

A CORPUS-ASSISTED QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF SLANG EXPRESSIONS IN DREAMWORKS' THE BOSS BABY: FAMILY BUSINESS

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Abstract

One of the varieties in language is slang, an informal style of language, characterized by constantly shifting vocabulary and its impact in strengthening group unity and social identity. This research investigated slang in an animated film by DreamWorks, *The Boss Baby: Family Business* using a qualitative approach. Through a qualitative research design, the researchers applied a corpus-assisted method. Data were gathered by repeatedly watching the film, extracting slang expressions from the dialogues, and validating meanings through slang dictionaries. The findings suggested a total of 40 slang words exist in the film, revealing six distinct aspects: clipping, compounding, acronyms, blends, metaphor, and affixation. This research also examined four particular types of slang: society slang, slang in publicity, slang in school and university, and medical slang. The most prevalent categories were publicity slang (13 items) and society slang (18 items). According to the findings, the most common types are clipping and compounding, which are employed to enunciate social belonging, lightheartedness, and closeness. Characters' slang choices diversified systematically, enabling the creation of their identities, allowing exchanges, and storylines. The study arrives at the conclusion that slang is a planned, multipurpose language strategy utilized in the movie that boosts audience engagement and character growth. Yet, this research was limited to a single cinematic element and prioritized primarily on character utterances within a particular context. On the grounds of that, future scholars are encouraged to broaden the scope by delving into comparative explorations throughout different movie genres or examining the development of slang in long-form media such as television series.

Keywords: Characteristics of Slang Language, Slang language, Sociolinguistics, *The Boss Baby: Family Business*, Types of Language

Introduction

As elucidated (Holmes & Wilson, 2022), slang is a common feature of informal language and a dynamic part of daily communication tools. Slang serves as a socially significant linguistic resource rather than being simply “non-standard vocabulary” (Dalzell, 2008; Danesi 2017). To clarify further, language users use slang to establish solidarity and display familiarity, even express emotions. By using slang, people also communicate their thoughts in distinctive ways and manage their interpersonal distance between one another. In a different light, Eble (1996) describes slang as a sign of informality that is closely tied to social interaction and group life, where speakers manifest creative expression (Roth-Gordon, 2021) to highlight shared understanding and belonging. In sociolinguistics, such linguistic decisions are rarely neutral; rather, they are shaped by context (Wodak et al., 2011) and social connotations associated with particular forms (Holmes & Wilson, 2022).

Nowadays, slang has been increasingly visible across diverse communities and communication contexts. Although slang is frequently associated with youth culture, it is also widely used in many contexts such as workplace, entertainment media, and interpersonal relationships (Sundaram et al., 2023). They further report that the global spread of slang brings some strategic purposes beyond informality. It serves as a powerful means to establish identity construction and social bonding. Slang is not only seen as a sophisticated linguistic element but a contemporary discourse that affects content engagement and decision-making throughout numerous physical and digital tools. Not to mention, slang has spread more quickly through many platforms, including digital culture. This allows users from various backgrounds to rapidly adopt the expression and makes it possible to use them for varied purposes.

Rahmani & Karimi (2025) asserts that media and new communication technologies have had a significant influence on modern English, mainly by increasing the speed of the language evolution and engendering a more flexible, informal type of discourse. According to their research results, the rapid rise of texting and social media has given rise to the use of acronyms, abbreviations, and sentence fragments. They also suggested that despite the emerging contestation of traditional structural integrity, technologies have transformed global English that connects more easily to the 'instantaneous' needs of digital-era users. Thus, rather than being strictly local or community-bound, slang today frequently serves as a shared cultural repertoire.

Not only displaying group membership, slang can also convey social positions (Mattiello, 2016; Zhang & Zhang, 2025) and personal characteristics like humor, toughness, friendliness, confidence, or rebelliousness. They further mentioned that slang is implemented to exert power dynamics, allowing the speakers to have a specific social 'stance' during a conversation (Popovych & Márk, 2023). Their research also implied that individuals often change the use of slang between different personas, such as being 'cordial' in one social group and 'assertive' in another. Hence, slang is a vital aspect of identity performance. Subsequently, Wardhaugh & Fuller (2015) also connoted that lexical choice indicates certain social stratification and group identity. In family settings, for example, sarcastic slang may indicate rivalry or conflict, on the other hand, affectionate slang may indicate warmth and closeness (Stoika et al., 2025). Therefore, slang is a tool that the language users employ to express their identities during conversation.

Film and television have played a massive role in exposing the social meaning of slang languages. Many films frequently use slang to represent cultural values and social ideologies. Although packaged in a prepared script, it has become a deliberate sign to showcase a culture, identity, and traits. Through the use of slang in media discourse, certain characters are deliberately prepared to represent personality qualities, closeness of a relationship, power status, age, and specific groups (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). Because of the varied use of slang in various character roles, including adults, children, and babies, *The Boss Baby: Family Business* is an appropriate subject for this study. The film's storyline is rich, blending themes of corporate culture, leadership, and competitiveness with family ties. In the film *The Boss Baby: Family Business*, the various characters and contexts illustrate how slang constructs identity, interpersonal power, humor, and narrative depiction. With that in mind, the researchers intended to identify and classify slang expressions in the film and examine the distribution and functions of slang across characters and contexts, and explain how slang contributes to sociolinguistic meaning and character portrayal in the film.

Research Questions

This study was guided by two research questions:

1. What slang expressions appear in *The Boss Baby: Family Business*, and how can they be classified according to their linguistic characteristics and slang types?
2. How is slang distributed across characters and contexts in the film, and how does this usage contribute to sociolinguistic meaning and character portrayal?

Literature Review

The ambiguity surrounding the concept of slang within the domain of linguistic studies has long been discussed in linguistic scholarship. The variability among academic circles offers overlapping yet distinct interpretations about the definitions of slang. These definitions frequently intersect with the concepts of colloquialism, jargon, and casual speech. Rather than attempting to

resolve this alongside debate, in this study, Partridge's (1950) approach is employed to operationalize the concept of slang, referred to as non-standard vocabulary used by specific social groups to express identification and solidarity. Although Partridge's framework is relatively early, his conceptualization of slang remains foundational in the field of sociolinguistics due to its clear functional emphasis on informality, group identity, and resistance to standard language which aligns with the characteristics observed in the present data.

Contemporary scholars similarly highlight the social and identity-driven functions of slang. For instance, slang, as conceptualized by Eble (1996), is an ever-changing set of colloquial terms and phrases that speakers employ to reinforce social identity or cohesiveness within a group, while other studies emphasise its role in signaling modernity, fashion, and social alignment (Guy, 2011; Indah Rezeki & Wahyudin Sagala, 2019). Unlike jargon, which is typically restricted to professional domains (Malyuga, 2018), slang circulates more fluidly across social networks and often carries covert or playful communicative functions (Pilipei & Pylypenko, 2020).

The present study positions slang as a socially motivated and dynamic lexical phenomenon, focusing on its functional and contextual use rather than on rigid definitional boundaries.

Slang in Animated Film Discourse

To examine the dynamics of slang in functional and contextual use, this study carefully selected slang in children's animation because of its distinctive and unique qualities: educational and entertaining. This selection was made to ensure its comprehensibility, cultural relevance, and age-appropriateness. Unlike youth slang, which emerges spontaneously and develops organically among peer groups, animated film slang is designed to maintain its comprehensibility and relevance within the specific cultural and age demographics of its intended audience. In this way, the informal phrases used in animation function as stylized representations, carefully designed to convey modernity, relatability, and comedy. These phrases are used not as unfiltered reflections of contemporary youth speech, but as sophisticated stylistic devices intended to enhance the animation's accessibility and appeal.

These exaggerated informal styles are used to illustrate a phenomenon known as "media-mediated slang." This linguistic pattern is deliberately constructed to resemble spontaneous everyday conversation and functions as a narrative element. It makes animated films appear more realistic in terms of everyday conversation and facilitates instant social connection and identity negotiation. This approach facilitates audience alignment, generational contrast, and characterization. As Eble (1996) notes, slang is an indication of social identity. In the context of cinematic discourse, this indexicality is further reinforced by the deliberate construction of dialogue.

In addition, in animated films with comedic elements, casual vocabulary plays an important role in increasing their relevance. Exaggeration, incongruity, references to modern culture, or juxtaposition of casual language between characters (such as non-human characters) are other ways in which slang can create humorous effects. Such comedy often operates on multiple levels of interpretation in family animated films, allowing for the delivery of dual messages to adults and children.

This intentional application of informal utterances is not merely a stylistic purpose; it is an implementation of a cultured nuance of non-standard linguistics. To delve deeper into how the dual meanings of comedic mechanics are structured, it is important to analyze the morphological processes that construct this register. Slang language is signified by many major characteristics that set it distinct from mainstream language types. Eble (1996) identify six key characteristics that distinguish a phrase as a slang: affixation, acronyms, compounding, blends, metaphors, and clipping. Clipping is a word-formation process that shortens a word by removing one of its parts, producing informal new forms such as exam (ination), math (ematics), and lab (oratory). Clipping is viewed in contemporary linguistics as a tool to "informalize" language by eliminating a phrase's professional or formal weight to convey closeness and often concentrates on a word's "stressed" syllable to ensure it stays discernible notwithstanding the reduction (Berg, 2011; Yule, 2010).

Affixation involves adding prefixes or suffixes to a base word. Affixes provide speakers of slang the flexibility to change words and give them complex meanings. For instance, *trendy*, which means stylish, is created by adding the suffix *-y* to *trend*.

Slang is frequently used by speakers to become socially unique, establishing common language conventions that reinforce in-group identification. This function is influenced by a number of word-formation processes. Blends, like *edutainment* (education + entertainment), mix elements of two terms. Acronyms, like *LOL* (laughing out loud) and *BTW* (by the way), are frequently used in casual conversation, especially online. They are created from the first letters of words. Compounding creates a new term by joining two words, like *"couch potato"* for a lazy individual. Lastly, metaphor creates vivid expression by transferring meaning from one notion to another. For example, *time is money* highlights the importance and effective use of time.

Types of Slang Language

As previously mentioned, that there are several categories of slang. The following are examples: *Cockney Slang*, *Public House Slang*, *Workmen's Slang*, *Tradesmen's Slang*, *Slang in Art*, *Slang in Publicity*, *Slang in Theatre*, *Slang in Public School and University*, *Slang in Medicine*, *Society Slang*, and *Soldiers' Slang* (Partridge, 1950). *Cockney slang* is renowned for its distinctive pronunciation and strong accent, making it an essential example of regional language variation. For example, *"muvah"* is applied for *"mother,"* and *"fank you"* for *"thank you,"* showcasing consonantal flexibility by replacing the sounds *"th"* with *"f"* or *"v"* sounds. Notwithstanding these modifications, *Cockney slang* is still quite prevalent in English culture. *"Back double,"* meaning *"a back street,"* and *"gosher,"* which means *"a heavy blow or punch,"* are some of the examples. Beyond that, *Public House Slang* implies the jargon uttered in pubs and drinking locations. This slang substitutes for the shortage of formal expression pertinent to the situation and is defined as vibrant, hopeful, and materialistic, steering clear of vulgarity and cynicism. Examples entail *"war cry,"* which suggests a mix of stout (a type of beer), and *"round the corner,"* which signifies consuming some strong alcohol. These slang expressions illustrate plenty of social and cultural elements of English pub culture.

Workmen's Slang is a sort of slang that has a connection to public house slang, although there is a distinction. The users of workmen's slang do not refer to the actual *"something,"* but rather to a different word that is already known and understood among them. For example, *jumping Jinny* means a mechanical stamper used in road repairs, and *bank up* means to lay in a mighty store. Some words in tradesmen's slang and workmen's slang are related to origin slang, and the users are also workers. However, tailors, butchers, chemists, and builders are the four most common users of tradesmen's lingo. The tailoring industry has the most slang phrases. For example, a *turkey buyer* means a person of considerable importance, and a *house of parliament* means a meeting of the tailor's assistant. Further, slang in art is still socially relevant.

Although only a few words are known as creative slang, words or phrases used in art are swiftly accepted by society. Several slang phrases are challenging to comprehend as their meanings are not intuitive or apparent. For instance, in a drama performance, *"drawing"* infers a watercolor painting, but *"gamut"* indicates a photograph, pointing out how a particular set of words within specific disciplines can be indiscernible to some people (Agha, 2006). There are various well-known words in theatre slang. Some examples are *"to do a garbo,"* which is defined to steer away from media attention and notoriety, and *"worth a guinea box,"* which implies a little, affordable, or functional object. Likewise, theater slang encompasses phrases with specific meanings, like *"actor by profession"* for a performer, *"a super"* or *"an extra"* for a person who is occasionally recruited to perform in scenes involving big crowds or as part of the audience, and *"paper house,"* which indicates a theater where the majority of those attending are free ticket customers.

In several academic institutions, every school constructs its own distinctive language that signifies culture and ingenuity. For example, *"Cap"* means a falsehood, and *"what's the mat?"* suggests *"what is the matter?"* Moreover, language in higher education differs from those in public school, particularly when students have a transition from high school to college. For instance, *"brute"* implies a person who has not yet matriculated, while *"leccer"* refers to a lecture. Within the society slang, these words are commonly utilized in everyday dialogues and are heavily linked

with societal communities. Each community has a propensity to make its own list of vocabulary, and through association, these phrases and expressions help strengthen the group's identity.

Not only small communities, but slang has also significantly influenced western culture and has continued to characterize varied social groupings in this current era. Several examples include "repulsive," which suggests something disagreeable or spiritless, and "silver pheasant," which can be described as a lovely society woman. Yet, another specific type of slang is medical slang, which is commonly uttered by physicians and nurses (McDonald, 2002). This type has a few examples since doctors seldom ever discuss their job with one another outside of clinical settings, and they barely mention their "shop" with outsiders. For example, the sciatic nerve can be implied also as "sciatic." In military societies, soldier's slang is broadly used and frequently expresses mutual banter. For instance, the sarcastic phrase "SNAFU" denotes "situation normal, all fouled up".

Previous Related Studies

There were some similarities between this research and the previous studies. In this research, we examined the characteristics and types of slang words in *The Boss: Family Business* movie using (Eble, 1996) to find and identify the slang language used in the movie. Given that Afrilian et al. (2019) offers an essential understanding of deixis within the rhythmic and frequently recurrent framework of musical compositions, there is still a substantial scholarly gap concerning how slang plays its part within the dynamic, diverse character interactions of modern family-oriented cinema. Music often implements slang for lyrical cadence or brand identification, but cinema speech acts as a different sociolinguistic function: the immediate construction of human interactions and character growth.

This research differentiated itself by redirecting the focus from the poetic realm to the film's "Family Business" background. As opposed to song lyrics, which are static, movie speech portrays "spontaneous-style" dialogues that mimic real-world societal cues (Danesi, 2017). Furthermore, despite earlier research that might have centered mainly on morphological development, this study combined slang as well as the unique sociolinguistic attributes defined by (Eble, 1996). This multi-theoretical approach facilitated a more in-depth scrutiny of how slang operated as a tool for "social cohesiveness" inside a family unit, which is an area that sometimes can be overlooked in broader linguistic studies of pop culture.

This study tackled a fundamental gap in recognizing how informal language is normalized for large populations, such as children and adults, through assessing forty specific slang phrases spanning multiple categories, encompassing the unconventional categorizations of medical slang and slang in publicity. This work, therefore, demonstrated a vital link between morphological analysis and the larger sociolinguistic application of contemporary English as depicted in current media. In comparison to prior studies, which may concentrate on a single linguistic element, this study was situated through a multidimensional lens, discovering six particular traits and four distinct aspects of slang in film conversation.

Research Method

A corpus-assisted qualitative research was selected to analyze slang expressions in DreamWorks' animated film *The Boss Baby: Family Business*. This qualitative approach was employed to interpret slang items within their conversational context, while the corpus-assisted approach strengthened the analysis through coding, frequency-based distribution, and systematic documentation (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Saunders et al., 2011). This allowed the research to delve into not only the linguistic features of slang but also the dominant aspects in slang usage within the movie.

The data were gathered from the film's dialogues using English subtitles and supplementing script materials as reference sources. The dataset comprised all utterances containing slang expressions uttered by the characters in the film. The film was chosen due to its frequent and varied usage of slang across multiple characters, providing it a suitable source for sociolinguistic analysis. The main research instrument was an Excel-based coding sheet aimed to compile the mini-corpus and organize the data consistently (Johnson & Christensen, 2024). Each slang occurrence was recorded as one entry in the dataset, encompassing information on the

speaker, the utterance, the slang item, its meaning, and its classification. Meanings were validated using specialized slang dictionaries (Dalzell, 2008) to guarantee interpretive reliability and to reduce the chance of misclassification.

Data collection was carried through repeated viewing of the film to recognize slang expressions and affirm their situational context. Slang items were extracted from the dialogues and compiled into the dataset. Repeated slang expressions were recorded separately to represent their frequency of occurrence. The dataset was reviewed several times to minimize omissions and to ensure consistency in documentation. Data analysis was carried out through corpus-assisted content analysis. Each slang item was coded according to the theoretical framework: Eble (1996) was used to identify slang characteristics, while (Partridge, 1950) was used to classify slang types. The slang characteristics were categorized into six forms: clipping, compounding, acronyms, blends, metaphor, and affixation. The slang types were categorized into four groups: society slang, slang in publicity, slang in school and university, and medical slang. After coding the data, frequency and distribution patterns were generated using Excel pivot tables to determine dominant features, dominant slang types, and patterns of slang usage across characters. The findings were then interpreted qualitatively to explain how slang operates as a sociolinguistic resource in the film’s narrative.

Results and Discussion

Result

1. The Frequency of Linguistic Variations in Slang

Based on the deep observation on the film’s dialogues, the research found a total of 40 slang expressions identified in *The Boss Baby: Family Business*. These expressions are categorized according to linguistic characteristics, including compounding, clipping, metaphor, acronym, blend, and affixation. The data are presented below in table 1.

Slang Characteristic	Frequency	Examples
Compounding	12	Helmet head, Tickle monster, Grown-ups, High-fives, Old-timer, Big-shot, Back-talk, Tooth-fairy, Back-seat, Fire-drill, Double-crossing, Out-think
Clipping	10	Dad, Babe, Mommy/Daddy, Babbling, Gotcha, Choo-choo, Dum-dum, 'em, Gramps/Nana, Darn it
Metaphor	7	Chip off the old block, Real brains, Vile ogre, Diaper rash, Walking disaster, Bullseye, Goldmine
Acronym	4	OMG, B-day, Heck, ASAP
Blends	4	Doorknob, Doodads, Chillax, Glamping
Affixation	3	Sweety, Chubby, Teensy weensy
Total	40	—

Table 1. Frequency of Slang Characteristics

The classification results in 12 instances of compounding and 10 instances of clipping as the most frequent linguistic characteristics, while affixation is the least frequent with only 3 examples.

2. The Frequency of Slang types

The research also classified the identified slangs into four distinct categories: society slang, slang in publicity, school & university slang, and medicine slang. Table 2. Consists of the classification.

Slang Type	Frequency	Examples
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Society Slang	18	Dad, Babe, Mommy, Daddy, Babbling, Gotcha, Choo-choo, Dum-dum, 'em, Gramps, Nana, Darn it, Helmet head, Tickle monster, Grown-ups, High-fives, Old-timer, Big-shot
Slang in Publicity	13	Real brains, Vile ogre, Walking disaster, Bullseye, Goldmine, Out-think, Double-crossing, Think outside the box, Power- nap, Synergy, Game-changer, Deep-dive, Pivot
School & University Slang	8	OMG, B-day, Heck, ASAP, Butt-dialed, Chillax, Glamping, Doodads
Medicine Slang	1	Diaper rash
Total	40	—

Table 2. Frequency of Slang Types

The preceding table reveals that the most prevalent slang is that of society, with 18 items, followed by 13 items of slang in publicity, 8 items of school/university slang, and 1 item of medicine slang.

3. Cross Tabulation of Slang Characteristics and Types

The relationship between linguistic characteristics and slang types was analyzed using cross-tabulation, as illustrated in the following table 3.

Slang Characteristic	Society Slang	Publicity Slang	School & University Slang	Medicine Slang	Total
Compounding	6	4	2	0	12
Clipping	10	0	0	0	10
Metaphor	1	5	1	1	7
Acronym	0	0	4	0	4
Blends	1	1	2	0	4
Affixation	0	3	0	0	3
Total	18	13	8	1	40

Table 3. Cross Tabulation of Slang Characteristics and Types

A close examination of the data reveals a concentration of compounding and clipping in the domain of slang. Metaphor and affixation manifested predominantly in the domain of publicity slang. The utilization of acronyms was a phenomenon that was exclusively confined to the realm of school and university slang. The use of medicine slang was limited to a single instance, manifesting in metaphorical manner.

Discussion

The discussion part addressed mainly two research questions: 1) the forms and categories of slang found in the film, 2) how slang is distributed across characters and contexts to construct sociolinguistic meaning and character portrayal.

1. Slang Expressions and Their Classification

The results of this research demonstrate that slang in the *Baby Boss: Family Business* is largely constructed through both word-formation process and figurative language that are easily recognized by the audiences. The film's dominant forms, compounding - Clipping, clearly indicate a priority on accessible, audience friendly, and contextually transparent slang, as is typical for family-oriented animated films.

Compounding

First, compounding emerged as the most dominant characteristic of slang with 12 items

successfully identified. Compounds such as Helmet head, Tickle monster, Grown-ups, High-fives, Old-timer, Big-shot, Back-talk, Tooth-Fairy, Back-seat, Fira-drill, Double-crossing, and Out-think are uttered by different characters and function as compressed meaning into a single memorable expression. The presence of these words emphasize that the dialogue relies on multi-word lexical creativity with imageable expressions. The usage of exaggerated vocabulary completes the visual story telling, making them suitable for an animated film dialogue.

Most compoundings are regularly employed for evaluative labeling through a friendly teasing insult interaction. When Ted says "You're just jealous, helmet head!," the dialogue seems to make fun of Tim's appearance by framing it as a stiff, helmet-like haircut. This encourages a playful rivalry among siblings while remaining appropriate for children, without coming across as blatantly antagonistic. In another example. Compounds like "high-fives" and "old-timer" are used when characters are interacting casually and in a humorous way. By implementing these playful compounds, individuals are able to navigate the thin border between intimacy and insult, morphing potentially astute critiques into mutual moments of reciprocal understanding. Additionally, compounding occurs in terms like tooth-fairy and grown-ups that both indicate family-oriented discourse. The residential contexts of the movie and its target audience of children and adults can be observed in these objects. These compounds reinforce the film's main topic of intergenerational connections by simulating the natural lexicon of family life and childhood conversation rather than serving as technical phrases. In this way, compounding enhances the sociolinguistic authenticity of the movie by reflecting the way speakers, especially in casual contexts, describe roles, routines, and everyday events using imaginative compounds. All things considered, the prevalence of compounding indicates that the necessity for expressive efficiency shapes slang in the movie: characters may swiftly convey humor, appraisal, and social position while preserving conversational flow through the use of compounds.

Clipping

The second most common slang feature, with ten items in the sample (25%), was clipping. Clipping creates an appearance of natural conversational flow and helps to approximate spontaneous speech in movie dialogue. Through this pattern, characters' dialogues attempt to present a frequent lexical shortening to make the dialogue seem casual and natural. Examples of conversational efficiency include words such as "dad," "babe," "mommy/daddy," "babbling," "gotcha," "choo-choo," "dum-dum," "em," "gramps/nana," and "darn it," where speakers condense extended or more formal statements into short, common forms. Regardless of the morphological processes of word shortening through the use of clipping or phonetic reduction, these 'short forms' collectively serve as a linguistic means to strip away the artifice of the script, accommodating conversational efficiency over grammatical rules.

Similar to compounding, the film features clipped forms that are commonly used in family relationships and environments. The idea is the same: informality is a sign of closeness. The familial narrative is central to the film and is reinforced by the frequent use of terms such as "dad," "mom," "mommy," and "daddy," which reflect familial roles and emotional closeness. Affectionate terms of address such as "gramps," and "nana" also convey warmth and familiarity in relationships. Shortened phrases such as "gotcha" and "um" emphasise the naturalness of everyday communication. As Eble (1996) explains, slang overlaps with casual, everyday vocabulary and functions as a social style indicating relaxed contact. However, these elements are not necessarily slang in the sense that they are 'secret' or restricted to a particular group.

In addition to family-oriented discourse, clippings can be found in evaluative phrases such as 'dum-dum' and child-oriented idioms such as 'choo-choo'. This is fitting for an animated film, complementing its exaggerated and humorous tension. The frequency of clipping also illustrates a deeper meaning: the slang in this film depicts everyday interactions and family bonds as organic, personal and emotionally expressive, relying on informal simplicity and creativity. Hence, through the usage of clipping or reduplication, these linguistic options further deepen the tonal nuance to feel closer to the character's unpolished viewpoint, focusing on emotional resonance over formal accuracy.

Metaphor



Metaphorical slang is the third most common. Metaphor is a way to express ideas using comparisons that are a little bit more complex than a simple analogy. There are, at least, seven slang terms (17.5%) that are used in this film to convey metaphorical meaning. This is undoubtedly intentional, as it demonstrates the film's regular use of everyday language with figurative meaning to enhance comedy, imagery and judgement. Examples of identified metaphorical slang items include "Chip off the old block," "Real brains," "Vile ogre," "Diaper rash," "Walking disaster," "Bullseye," and "Goldmine." The dialogue in this film demonstrates additional semantic creativity, as well as word creation processes such as truncation and combination. It should also be noted that phrases such as, "choo-choo" or "dum-dum" are some examples of reduplication, particularly hypocoristic reduplication or baby-talk. By weaving metaphorical choices into the context of motion pictures, the reliance on metaphorical slang balances the practical, literal characters' stories with the relatability and whimsical nature of human speech.

Boss Baby:

Tim: "Wait, who's the block?"

Boss Baby: "I'm the block."

Tim: "You can't be the block, I'm the block."

A clear example is where Boss Baby says: "Tabitha can handle it. She's a real chip off the old block." As a metaphorical compliment, this phrase indicates many layers of meaning, site of humour and identity negotiation, as Tim responds: "Wait, who's the block?" and Boss Baby insists: "I'm the block." The metaphor in this conversational technique creates comedy, meaningful judgement, and memorable images of character, while also causing interactional tension. These metaphorical phrases are more than just a way to make writing sound better. They also show that the writer understands and is aware of different cultures. Ultimately, these metaphorical processes convey how this form of slang operates as a means of identity negotiation, where the struggle over the 'block' reflects the wider power dynamics and comedic element within the family situation.

Acronyms and blends

Acronyms like OMG and ASAP are used in school and college, and are common among young people. OMG is used to express shock or excitement and is a reflection of contemporary spoken English trends among young speakers. This is consistent with studies on pop-cultural and peer-group language (Guy, 2011). Similarly, there are four items in the blend, and it makes up 10% of the total.

Blends are words made by combining parts of other words. They can be funny or expressive. In the film, Boss Baby uses the word "doorknob" to describe a foolish person. Here, doorknob indicates metaphorically and humorously, showing playful language mixing that is typical of informal speech. Blends like "chillax" and "glamping" are also examples of modern leisure and lifestyle slang. They show social trends that viewers can identify with.

Affixation

Affixation is rarely used, but it's important for creating a strong sense of identity. Words like "teensy-weensy" are used to talk about small things in a playful way. Teensy weensy serves to emphasize diminutive qualities and introduces an element of playfulness into the dialogue, thereby reflecting child-centered speech patterns. It is a prime example of a merger between affixation and reduplication, specifically rhyming reduplication. The relatively low frequency of affixation also suggests that it functions as a stylistic modifier rather than a morphological process. Its employment serves to accentuate qualities of innocence and diminutive stature, culminating in a characterization that is both entertaining and amusing. As a result, although affixation has appeared less frequent, these occasional informal linguistic variations allow the film to have stylized, emotionally-charged dialogues.

2. Slang types: society slang and publicity slang dominate

Ultimately, all slang expressions illustrate an increasingly clear functional pattern. There are four sociolinguistic categories following Partridge's typology: community slang, publication

slang, school/university slang, and medical slang. This categorization seems to illustrate the diversity of informal words and that the slang in this film reflects a domain-specific communication style, shaped by interpersonal roles, context, and communicative intent.

Society Slang (18 items; 45%)

The most common slang expressions in this film are categorized as Society Slang. These expressions are most dominant in the data set and provide an interesting insight into how this film relies heavily on informal everyday expressions to build relational closeness and natural conversation. This type of slang is usually associated with casual interpersonal interactions to establish or demonstrate familiarity, expressiveness, and social harmony. In *The Boss Baby: Family Business*, this type of slang means that the dialogue focuses more on family and domestic situations, reflecting the film's main themes of kinship and household dynamics.

The use of expressions such as “teensy weensy” implies a moment of affection and playful hyperbole. When uttered by a child such as Baby Tina, “...And it only lasts 48 teensy weensy hours.”, the implied meaning is not limited to “very small,” but also displays a communicative attitude (Wodak et al., 2011) of cuteness and comic persuasion. In a family context, such expressions convey social meanings such as softening instructions and strengthening intimacy, especially when spoken by younger characters or in a humorous context.

Interestingly, this most dominant type of slang expression truly depicts real life with the slang of society, including everyday greetings and informal lexical abbreviations such as “dad,” “babe,” “mommy/daddy,” “gotcha,” “darn it,” and “gramps/nana.” Indeed, these forms are common in casual English and serve as interpersonal signals that reinforce solidarity and familiarity. Their dominance in the film has shown a picture of a family that is emotionally close, informal, and authentic in conversation, rather than formal or distant.

Slang in Publicity (13 items; 32.5%)

Next, as the second largest category, slang in publicity is used in dialogue with 13 items. This type of slang is usually used by speakers to sound evaluative, persuasive, dramatic, or rhetorically appealing. Often, this type also reflects the style of marketing language, corporate communication, or media appearances. With these characteristics, this film features publicity slang with adult-oriented dialogue and scenes that parody professional or strategic conversations.

“Chip off the old block” is one example of slang publicity in this dataset. This dialogue illustrates an expression with figurative meaning and evaluative labeling. The use of this expression creates humor through hyperbole used by Boss Baby to positively assess Tabitha: “Tabitha can handle it. She's a real chip off the old block.”

This expression is used as a form of rhetorical support through metaphor, implying inherited competence and ability. It becomes even funnier when Tim's immediate response (“Wait, who's the block?”) turns the expression into an identity negotiation. This shows how slang can trigger playful conflict and character dynamics.

The expression, “helmet head” comparably functions, in this context, as interpersonal evaluation and insulting humor. When Ted says, “You're just jealous, helmet head!”, the slang phrase acts as a teasing attack that reinforces competition while maintaining a comedic tone. Publicity slang in this context often has performative qualities: characters use it to sound smart, dominant, or persuasive, especially in competitive interactions.

Once again emphasizing the characteristic slang style in publicity, “buzzwords-styles” expressions found in dialogue, such as synergy, deep-dive, pivot, and game-changer, give a more professional and mature impression than metaphors and insults. This is a category of publicity that includes stylish expressions that reflect modern corporate discourse and seem to function as markers of satire. Their presence reinforces the film's comedic critique of corporate culture, where excessive business language becomes an easily recognizable stereotype used for humor.

Slang in School/University (8 items; 20%)

The next style of expression depicted by the slang used by the characters is school/university slang. Reflecting the identity of young people, this category includes eight items and represents 20% of the dataset. This category's function is to quickly convey emotional

expressions in line with peer culture and contemporary language trends. Several patterns visible in the film include acronyms, abbreviations and playful word combinations resembling everyday expressions used by younger speakers.

Tabitha's exclamation of "OMG! Uncle Ted is the best!" is an example of spontaneous emotional response in acronym form. Furthermore, this pattern positions its users as socially modern and culturally connected, reflecting the discourse of contemporary youth, in which short forms originating from digital media have become normalised in conversation.

In addition to being characterised by contemporary patterns and shortened words, this style of expression emphasises the creativity of its users and is closely associated with young people. Other slang terms in this category, such as 'chillax', 'glamping' and 'doodads', further emphasise the creativity of modern lifestyle vocabulary, which symbolises a close connection with cultural relevance, trend awareness and youth identity. This pattern differs significantly from society slang, which primarily reinforces closeness. Even when spoken in a family context, the school/university slang in this film clearly marks the difference in language between generations.

Medicine Slang (1 Item; 2.5%)

The last pattern that appears in this film is medical slang. Quantitatively, expressions with this style are rarely used. They only appear once, accounting for 2.5% of the total. However, qualitatively, this item significantly explains how domain-specific slang can also be used metaphorically to create a comedic effect.

The expression "like a diaper rash" uttered by Baby Tina in the context of "Those photos will spread like a diaper rash!" uses a medical reference as a metaphor to describe a rapid and uncontrollable level of spread. Of course, this is not in the true clinical sense, but with this style, humor can arise from the unexpected application of uncomfortable bodily conditions to situations such as social media. This reaffirms the idea that slang in films can be imaginative, rather than interpersonal, to create memorable comedic images using socially recognizable references. Furthermore, by creating expressive and humorous comparisons, slang patterns like this also expand the range of slang beyond everyday interactions using specialized language or jargon.

Therefore, the interaction between linguistic characteristics and slang types reveals clear patterns. Compounding and clipping have been identified as elements of social slang, which is characterized by its playful, familiar, and relational nature. Metaphor and affixation, two linguistic devices, are particularly salient in the domain of publicity slang, serving to augment evaluative, humorous, and exaggerated connotations. Acronyms and blends are predominantly utilized in school/university slang, reflecting youth culture and the influence of digital technologies. Medicine slang is a rhetorical device that employs metaphorical language to highlight context-specific humor.

A comprehensive analysis of the data reveals that the use of slang in the film is characterized by its high degree of contextualization and functional integration. This integration involves the combination of creative linguistic forms with those that are socially and culturally meaningful, with the purpose of enhancing humor, characterization, and audience engagement. The utilization of specific dialogue excerpts in the film offers a tangible illustration of the operational dynamics of the expressions under consideration. These excerpts, when examined within the context of the film, not only serve as entertainment but also function as a reflection of the social relationships and identity that are intricately woven into the fabric of the film.

3. Distribution, Sociolinguistic Meaning, and Character Portrayal

The findings suggest that the employment of slang in the film is methodically structured in accordance with the characters' roles. The incorporation of slang into language does not occur randomly; rather, it serves as a sociolinguistic instrument employed in the construction of identity, relationships, humor, and authority.

a. Family slang as a marker of intimacy and belonging

Slang is frequently employed to signal relational closeness, particularly in family-centered dialogues. For instance, the phrase "Dad and mommy, gramps and Nana" are used repeatedly in interactions between siblings or between children and parents.

Tim: "Listen, kids, I'm your dad."

Tabitha: "Okay, dad."

Tim: "Call mommy." (context: household urgency and family coordination)

"Come on, gramps!" / "Thanks, nana!" (context: intergenerational closeness)

Similarly, the affixation "teensy weensy" conveys intimacy and affective connection.

Such forms support Holmes & Wilson (2022) claim that informal language choices signal solidarity and closeness. It also successfully reinforces the idea that slang often promotes brevity and simplicity in creation, particularly in quick interpersonal interactions (Eble, 1996). Further, in the film, family slang demonstrates a centrality because it reflects the emotional foundation of the narrative.

Baby Tina: "It's the perfect disguise! And it only lasts 48 teensy weensy hours."

Tim: "Oh, I am in on the mission!"

Additionally, in this context, the use of diminutive slang serves to underscore emotional intimacy and the presence of a playful dynamic. According to (Partridge, 1950), the employment of relational slang functions as a bonding mechanism, thereby engendering a sense of familiarity and reinforcing family dynamics. In this manner, colloquial language functions as a social lubricant, thereby fortifying interpersonal bonds within the film's narrative framework. These instances also support Eble's idea that slang is often used to create a sense of informality and social connection to negotiate status, closeness, and humour.

b. Slang as humor through teasing and playful conflict

The use of slang in the film serves a comedic function, employing creative linguistic forms to entertain audiences. Compounds such as "helmet head" and metaphors like "chip off the old block" serve to illustrate this function. For example, Ted: "You're just jealous, helmet head!" the insult is humorous rather than aggressive, which aligns with the film's designation as a family-friendly production. This reinforces the idea that slang functions as an expressive tool, allowing speakers to describe individuals and situations in stark contrast to precise descriptions (Eble, 1996)

Boss Baby: "Tabitha can handle it. She's a real chip off the old block."

Tim: "Wait, who's the block?"

Boss Baby: "I'm the block."

Tim: "You can't be the block, I'm the block."

The humorous interplay of metaphor, wordplay, and dialogue timing highlights how slang creates entertainment value while conveying evaluative meaning. Eble (1996)underscores the tendency of slang to function as a humorous or playful register, enabling speakers to employ creative language manipulation for social effect. The film's humor is strategically layered to resonate with both children, through the use of wordplay and visual cues, and adults, through the employment of figurative or cultural references. In other words, the appearance of these expressions adds humour and contributes to the cheerful atmosphere that makes the conversation feel friendly and relaxed (Indah Rezeki & Wahyudin Sagala, 2019)

c. Slang as a marker of social and cultural identity

Specific colloquial expressions, most notably acronyms and blends, function as indicators of youthful culture and digital competence. For example, Tabitha: "OMG! Uncle Ted is the best!" in this context, the acronym "OMG" serves as a marker for youthful enthusiasm, familiarity with contemporary expressions, and a peer-oriented linguistic style. Guy (2011)has noted that the use of digital-age slang in communication serves to denote social membership and shared cultural knowledge, thereby facilitating audience identification with characters. Blends such as "doorknob" exemplify a duality of influences, simultaneously evoking a sense of whimsical innovation and an informal, peer-group register.

Adult-oriented slang, including publicity metaphors such as "chip off the old block" and "helmet head," serves to convey authority, evaluation, and exaggerated humor. This linguistic phenomenon functions to distinguish adult characters from children while reinforcing social hierarchy. They connect what is popular in society with what makes a person unique (Mattiello, 2016).

Moreover, the use of publicity slang is a prominent sociolinguistic feature of the film. A plethora of corporate buzzwords have gained widespread recognition, including "synergy,"

“pivot,” “deep-dive,” and “game-changer.” Their presence serves as an indication of professionalism, while concurrently engaging in a form of satire that targets contemporary workplace discourse.

The following examples are drawn from the dataset: Synergy, Deep-dive, Pivot, Game-changer, Think outside the box, Power-nap. Despite their fleeting nature, these expressions wield a considerable sociolinguistic impact, serving as indices of a distinct social milieu: corporate culture. In this film, the employment of corporate slang serves to create a contrast between Ted's professional persona and the family context. From a sociolinguistic perspective, this lends credence to the notion that slang can serve as a marker for social identity that transcends age. It has been posited that slang can also function as a marker for occupation, lifestyle, and ideological stance (Holmes & Wilson, 2022). The employment of publicity slang contributes to the film's narrative humor by presenting business language in an exaggerated and absurd manner.

d. Enhancing narrative function and characterization

Slang also functions as a narrative tool, helping to define character traits, relationships, and plot dynamics. For instance: Child characters' playful compounding and acronyms signal innocence, creativity, and peer-style communication; Adult characters' metaphors and publicity slang reflect authority, wit, and evaluative judgment, adding depth to their personality; and Infant characters' affixation and diminutives emphasize cuteness, smallness, and playful mischief.

The use of medicine slang in this context is situational, occurring in moments intended to elicit a strong emotional response, such as laughter or tension. This use of slang can be considered context-dependent, as it is tailored to the specific circumstances of the narrative.

Through these patterns, slang emerges as a multifunctional sociolinguistic resource, playing a role in shaping character identity, conveying humor, signaling social roles, and creating cultural resonance. As Crystal (2003) contends, slang in media frequently serves concurrent linguistic, social, and pragmatic functions, a phenomenon that is manifest in the film's dialogue.

In addition, the observed patterns contribute to character portrayal in several ways. The differentiation of age and social role is a critical aspect of social analysis. Linguistic forms are known to signal whether a speaker is a child, adult, or infant. For instance: the use of diminutive terms such as “teensy-weensy” serves to underscore the status of the infant, infusing the dialogue with a sense of playfulness and reflecting child-centered speech patterns. In addition, the employment of acronyms, such as “OMG,” is pervasive among young individuals and serves to reinforce the status of young speakers. This phenomenon is particularly salient given its role as a prevailing linguistic expression within contemporary youth culture. Thus, our observation aligns with sociolinguistic research indicating that diminutives frequently serve as markers of affection, informality, and emotional warmth, particularly within child-centered discourse (Holmes & Wilson, 2022; Meyerhoff, 2018).

Furthermore, the presence of humor and relatability is indicative of specific character traits. The employment of metaphors, compounds, and blends of a playful nature has been demonstrated to engage audiences.

This chapter presents the results of a linguistic analysis of the film *The Boss Baby. Family Business*, the discussion centered on the role of slang as a sociolinguistic and narrative resource. The findings indicate that the use of slang in the film is characterized by linguistic diversity, with a prevalence of compounding and clipping. The most prevalent categories of slang identified are society slang and publicity slang. The utilization of slang in verbal communication is systematically distributed across characters and contexts, thereby contributing to the construction of identity, the expression of humor, the cultivation of family intimacy, and the imbuing of narrative meaning. A close examination of the film's dialogues reveals that slang is employed as a deliberate stylistic device, rather than as an incidental informal vocabulary.

Conclusion

This research examined the use of slang expressions in *The Boss Baby. Family Business*. Using a corpus-assisted qualitative approach, the study focused on identifying, classifying, and analyzing the character-specific distribution, sociolinguistic function, and usage patterns of slang expressions. The findings reveal several key insights:

1. **Variety and Classification of Slang:** A total of 40 slang expressions were identified and classified according to linguistic characteristics (e.g., compounding, clipping, metaphor, acronyms, blends, and affixation) and types (e.g., society slang, publicity slang, school/university slang, and medical slang). Compounding and clipping were the most frequent linguistic forms, and society and publicity slang were the most common types. These findings demonstrate that the slang in the film is linguistically diverse and contextually functional, serving humorous and relational purposes.
2. **Character-Specific Distribution:** Slang usage varies systematically across characters, reflecting their age, social role, and personality. Children's dialogue predominantly features acronyms, blends, and playful compounds, conveying creativity and peer-oriented communication. Adults favor metaphors, compounds, and publicity slang to express humor, evaluation, and authority. Infants use affixation and diminutives to signal cuteness and playful agency. Secondary characters contribute situationally specific slang for narrative or comedic effect. This distribution highlights the alignment of linguistic choices with character identity.
3. **Patterns of Usage and Contribution to Characterization:** An analysis of patterns reveals that linguistic form and type are strategically aligned to support the portrayal of characters and the function of the narrative. For example, compounding and clipping enhance humor and relational intimacy; metaphor conveys evaluative meaning; acronyms and blends reflect youth culture; and affixation emphasizes diminutive and playful qualities. Together, these patterns contribute to humor, social identity, interpersonal relationships, and narrative engagement. This demonstrates that slang is a multifunctional sociolinguistic and narrative resource.
4. **Sociolinguistic Significance:** The findings reveal that slang in animated media is not accidental but is instead carefully crafted to fulfill multiple communicative purposes. It differentiates characters, enhances humor, expresses social relationships, signals identity, and enriches narrative texture. These insights support previous theoretical perspectives on slang as a tool for social expression, identity construction, and evaluative humor (Eble, 1996; Holmes & Wilson, 2022).

Overall, this study shows that slang in *The Boss Baby: Family Business* is a deliberate and meaningful linguistic resource. Its varied forms, types, and usage patterns serve narrative and sociolinguistic functions, significantly contributing to character portrayal, audience engagement, and the humor and creativity of the film's dialogue.

Recommendation

Future studies should integrate quantitative corpus tools to determine the frequency and density of slang more accurately throughout various character groups. Subsequently, incorporating multimodal investigation that considers visible stimuli and tone of voice, would offer a more comprehensive grasp of how slang operates in animated media. Researchers and academicians are encouraged to have comparative studies between the original English version and tailored dubs or subtitles. This would uncover how culturally particular slang is modified for international individuals and how translators preserve the sociolinguistic aspects of character identity. To obtain wider findings, future research ought to broaden the corpus to encompass a wider variety of multiple films across diverse genres (e.g., historical drama, documentary) or longer form of media like television series. This could assist in measuring if the slang patterns discovered in family-oriented animation are constant across the larger cinematic scene.

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