Parts.

(11) It’s enough to make you crazy
It’s fuckin’ with my **dome**. [127]

Each body part has one or more specific functions which distinguish them from the others.

(12) I like funny things that make me happy and gleeful (hehehe)
like when my teacher sucked my **wee-wee** in preschool (Woo!). [132]

As (4.67), **wee-wee**, children’s toilet vocabulary, is used to show “urine” or “urination”

4.3.8. Slang Denoting Impertinence and Offensiveness

(13) Be easy, stop the **bullshit**, you get your whole crew wet
We in the club doin’ the same ol’ two step. [217]

In the examples above, **bullshit** is considered as the manner of talking nonsense and doing things to piss people off. Other slang words denoting impertinence and offensiveness are related to bad quality (**crummy**, **tough titty!**) or even nonsense (**booshit**, **shit**)

Besides, other offensive slang words are rather related are related to foolishness:

(14) Michael Vick in this bitch, fall back you **muts**. [96]

4.3.9. Slang Denoting Excellence

(15) Just woke up in my bedroom **wizzy**, While ya on break let yo kitty air [102]
I finally made it.
Not as a superstar rapper, not as an *ill-ass* white boy, but as a respected emcee. [81]
The term *wizzy*, whose variation is *wizard*, is used to indicate something excellent, exciting or wonderful and is employed for registering general approval. And the term *ill-ass* is used to describe something *excellent* or *superb*.

4.3.10. Slang Relating to Transport

(17) I’m in my *Lambo* maggot, my fo’ fo’ faggot Doors lift up I’m like Go Go Gadget [198]
(18) My attitude is bitchy, cuz my period is heavy
I used to drive a *Chevy*, put twenties on that baby [113]

*Lambo* is used to indicate an expensive and exotic car which is not seen very often. It is short for *Lamborghini*, whose symbol is a bull symbolizing the taurus while *Chevy* is a *Chevrolet automobile*, an American car manufacturer owned by General Motors.

4.3.11. Slang Relating to Places

(19) New York, St. Louis, Chicago, *Philly*, *LA*, Atlanta
I’m diggin’ that
But how about the ladies that got a head full of fake weave or braids [143]
(20) My life is like a soundtrack I wrote to the beat
Treat my rap like *Cali* weed, I smoke till I sleep [197]

*Philly* is a slang term for one of the greatest cities in the United States. It is used instead of *Philadelphia* to explain someone’s point more quickly. *LA* is utilized to indicate Los Angeles, also a famous city in the United States while *Cali* is short for *California*, a word used by non Californians. Typically, it is often thought of as a children’s word. Only posers and losers use this word to seem cool.

4.3.12. Slang Relating to People

(21) I’m a *sucka*, all I gotta say
These drugs really got a hold of me [104]
(22) *Beeitch*, if you ain’t got no kinda chronic, yo punk ass gots to go! [79]

In the examples above, *sucka* is employed to address “*a stupid person*” and *beeeitch* is used as a synonym of “*bitch*,” especially as a a derogatory term for a woman. Other slang words relating to a woman or young woman (*pussycat, shortie*, etc.) , a pal (*homie*) or even an important person (*biggie, big shit*).

4.3.13. Slang Relating to Entertainment

(23) Radio won’t even play my *jam*
’Cause I am whatever you say I am [207]
(24) Dance a little bit
You don’t mind if I get my *boogie* on do you?
He he, yeah, know what I’m sayin? [209]

*Jam* is a slang term indicating *someone’s favourite song* and *boogie* is used to denote “*a kind of rock dance*”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic Features</th>
<th>Occurrence</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Drugs</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Sex</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Crime</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 The police</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Money</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Weapon</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 4.4. CULTURAL FEATURES OF SLANG IN ENGLISH HIP HOP SONGS

### 4.4.1. Anti-authority Symbols

### 4.4.2. Sexuality Symbols

### 4.4.3. Gun and Violence Symbols

### 4.4.4. Drugs and Alcohol Symbols

### 4.4.5. Criminality Symbols

### 4.4.6. Time Efficiency

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

### 5.1. OVERVIEW

This chapter provided a brief overview of the study as well as the conclusions. Basing on the analysis of the results of the study in chapter 4, some implications in teaching and learning slang in English as a foreign language as well as some implications in translating slang were suggested. After all, some recommendations for further research would be also mentioned.

### 5.2. CONCLUSIONS

(i) In terms of morphological features, under the viewpoint of Plag (2003), after examining 229 samples of slang words, we found that slang can be presented in nine different word-formation patterns including suffixation, prefixation, compounding, truncation, blending and so on.

The most popular pattern of slang is suffixation, in which nominal suffixes make up the highest rate in occurrence frequency. On the other hand, prefixation presents the lowest rate in the data.

(ii) In terms of semantic features, some of the slang words in the data, while commonly used on the street, might be offensive to readers who are not part of “the slang scene.” As the objective of this process was to improve the comprehensiveness, accuracy, and appropriateness of terms in the EHSs, all of the terms are included in the corpus. For this reason, slang words are found particularly rich in a certain semantic sub-field, such as violence, crime, drugs, sex, impertinence and so on while the number of slang words which have positive or neutral meaning seem to be fewer and belong to the such semantic sub-fields as excellence, people, entertainment and so on.

(iii) In terms of cultural features, as the EHSs in this thesis were written and presented by American hip hop artists, the data were analysed mainly based on American cultural values. As the American culture is much different from the Vietnamese culture, the way of the American using slang may be surprising to the Vietnamese. Such cultural features as anti-authority, sexuality, drugs, criminality symbols will be challenging to the people who don’t know much about the world of hip hop where its lyrics are all about the realities of life and it is, therefore, honest without any reserve.
5.3. IMPLICATIONS

5.3.1. Implications for Teaching and Learning Slang

Firstly, in order to make students be accustomed to informal usage of language, the best way to start introducing slang in the classroom will be by teaching song lyrics first, then followed by showing movies. After getting used to hear unusual slang words and expressions finally students can play roles and take part in simulations using colloquial speech. This means that teachers should improve students’ listening skills to make them good speakers later. However, students should initially be acquainted with slang words and expressions; a teacher can give them a list of frequently used slang words and explain the major differences between standard and nonstandard words.

Secondly, teachers can give students lyrics with various words blanked out; or teachers can give students a list of words and ask them to listen to the song to see which of the words are used. Teachers can ask students to put lines in order, or complete half-finished lines. Or teachers can simply have students listen to a song and say what they think the title might be.

Thirdly, it is preferably to show a video which is not deep in meaning so that students can concentrate mainly on the voice of the singers rather than the meaning itself. As a pre-watching activity students are given a list of slang vocabulary used in the video so that they can determine the meaning of new slang words and expressions, or a teacher can give them their definitions which students will discuss in class, whose standard equivalents they compare with and they can eventually understand the lyrics while watching that video.

Fourthly, teachers can give students a short list of non-slang expressions and ask them to search the Internet or ask friends to find corresponding slang expressions. If students stay with teachers for a long period, teachers can start building a slang dictionary. Everyone should bring one slang for each lesson. Teachers use the slang words during the lesson, add them to the dictionary and discuss if their current or dated and in what context students can use them and then teachers show them if the slang words are offensive, sexist, obscene or naughty.

Overall, teachers should instruct their students on the cultural background of language usage. If one teaches language without teaching about the culture in which it operates, the students are learning empty or meaningless symbols or they may attach the incorrect meaning to what is being taught. The students, when using the learnt language, may use the language inappropriately or within the wrong cultural context, thus defeating the purpose of learning a language.

Many people believe that Hip hop songs generate nothing but violence, sex, drug, crime or so on. However, that is only a small part of hip hop; there are many positive outcomes that hip-hop provides. Hip-hop music that use violent lyrics or scenes in music videos promotes listeners to think about how they feel is right or wrong about these types of songs and why they occur. Hip-hop also brings social and political awareness about certain issues such as racial inequality, gender inequality, education, family and so on since hip hop artists tend to tell their individual's experiences, perspectives, or just stories in their life.
5.3.2. Implications for Translating Slang

Firstly, you must either focus on the form and content (semantic meaning) of the source text (ST) or the effect of the target text (TT). If you focus on the former, this is labelled a ST oriented strategy and if you focus on the latter, this is labelled a TT oriented strategy. You have to decide what you want to emphasise in your translation: How the ST looks and appears and thereby emphasising that the ST contents are the important element and must be visible in the TT or how the TT is to work within the TT culture, allowing for differences in the form between the ST and the TT.

Secondly, a way to find out what a certain slang expression means is to go to a website specialised in slang, such as urbandictionary.com and look into what the article on the term in question offers as a definition. Since the peer-reviews on urbandictionary.com help slang words and expressions gain some validity, this may give the translator an idea of what the word or expression connotes, and, if the translator then knows a similar expression in his/her native tongue, this could be used as the suggested translation.

Finally, discussion forums such as wordreference.com and proz.com are designed for language and translation purposes and attract professional linguists, translation scholars and translators from all over the world who provide answers and suggestions to questions about terminology/linguistic features that are difficult to translate.

5.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although we have made a great effort to carry out this study, some of the limitations and the shortcomings are inevitable.

Firstly, the data chosen to make the study on are deeply limited to only slang words in EHSs by some of famous American artists. Therefore, although a wide search has been made on many sources of slang in English, only a moderate number of data of not more than 300 slang words have been finally collected to investigate the problem stated, which may make a challenge for us to reach to a much more convincing conclusion.

Secondly, due to the lack of time and reference materials, we didn’t pay attention to analyzing the data in terms of syntactic and pragmatic features. Therefore, we could not exploit all the data as much as we expected.

Finally, this thesis would be better if there was a comparison in slang between English and Vietnamese. As Vietnamese hip hop songs have recently been in popularity and the use of slang in those songs has not been common, we could not find enough slang words in Vietnamese to carry out the thesis in both languages.

5.5. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

This thesis has focused only on studying the morphological, semantic and cultural features of slang in EHSs. Therefore, there still have some topics related to this problem left for further researches:

(i) Investigation into syntactic and pragmatic features of slang in EHSs

(ii) Investigation into linguistic features of slang in poems, in political speeches, in newspapers, in magazines and so on.