

Primary and Secondary English Slang in SCREAM VI Movie: A Sociolinguistics Analysis

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Abstract: This research analyzed the English slang in the SCREAM VI movie through a sociolinguistic framework focusing on Chapman's primary and secondary slang. Teenage characters for group identity widely use primary slang while secondary slang conveys attitudes and serves as a covert code. The qualitative descriptive method reveals that slang in SCREAM VI creates informality, expresses rebellion, and provides in-group exclusivity. The researchers collected the data by watching the film SCREAM VI, downloading the movie script, and extracting the slang words used in it. The findings highlight the dynamic role of slang in reflecting social dimensions and cultural values within youth subcultures towards the primary and secondary slang found. It is expected that future research explores slang across different media and cultural contexts to further understand its evolution and functions.

Keywords: English slang, movie script, Scream VI, sociolinguistics

INTRODUCTION

Language plays a crucial role in human life. It serves as the primary instrument for human communication, facilitating the development of feelings and ideas towards others. Without it, understanding and collaboration among humans would be significantly challenging. This assertion is supported by Mwakapina (2021) who asserts that language is as essential tool for human beings. This highlights the pervasive influence of language across various human endeavors. Through language, individuals can effectively convey thoughts, ideas, and knowledge, fostering interpersonal connectivity and intellectual exchange. The emergence of sociolinguistics, a branch of linguistic inquiry, can be traced to the endeavor of understanding language in its societal milieu. It delves into the intricate interplay between language and the multifarious social factors within a given community (Chaer and Agustina, 2004).

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Sociolinguistics refers to how language is used in society. This discipline investigates how social status, culture, gender, and communicative context influence language use, and how language usage reflects and shapes social structures within society. Nasution et al., (2019) confirm that sociolinguistics is about the use of language in society. Slang constitutes a segment of sociolinguistics. Slang is defined as informal language used within particular social contexts, characterized by its dynamic nature and incorporation of creativity and playfulness (Dumas & Lighter, 1978). While slang is used by various demographics, youth communities and subcultures often play a significant role in its creation and propagation. Slang serves multiple purposes, including facilitating group identity, expressing rebellion, and providing informality and in-group exclusivity. Its usage reflects social dynamics, cultural values, and contributes to language variation and change, offering insights into societal and linguistic contexts.

One of the uses of slang words is through movie scripts. The relationship between film scripts adapted into films is the process of transformation from text to visual, where dialogue, plot, and characters are realized in audiovisual form. The times, such as cultural changes and language development, encourage the use of slang words in dialog to display realism and contextual relevance in films. Slang words are used to create closeness with the audience and portray characters and atmosphere more accurately. The analysis of slang words attracted many researchers. The word formation analysis of slang (Firdaus & Ardi, 2023; Shera & Fitrawati, 2021; Maulana & Rosa, 2021; Hafiza & Rosa, 2020) and its translation (Harahap & Lubis, 2021) were investigated. On the screen platform, the research on slang was done with television series (Yulia & Ningsih, 2024).

Numerous researches have been conducted regarding the analysis of slang in movie. Some are according to Allan and Burridge' theory (Dula, 2024; Prasetyo et al., 2023; Susanto et al., 2023; Achmad et al., 2023; Dewi & Ariyaningsih, 2023; Maudy et al., 2023; Pranata & Nasrullah, 2023; Syahputra & Syafitri, 2022; Putra & Winarta, 2022; Manurung et al., 2020), and some are according to Chapman's theory (Ramadhani et al., 2023; Jaya et al., 2022; Utami et al., 2022; Yudhistira & Mayasari, 2022; Christiana et al., 2021; Abidin, 2021; Syahputra et al., 2021). Based on the above rationale, it is essential to study slang words further, focusing on a different movie, SCREAM VI, which was released in 2023. It is selected as the research object because almost all the characters in this movie are teenagers, and they belong to a group that often uses slang. Then the analysis of slang words in this movie has never been done before.

Although various studies have examined the use of slang in films using different linguistic frameworks, few have focused specifically on categorizing slang based on Chapman's theory of primary and secondary slang. Moreover, previous studies tend to emphasize popular genres such as action or romance, while limited attention has been given to horror films, which often incorporate youth-oriented dialogues rich in contemporary slang. SCREAM VI, featuring predominantly teenage characters, offers a unique opportunity to explore how slang is used not only as a communicative tool but also as a marker of group identity and cultural expression. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, no prior study has analyzed slang use in SCREAM VI using this sociolinguistic lens. This study seeks to

fill that gap by examining the types and functions of slang found in the movie, and by interpreting their social meanings through the classification of primary and secondary slang.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the types of English slang used in the *SCREAM VI* movie. As explained by Nassaji (2015), qualitative descriptive research is concerned with understanding a phenomenon within its natural context, focusing on describing its characteristics rather than quantifying data. In this context, the descriptive method was used to explore how slang appears in the dialogue and how it aligns with Chapman's (1998) classification of primary and secondary slang.

Data Collection

The data were collected through several steps. First, the researchers watched *SCREAM VI* (2023), which has a runtime of 122 minutes, to understand the storyline, setting, and character dynamics. The film was chosen because most characters are teenagers — a demographic known for active slang usage (Dumas & Lighter, 1978) — and because this film had not yet been analyzed from a sociolinguistic perspective using Chapman's classification.

Next, the researchers downloaded the complete movie script from a reputable source (<https://thescriptlab.com/property/scream-vi/>). All materials, including the film and script, were obtained legally: the movie was sourced from the original 4K Blu-Ray disc, and the script from a licensed script archive. Slang expressions were then systematically extracted from the script, focusing on informal, non-standard vocabulary used in character dialogues.

Data Processing and Analysis

The analysis followed several procedures:

1. **Screening:** All lines of dialogue were examined, and irrelevant or neutral dialogue was excluded. Only utterances containing potential slang were retained.
2. **Identification and Classification:** The selected slang terms were then categorized as either primary or secondary slang based on Chapman's (1998) definitions:
 - *Primary slang* refers to slang widely recognized and used by the general public, especially among youth.
 - *Secondary slang* includes more coded or community-specific expressions, understood primarily by select groups.
3. **Verification of Meaning:** The meanings of each slang term were verified using an online slang dictionary to ensure accurate interpretation.
4. **Reduction and Conclusion:** After classification, the data were reduced to eliminate redundancies. Patterns were identified, tabulated, and visualized using charts. The researchers then drew conclusions regarding the frequency and function of slang in the film, ensuring that the results reflected the film's social and linguistic contexts.

Throughout the process, consistency was maintained by applying a uniform coding scheme aligned with the sociolinguistic framework proposed by Dumas and Lighter (1978)

and Chapman (1998). As emphasized by Nassaji (2015), such procedures help maintain validity and relevance in qualitative descriptive research.

RESULTS

The following table presents the results of the overall analysis.

Table 1. English Slang Found in Scream VI Movie

Slang Types	Quantity	Percentage (%)
Primary Slang	82	92.13%
Secondary Slang	7	7.87%
Total	90	100%

From the table above, it is evident that primary slang is the most frequently used type in the movie SCREAM VI, while Secondary Slang is the least used. The following section will categorize and analyze the collected slang data based on these types. This section presents the 82 primary slang terms found in the SCREAM VI movie script, derived from 160 lines of dialogue.

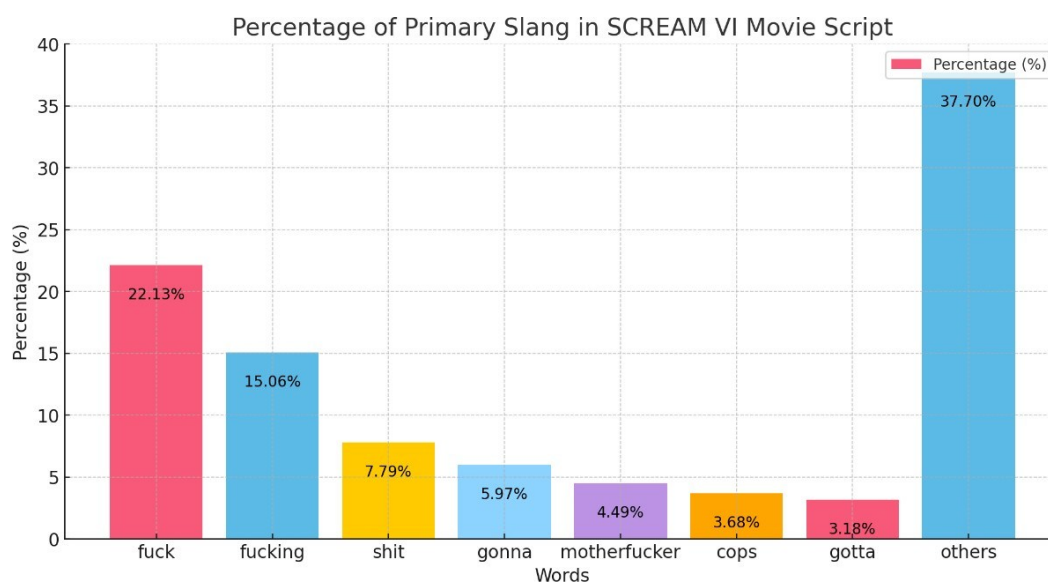


Figure 1. Percentage of Primary Slang in Scream Movie Script

In the figure above, the highest percentage is represented by the "others" category, accounting for 37.70%. However, the most frequently used slang word in the movie script is "fuck," appearing 27 times and constituting 22.13% of the total occurrences. Here are the sample dialogues that contain the most frequently occurring primary slang words, namely "fuck," "fucking," "shit," "gonna," "motherfucker," "cops," and "gotta." in the following elaboration:

Data 1 – ***Fuck*** (Page 8)

Jason: *Greg! Where the **fuck** are you?*

The phrase contains the slang word, "fuck". The word "fuck" literally means "sexual intercourse", but in this context, it is used as a vulgar expression that is inappropriate in formal or official situations. It is a profane word used to express anger, confusion, or disbelief. The word is uttered by the character Jason to express his frustration when inquiring about the whereabouts of his roommate, Greg, who has disappeared without notice. The word "fuck" itself is widely recognized by all native speakers in America. The slang word "fuck" appears 27 times in the script of the film *SCREAM VI*, making it the most frequently used primary slang word.

Data 2 – ***Fucking*** (Page 11)

Jason: *What are you, **fucking** five?*

The slang term in this phrase is "fucking." In this context, Jason is saying to Greg, "Are you a five years old kid?" as Greg suggests playing "warmer colder." The term "fucking" is well-known to native speakers in America, and thus it is categorized as primary slang. In the script of the film *SCREAM VI*, the word "fucking" is repeated 19 times.

Data 3 – ***Shit*** (Page 2)

Jason: *Am I on Hudson? I am not on Hudson. **Shit**.*

The phrase above contains the slang word "shit." This word is often used to express emotions or reactions in a stronger or more direct manner than standard language. 'Shit' has a literal meaning of 'feces' or 'excrement' and is employed to convey a range of emotions, such as surprise, frustration, annoyance, or disappointment. In this context, the character Jason uses the phrase containing this word to express his frustration at not reaching his destination. The word is quite popular and recognizable to native speakers, thus categorizing 'shit' as primary slang. The word "shit" is used 9 times in the dialogue of the script of the film *SCREAM VI*.

Data 4 – ***Gonna*** (Page 27)

Chad: *I'm **gonna** go. Get rest, get sober, don't kill your sister.*

The slang term in the phrase is "gonna." This word is a simplification of "going to," which in this context, Chad uses to inform Tara that he must depart to return to his dormitory. The slang term "gonna" itself is recognized by native speakers in America and is extensively popular in everyday conversations, television series dialogues, and other mediums.

Consequently, it is categorized as primary slang. In the script of the film SCREAM VI, the word “gonna” appears 8 times.

Data 5 – *Motherfucker* (Page 102)

Quinn: *Yes, you are, you **motherfucker**! You killed our brother!*

The slang term contained in the phrase is "motherfucker". This is a type of vulgar slang that should not be used in formal situations. In the context of this scene, the term "motherfucker" is directed at Samantha, with the intent of insult, and serves as an alternative to the word "bastard". The slang term "motherfucker" is fairly recognized by native speakers in America. The word “motherfucker” is repeated 5 times in the script of the film SCREAM VI.

Data 6 – *Cop* (Page 31)

Tara: *Quinn's Dad's a **cop** - can we call him and find out what's going on before you make the unilateral decision to abandon my college education and flee the state?*

The slang term present in the phrase is "cop." "Cop" is a slang form of the word "police officer." In this context, Tara states that Quinn's father is a police officer, and they need to call Quinn's father first to inquire about the actual tragedy that occurred. This term is quite popular among native speakers in America. The slang word “cop” appears 5 times in the script of the film SCREAM VI.

Data 7 – *Gotta* (Page 31)

Chad: *You **gotta** get out there, bud. Start making some moves.*

The slang word in this phrase is “gotta”. The term "gotta" is a slang contraction of "got to" or "have got to". It is usually used both written and spoken speech to convey necessity or obligation casually. In this context, the character Chad is urging Ethan to approach the girls at the fraternity party. He uses this slang because Ethan is his roommate, and the two characters are depicted as being quite close. The term “gotta” is well recognized by native speakers in America, and therefore, it is categorized as primary slang. In the script of the film SCREAM VI, the slang word "gotta" appears 4 times.

In addition, it was found that the two most frequently used secondary slang terms in the SCREAM VI movie script are "The Core Four," which appeared six times, accounting for 40%, and "Cute Boy," which appeared four times, accounting for 26.27%. The remaining terms were grouped together, accounting for 33.33%. A graphical representation is presented below in the form of the percentages of the secondary slang terms identified.

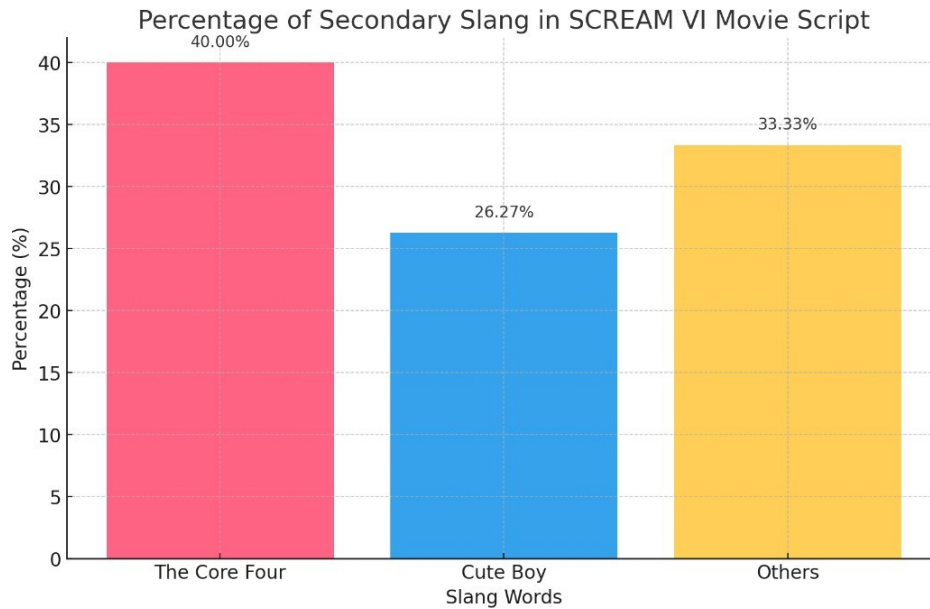


Figure 2. Percentage of Secondary Slang in Scream Movie Script

In the figure above, the highest percentage is represented by the "The Core Four" category, accounting for 40.00%, while the next category, "Cute Boy," comprises 26.27%. Subsequently, the "others" category, which combines secondary slang terms that appeared only once, constitutes 33.33%. Here are the instances of dialogue containing secondary slang, regardless of their percentage distribution, in the following elaboration:

Data 1 – *The Core Four* (Page 49)

Chad: *This is gonna be great. Slumber Party with the **Core Four**!*

The slang term present in the phrase is "core four," which is a nickname used to refer to the four *Woodsboro* murder survivors from 2022: *Chad, Mindy, Samantha, and Tara*. This term is employed to label their identity as survivors of the *Ghostface* killer. In this scene, the term "core four" was first coined through a remark made by the character Chad, implying that the four of them - *Chad, Mindy, Samantha, and Tara* - would be having a slumber party together. It can be categorized as secondary slang, as the form is informal and the usage is only understood by the specific individuals or communities who originally coined the term. This term appears six times in the dialogue, making it the most frequently used secondary slang term.

Data 2 – *Cute Boy* (Page 19)

Quinn: *Oooh, is **Cute Boy** shirtless again?*

The slang term used by the character Quinn in this line of dialogue is "cute boy." The term "cute boy" here does not have its literal meaning of "an attractive young man," but

rather refers to the character *Danny*, whose name is not yet known to Quinn and Samantha, so they nickname him "Cute Boy." This term is only known to the characters Quinn and Samantha. In this scene, Quinn and Samantha are observing the character Danny through a window, as they live in an apartment building across from him. The term "cute boy" in the context of this dialogue is categorized as secondary slang, as the actual referent is only known to the characters *Quinn* and *Samantha*. This term is used 4 times in the script, making it the second most frequently appearing secondary slang term.

Data 3 – *Little Miss You Know Who* (Page 7)

Jason: *Hey man, so... don't be mad. But I just did a practice run. Little Miss You Know Who from film studies.*

The phrase "Little Miss You Know Who" that appears in the dialogue categorized to secondary slang. It refers to the character Laura, who has been killed by Jason. Jason uses this term to refer to Laura in order to avoid being traced by the police if their phone records are detected. This phrase falls under the category of secondary slang because it is a secret term known only to Jason and Greg. This term is used only once in the SCREAM VI movie script, placing it in the "others" category.

Data 4 – *Chicks dig confidence and you're a snack* (Page 22)

Chad: *Chicks dig confidence and you're a snack.*

The slang phrase used by the character Chad in the dialogue below is "Chicks dig confidence and you're a snack." The term "chicks" is a slang word referring to young women. This is a less formal slang term often used in casual conversation. The word "dig" in this context means to like or be attracted to something, rather than its literal meaning of digging. The word "confidence" is used in its general sense, but the entire phrase spoken by the character Chad in the scene suggests the idea that women are attracted to confident men, which is a common social concept often expressed in popular culture. Therefore, this phrase is categorized as secondary slang. This term is used only once in the SCREAM VI movie script, placing it in the "others" category.

Data 5 – *Jurisdictional pissing contest* (Page 38)

Kirby: *I'm not looking to get into a jurisdictional pissing contest here; I just want to help.*

The slang phrase uttered by the character Kirby in this dialogue line is "jurisdictional pissing contest," which functions as an idiomatic expression, but is categorized as slang due to the inclusion of the profane term "pissing." Overall, "jurisdictional pissing contest" is a slang phrase used to describe a futile and childish power struggle between authorities, which in the context of this dialogue refers to the detectives. In the context of the dialogue, Kirby

wants to emphasize that she is not interested in encroaching on Bailey's investigative jurisdiction, and that *Kirby* is genuinely trying to be helpful. This phrase is categorized as secondary slang, as it is more commonly used within circles of authority figures and is not widely known among the general population. This term is used only once in the SCREAM VI movie script, placing it in the "others" category.

Data 6 - *whiny snowflake film nerds with Letterboxd accounts instead of personalities* (Page 45)

Mindy: *Franchises only survive by subverting expectations; if the killers last time were **whiny snowflake film nerds with Letterboxd accounts instead of personalities**, you can bet the opposite will be true here.*

The slang phrase in this dialogue is "whiny snowflake film nerds with Letterboxd accounts instead of personalities," which contains elements with distinct meanings. "Whiny" describes someone who complains excessively. "Snowflake" refers to a person who is overly sensitive or easily offended, often used pejoratively. "Film nerds" are people deeply interested in films, with "nerd" indicating a strong, perhaps peculiar, interest. Letterboxd is a social media platform for evaluating and discussing films. In this scene, *Mindy* uses the phrase "Letterboxd accounts instead of personalities" to imply that these individuals are more known for their activity on that platform than for their own personalities, indicating a focus on digital presence and film preferences over real-life interactions or genuine personal qualities. This phrase is used by *Mindy* to mock characters who care more about their social media image than being authentically themselves. This term is used only once in the SCREAM VI movie script, placing it in the "others" category.

Data 6 – *body count* (Page 44)

Mindy: *Heroes now in college? Check. Suspicious new characters brought in to round out the suspect list and/or **body count**? Check, check, and check.*

The slang term in this dialogue is "body count," which refers to the total number of victims in a horror film. In this scene, the character *Mindy*, an aficionado of horror films, employs the term while discussing theories to uncover the true identity of the Ghostface killer, drawing on established horror film conventions. Here, "body count" functions as secondary slang, predominantly understood within the subculture of American horror film enthusiasts. This term is used only once in the SCREAM VI movie script, placing it in the "others" category.

Data 7 – *cannon fodder* (Page 45)

Mindy: *Legacy characters are **cannon fodder** at this point, usually brought back only to be killed off in some cheap bid for nostalgia.*

The slang term present in the dialogue line below is "cannon fodder." The term "cannon" itself refers to heavy artillery weapons used in combat, while "fodder" typically denotes inexpensive and readily available feed for livestock. In the context of this dialogue, "cannon fodder" is employed as a metaphor to characterize the film's characters (particularly legacy or returning characters) who are reintroduced solely to be killed off, serving dramatic effect or cheap nostalgia. This suggests that these characters are perceived as expendable, sacrificed to serve a particular purpose without much consideration for deeper character development or narrative progression. The term is informal in nature and, in the context of this dialogue, is only recognized by American horror film enthusiasts, based on the established conventions of the horror film franchise. Therefore, the use of "cannon fodder" in this dialogue context can be categorized as secondary slang. This term is used only once in the SCREAM VI movie script, placing it in the "others" category.

Data 8 – *franchise Easter eggs* (Page 47)

Kirby: *The Ghostface who was directing Stab 3. It's like he's leaving us real life **franchise Easter eggs** - dropping the killers' masks in reverse. Almost like he's counting down to something.*

The slang term present in this dialogue line is "franchise Easter eggs," which in the context of filmmaking refers to hidden references in a newer film from an established franchise, often manifesting as the appearance of objects or characters from previous installments. These references are not limited to the franchise's own prior films, as they can sometimes also include tributes to other film franchises. In the context of this dialogue, the term "franchise Easter eggs" refers to the hidden clues or references left by the killer, which are connected to the previous films in the Stab franchise. The phrase "*franchise Easter eggs*" is categorized as secondary slang, as its usage is more common among film enthusiast communities than the general American public. This term is used only once in the SCREAM VI movie script, placing it in the "others" category.

The results indicate that SCREAM VI predominantly utilizes primary slang, reflecting the everyday vernacular of the teenage characters. This usage aligns with the movie's target demographic and setting, where informal language is a natural part of communication. The seven primary slang words most frequently used are "fuck," "fucking," "shit," "gonna," and "gotta." Secondary slang, although less frequent, serves to convey specific attitudes and resourcefulness among the characters, often in more covert or coded forms. The two most commonly used secondary slang terms are "The Core Four" and "Cute Boy". The presence of both primary and secondary slang provides a nuanced understanding of character dynamics and social interactions within the film.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reaffirm the dominance of primary slang in the *SCREAM VI* movie script, where informal language serves as a key marker of youth identity and social bonding. This supports the view of Dumas and Lighter (1978), who state that slang is often characterized by creativity, playfulness, and group specificity. In the case of *SCREAM VI*, slang such as *fuck*, *shit*, and *gonna* reflects the characters' emotional states, familiarity, and generational communication style, particularly among teenagers navigating high-stress or rebellious scenarios.

The result corresponds with Utami et al. (2020), who found that primary slang was more commonly used in *The Fate and the Furious*, emphasizing its role in portraying everyday speech and close interpersonal relationships. Likewise, Christiana et al. (2021) discovered a high frequency of primary slang in *Birds of Prey*, identifying similar terms such as *fuck*, *wanna*, and *shit*, many of which also appeared in *SCREAM VI*. These repeated patterns across different movies highlight the recurring use of primary slang to build authenticity and relatability, especially in action- or youth-driven films.

In contrast, studies such as Jaya et al. (2022) and Ramadhani (2023) reveal a stronger presence of secondary slang, which is more context-dependent and typically understood by a limited group. In *Ride Along 2*, the frequent use of secondary slang is attributed to the film's specific cultural and situational references. Similarly, Ramadhani's research in *The Kissing Booth* focuses primarily on secondary slang, leading to the exclusion of many primary slang instances. This contrast demonstrates that the dominance of slang types is influenced not only by the characters' age group but also by the film's thematic focus and analytical scope.

In *SCREAM VI*, secondary slang — though less frequent — plays a meaningful role in signalling social intimacy and in-group labelling. Phrases like *The Core Four* and *Cute Boy* exemplify Chapman's (1998) concept of secondary slang, where language is intentionally coded and only understood by a limited circle. These expressions function as identifiers of shared experience or subcultural reference, strengthening interpersonal dynamics among characters.

From a sociolinguistic standpoint, the coexistence of primary and secondary slang in this film reflects both the inclusive and exclusive functions of informal language. Primary slang provides directness and emotional realism, while secondary slang enhances narrative layers through secrecy or symbolic labelling.

However, this study is limited by its focus on a single film and reliance solely on the written script. As Manurung et al. (2020) noted, differences between scripts and spoken dialogues may affect interpretation. Additionally, while Chapman's (1998) theory is useful for classifying slang, it may not capture all sociocultural nuances present in modern cinematic language. Therefore, the findings should be viewed within the context of this specific film and theoretical approach.

Future research could benefit from analyzing multiple films across genres, or comparing how slang functions in different cultural or linguistic environments. As suggested by Yulia and Ningsih (2024), examining slang use in varied media platforms such as

television series may also offer broader insights into its evolving role in modern communication.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the film *SCREAM VI* predominantly employs primary slang, reflecting the everyday informal speech of teenagers and enhancing character authenticity within the narrative. The frequent use of expressions such as “*fuck*,” “*gonna*,” and “*shit*” illustrates how primary slang functions as a tool for emotional expression, rebellion, and in-group solidarity among youth characters. In contrast, secondary slang, though less frequent, provides a glimpse into specific cultural references and private codes used among close-knit groups, such as “The Core Four” and “Cute Boy.” These findings demonstrate how slang serves not only linguistic but also sociocultural functions in shaping identity, group belonging, and audience engagement.

The research contributes to a deeper understanding of how language variation is portrayed in contemporary cinema, especially within the horror genre. Future studies are encouraged to explore slang across different media forms and cultural contexts, compare genres, or analyze audience reception to slang use. Incorporating cross-cultural or multimodal analysis could also yield insights into the evolution of slang and its broader implications in popular culture and sociolinguistics.

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