

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Theoretical Framework

This section provides the theoretical framework used in this study, including the discussion of slang, type of meaning, and literature and society theory in order to analyze the phenomena of gay slang in the *Bros (2022)* movie.

2.1.1. Slang

Slang is colloquial speech that is used in place of everyday terms among younger people and other groups with a particular interest (Yule, 2010). In line with this definition, Eble (2006) defines slang as a constantly changing collection of words and phrases used by speakers in casual conversation but usually avoided when writing or when communicating with strangers or on formal occasions. Slang aims to form or strengthen social identity or cohesion, both within a group and with trends or fashions in society at large (Eble, 2006). Therefore, a word can be categorized as slang when it is primarily used informally within a particular social group and generally avoided in formal language use.

Slang also functions as a means of self-expression and displays personality because the formation of slang itself arises from a person's desire to distinguish themselves from others (Partridge, 2015). This phenomenon is evident in the gay community, as various terms in gay slang summarize social, sexual, and behavioral characteristics that help members understand their own position and that of others in the group (Sonenschein, 1969).

In this study, a word is defined as gay slang when it is used as colloquial or informal language within queer-related discourse and has been identified as gay slang in references, such as gay slang dictionaries by Baker (2002). For example, terms such as "top," "bottom," "switch," "femme," "closet queen," "fag hag," and many more reflect that gay language has specific terms that represent very specific aspects of Queer community life that are not always found in mainstream society (Jacobs, 1996).

2.1.2. Type of Meaning

According to Leech (1981), meaning arises from the way a linguistic form is related to the concept or reality it represents, as well as from how these linguistic forms relate to each other within the language system. Leech (1981) divided meaning into seven types.

2.1.2.1. Conceptual Meaning

Conceptual meaning, also called denotative or cognitive meaning, indicates the literal or dictionary definition of a word (Leech, 1981). Conceptual meaning is the core of a word without any additional associations or connotations (Sari, 2023). For example, the word “woman” has the conceptual meaning of an adult human female, which can be analyzed through the features +human, -male, and +adult.

This meaning is considered to be the most influential factor in linguistic communication because the most fundamental meaning that is always involved in using language is the literal meaning of each expression. It has a closed-ended characteristic, which means that there is no change in meaning taking place at all

(Swarniti, 2021). Without conceptual meaning, language cannot function as language, so conceptual meaning is fundamental (Leech, 1981).

2.1.2.2. Connotative Meaning

Leech (1981) defines connotative meaning as the communicative value of an expression based on what it refers to and beyond its mere conceptual content. Not only does it refer to literal meaning, but connotative meaning also refers to real-world experiences related to an expression when someone uses or hears it. The characteristic of connotative meaning is that it is open-ended, implying that its meaning is not final and will constantly change in accordance with the development of our knowledge and beliefs (Leech, 1981)

Connotative meaning does not only refer to physical or psychological forms but also psychological and social properties attached by society. For example, the term “woman” is not only defined conceptually as ‘human’, ‘adult’, and ‘female’, but also to the psychological and social traits such as sociability and a tendency toward maternal instincts (Leech, 1981).

2.1.2.3. Social Meaning

Social meaning is what a language expression conveys about the social conditions of its use (Leech, 1981). The reinterpretation of a text depends on our knowledge of stylistics and other language variations. Based on Leech (1981), social meaning is determined by six factors: dialect, era, region, social status, modality, and individuality. Social meaning can provide social information about the speaker and the speech situation, as we tend to recognize words dialectically.

Two words can have the same conceptual meaning but different social

meanings, so true synonyms do not exist. For example, “domicile” is usually used in official or legal contexts, “residence” in formal situations, “abode” in poetic expressions, and “home” in everyday language even though they all refer to a place where someone lives (Leech, 1981). Social meaning also contains illocutionary force because this function is often not the same as the literal meaning of the sentence but has other intentions, whether a request, assertion, threat, etc. (Leech, 1981).

2.1.2.4. Affective Meaning

Affective meaning refers to meaning that reflects the speaker's personal feelings, including their attitude toward the listener or their attitude toward the topic being discussed (Leech, 1981). This refers to the emotional association or effect that words have on the reader or listener (Martinius, 2023). According to Leech (1981), affective meaning is parasitic in nature, meaning that it can overlap with other meanings such as conceptual, connotative, or social/stylistic meanings.

Affective meaning can appear directly through words that clearly show emotion or indirectly through the choice of language style. For example, the expression “You’re a vicious tyrant and a villainous reprobate, and I hate you for it!” is clearly express the emotion of the speaker which is anger and hatred.

2.1.2.5. Reflected Meaning

Reflected meaning is the meaning that emerges in a situation of multiple conceptual meanings (Leech, 1981). In semantics, reflected meaning is a phenomenon in which a word or phrase is related to more than one meaning or interpretation. This is the result of human perception and imagination (Martinius,

2023).

This type of meaning suggests selecting a specific lexical term among other terms with similar meanings according to contextual association. For example, “The Holy Ghost” means the Spirit of God, but the word “ghost” in everyday usage means the literal “ghost,” which gives a scary impression (Leech, 1981).

2.1.2.6. Collocative Meaning

According to Leech (1981), collocative meaning refers to the meaning that a word tends to have when it appears together with certain other words in the language environment. It originates from the association that a word acquires as a result of the meanings of the words that tend to appear in its environment.

To illustrate this concept, Leech (1981) provides several examples. The words "beautiful" and "handsome" both mean good-looking, but they carry different collocative associations (Leech, 1981). Another example of collocative meaning is quasi-synonymous verbs such as "tremble" and "quiver," which both mean a slight vibration, but "tremble" is more commonly used in the context of fear, while "quiver" is used in the context of excitement (Leech, 1981).

2.1.2.7. Thematic Meaning

Thematic meaning refers to how the speaker or writer organizes their message, including its structure, focus, and emphasis (Leech, 1981). According to Leech (1981), two sentences can have the same conceptual content but still feel different because of differences in focus and structure.

Leech (1981) illustrates this point through the example of the sentences “They stopped at the end of the corridor” and “At the end of the corridor, they

stopped” have the same meaning, but the word order creates a different atmosphere. This highlights that meaning is not only context-based but also based on how information is organized and presented (Leech, 1981).

2.2. Research Method

2.2.1. Types of Research

This research used the descriptive qualitative method. Based on Kothari (2004), the qualitative method is concerned with qualitative phenomena related to qualities or types rather than numerical values. Therefore, the data collected in this study are analyzed descriptively to illustrate the phenomena under examination. The descriptive qualitative method was chosen specifically because this study examines character utterances, which consist of words rather than numbers. However, while qualitative methods primarily guide this research, quantitative methods are also used as a supplementary tool to aid in data collection and to calculate relevant percentages.

2.2.2. Data and Data Source

The data for this research were gathered from the utterances of Bobby Lieber, one of the main characters in the 2022 Netflix movie *Bros* (2022). To ensure accuracy, these utterances were assisted by subtitle transcripts retrieved from the online resource [sublikescript.com](https://www.sublikescript.com). The population of the data is all the utterances spoken by Bobby Lieber as the main character of the movie *Bros* (2022).

This study uses purposive sampling to focus specifically on the gay slang

that appears and is spoken by the main character. An expression was classified as gay slang if it appeared within queer-related discourse and was identified as slang through references such as gay slang dictionaries by Baker (2002), as well as slang dictionaries or dictionaries that classify the term as slang when used in Queer-related contexts.

2.2.3. Method of Collecting Data

In collecting data, the researcher used an observational method, thoroughly examining each utterance spoken by Bobby Lieber, the main character in the *Bros* (2022) movie. The first step that the researcher uses to collect the data is by listening to and watching the *Bros* (2022) movie on Netflix with the English subtitle enabled, ensuring that each utterance was clear. Next, the researcher downloaded the subtitle script from *subslakescript.com* and cross-checked it with the movie's dialogue to increase data validity.

After the subtitle was downloaded, the file was imported into a spreadsheet table to organize the dialogue systematically. From this file, the researcher identifies Bobby's utterances then filtered the table to include only his utterances without removing other characters dialogue to maintain the original context. Using purposive sampling, the researcher then selected only the utterances that contained gay slang and then identified the type of meaning of that gay slang using Leech's (1981) theory. Finally, the researcher re-watched the movie multiple times to verify the accuracy of the data.

2.2.4. Method of Analyzing Data

Several steps are used to analyze the data as follows.

1. The analysis begins by downloading the movie subtitle. The subtitled text is then organized into a table consisting of several columns, including the dialogue, the speaker, the indication of gay slang, and the type of meaning.
2. The subtitled data is organized into the dialogue column then identifies all utterances spoken by Bobby Lieber based on the movie's audio.
3. Next, the data is filtered to include only Bobby Lieber's utterances. Dialogue from other characters is not removed from the initial table to preserve the original context, but the analysis focuses solely on Bobby's utterances.
4. From Bobby Lieber's utterances, the researcher identifies which dialogues contain gay slang expressions.
5. The identified gay slang expressions were then classified based on their types of meaning using Leech's (1981) theory of meaning.
6. The next step is to calculate the frequency and percentage of each type of meaning to determine its distribution within the data.
7. Next, the researcher interpreted the slang descriptively based on Leech's (1981) type of meaning by analyzing how each type functions in Bobby's utterances.
8. Next, a comparative interpretation was conducted by comparing the slang meanings in the movie with the meanings of gay slang in real-life contexts using Online Etymology Dictionary and other dictionaries. Several terms

from each meaning category were selected based on the availability of clear meanings and contexts.

9. Furthermore, this study used Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) to identify the real-life context of gay slang usage among native American English speakers. Some selected terms were collocated with the word *gay* or other related words to ensure that the contexts specifically refer to gay discourse.
10. Finally, the real-life meaning source and real-life usage contexts were compared with the movie findings to examine whether the movie reflects real-life gay slang usage.