

Types and Functions of Slang Words Used in *Bookworm* (2024) Movie Script

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the types and functions of slang expressions used in the Bookworm (2024) movie script. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the data were collected from the movie script through repeated reading, note-taking, and observation. The analysis was guided by the classification of slang adapted from Allan and Burridge (2006) and Coleman (2012), while the functions of slang were interpreted by considering the conversational context, speakers, and addressees. The findings from ten selected slang expressions reveal five types of slang: community slang, standard slang, taboo slang, fresh and creative slang, and borrowed slang. Community slang is the most frequent category, with three occurrences, followed by standard slang, taboo slang, and fresh and creative slang, with two occurrences each, while borrowed slang appears once. The expressions serve six functions: addressing, humiliating, initiating relaxed conversations, forming an intimate atmosphere, expressing impressions, and revealing anger. Based on the analyzed examples, expressing impressions occurs in several different conversational contexts, although a complete frequency count of all six functions is needed to determine the dominant function. This study contributes to sociolinguistic research by demonstrating how slang in movie dialogue conveys attitudes, emotions, interpersonal relationships, and character identity.

Keywords: *Slang; Types of Slang; Slang Functions; Sociolinguistics, Bookworm (2024) Movie*

A. INTRODUCTION

Language is an important means of communication that allows people to express ideas, feelings, and relationships. People use language can be different depending on the situation, social group, and people involved. Holmes (2013) explains that language variation is influenced by social factors and can reflect the relationship and identity of speakers. One example of language variation is slang, which is commonly used in informal communication. Green (2016) describes slang as a distinctive lexical resource shaped by its users and social contexts.

Slang is an informal form of language that is often used in everyday communication and particular social groups. Eble (2012) explains that slang is closely related to social interaction and group identity. Allan and Burridge (2006) also state that slang provides speakers with

expressive ways to communicate informally. Therefore, slang is not only related to vocabulary but can also show how people interact with others.

Slang can be found in different forms of communication, including movies. Characters may use slang to express feelings, create humour, show attitudes, or develop relationships with other characters. Dumas and Lighter (1978) describe slang as language that is socially marked and commonly associated with informal use. Therefore, movie dialogue can be a useful source for examining how slang is used in different social situations.

This study focuses on the *Bookworm* (2024) movie script written by Toby Harvard and Ant Timpson. The movie was selected because it combines adventure, comedy, and family elements and focuses on the relationship between Mildred and her estranged father, Strawn. Their journey through the New Zealand wilderness involves family interaction, conflict, humour, and adventure. Second, the observation of the script found a considerable number of slang expressions used by characters. These findings indicate that the movie provides sufficient data for analyse the types and functions of slang. Therefore, this movie was considered a relevant and worthwhile object for this study.

Several previous studies have examined slang in different media. Ghassani et al. (2025) identified 91 slang expressions in *Dope Movie* and examined their types and use. Susanto et al. (2023) analyzed the types and functions of slang in *Turning Red* movie script using Allan and BurrIDGE's (2006) theory. Meanwhile, Hanafi and Setyowati (2026) examined slang types and functions in *Mean Girls* (2024), particularly their use in social interactions. These studies show that slang can be found and analyse various forms of media.

Other studies have also provided relevant perspectives on informal language. Ardira and Simatupang (2026) analyse slang in *Deadpool* and discussed its functions in humour, sarcasm, emotional expression, and character identity. Muhammad and Simatupang (2026) examined language styles in UFC trash talk and identified confrontational, humorous, and performative styles. These studies demonstrate that informal language can serve different purposes depending on the context in which it is used.

Research gap remains in the study of slang in audiovisual media. Based on literature reviewed, slang in the *Bookworm* (2024) movie script has not yet been specifically investigated. Previous studies have focused on other movies, television series, social media, and sports communication. In addition, the adventure, comedy, and family context of *Bookworm* has not been examined in the previous studies discussed above. Therefore, this study aims to address the gap by analyse slang in the *Bookworm* (2024) movie script.

The analysis also considers the context in which each slang expressions occurs. Hymes (1974) emphasizes that language use should be understood through the social situation and context of communication. This perspective is relevant because the meaning and function of a slang expression can depend on the interaction in which it is used. The present study considers both the slang expressions and their contexts.

This study examines slang in *Bookworm* (2024) as a meaningful part of character interaction and narrative style. By analyzing its forms and communicative roles, the study seeks to explain how informal expressions contribute to social meaning, character portrayal, and the overall flow of dialogue. The study is guided by two research questions: (1) what types of slang are used in *Bookworm* movie script? and (2) what functions of slang are used in *Bookworm* (2024) movie script? How these questions guide the study in examining how slang contributes to linguistic and social meanings in audiovisual communication.

This study is to identify the types and functions of slang in the *Bookworm* (2024) movie script. The study is expected to contribute to sociolinguistic research by showing how informal expressions are used in character interaction and how their use can reflect social relationships and communication in audiovisual media. It may also serve as a reference for future studies of slang in movies and other forms of popular media.

B. METHOD

This study applies a qualitative descriptive method to analyse slang expressions in the *Bookworm* (2024) movie script. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research aims to explore and understand the meanings individuals or groups associate with a particular social phenomenon. This method is suitable for the present study because the analysis focuses on identifying and describing slang types and interpreting their functions within the characters' conversations. Rather than focusing on numerical data, the study examines the linguistic expressions and their meanings in relation to the conversational context.

The primary data source of this study is the *Bookworm* (2024) movie script. The film was released in 2024 and directed by Ant Timpson and written by Toby Harvard. It is an adventure, family, and comedy film with a running time of approximately 96 minutes. The analysis focuses on seven characters who use slang expressions in the script: Mildred, Strawn Wise, Zo, Dotty, Arnold, Angelina, and Anne. The researcher read the *Bookworm* (2024) movie script repeatedly to understand the story, characters, conversations, and situations in the movie. The data were collected through reading repeatedly, note-taking, and observation. During the observation, the researcher identified slang expressions used in the characters' dialogue and recorded them as research data. Each slang expression was recorded along with the speaker, dialogue context, and page number of the script.

The classification was adapted from Allan and Burridge (2006) and Coleman (2012), which divides slang into six categories: standard slang, community slang, taboo slang, fresh and creative slang, acronyms, and borrowed slang. Through this classification, each expression was assigned to a sociolinguistic category that reflects the use of informal language in the movie script. Classified data were then analysed to identify the functions of the slang expressions by considering the speaker, addressee, situation, and context of each conversation. The analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, following Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). Finally, the researcher rechecked the identified slang expressions, their types, functions, dialogue contexts, and script pages against the movie script to ensure consistency in the analysis.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study shows how the characters in the *Bookworm* (2024) movie script use various slang expressions in their daily conversations. There are five categories: taboo slang, fresh and creative slang, standard slang, community slang, and borrowed slang. These categories show the different forms of informal language used by the characters in the movie.

The analysis shows that the use of slang in *Bookworm* (2024) movie script shows that slang serves various functions, including addressing, humiliating, initiating relaxed conversations, forming an intimate atmosphere, expressing impressions, and revealing anger. The use of these expressions reflects the different purposes of communication within the story and shows how language varies according to the context of interaction. These demonstrate how slang can convey social meanings and contribute to the portrayal of characters, as discussed by Eble (2012) and Dynel (2015).

Table 1. Types and Functions of Slang in *Bookworm* (2024) Movie Script

Slang expression	Types of slang	Function
Mildred: “And I’m doing mybest not to punch you in the goolies . Whatever.” (Mildred expresses her anger toward Strawn during their conversation in the wilderness) (page 3)	Taboo slang	Conveys irritation and hostility through a vulgar expression; intensifies Mildred’s threatening statement and reflects her frustration with Strawn.
Zo: “You sure do know a crapload of words, don’t you, young lady?” (Zo responds to Mildred’s extensive vocabulary during their conversation at home) (page 3)	Fresh and Creative slang	Emphasizes the large quantity of words Mildred knows through an exaggerated expression; adds a humorous and informal tone to their interaction.
Zo: “Say them and I’ll bugger off and make your bloody toast triangles.” (Zo asks Mildred to say the expected words before making her toast) (page 3)	Taboo slang	Express impatience through a profanity-based expression meaning to leave; reinforces Zo’s blunt communication style and adds an informal tone to the exchange.
Dotty: “What do you mean, mate ?” (Dotty uses a familiar form of address while asking for clarification) (page 7)	Community slang	Establishes a casual conversational tone through an informal form of address; reflects the colloquial language used in the interaction.
Arnold: “Listen, you muppets ! It wasn’t personal before, but it’s highly personal now!” (Arnold shouts at the people he accuses of stealing his belongings) (page 83)	Community slang	Conveys contempt and hostility through an insulting expression; intensifies Arnold’s anger and reinforces the confrontational atmosphere.
Mildred: “I don’t like people who say ‘hell yeah’ or ‘buddy’. And I despise the word ‘ dude ’ with every atom of my being” (Mildred explains her dislike of certain informal expressions while talking with Arnold and Angelina) (page 84)	Standard slang	Reveals Mildred’s strong dislike of a familiar informal expression; highlights her personal language preferences and distinctive attitude toward casual speech.
Angelina: “This is a pukka little camera. Crisp HD visuals. You look handsome, pet) (Angelina praises the camera while speaking to another character) (page 84)	Borrowed slang	Expresses approval through a positive description of the camera; conveys Angelina’s favorable impression and adds a distinctive colloquial quality to her speech.
Angelina: “Long-suffering missus .” (Angelina refers to herself as Arnold’s wife during their introduction to Strawn and Mildred) (page 49)	Community slang	Uses an informal term for a wife while adding a humorous remark about her relationship with Arnold; creates a conversational tone and reveals her playful attitude.
Mildred: “I know. I’m bloody jazzed , too.” (Mildred expresses her excitement while discussing their plan to retrieve their belongings) (page 80)	Standard slang	Expresses enthusiasm and excitement about the situation; communicates Mildred’s positive emotional response and adds energy to the dialogue.
Arnold: “Come back here immediately, you thieving bloody ratbags !” (Arnold shouts at the characters who have taken his belongings) (page 82)	Fresh and creative slang	Expresses anger and accusation through a derogatory label; emphasizes Arnold’s hostility and heightens the tension of the confrontation.

Table 2. Frequency of Slang Types in *Bookworm* (2024) Movie Script

Types of slang	Frequency
Community slang	3
Standard slang	2
Taboo slang	2
Fresh and Creative slang	2
Borrowed slang	1

Based on the ten selected slang expressions, the most dominant category shows that community slang (3) in the *Bookworm* (2024) movie script. This indicates that expressions associated with particular speech communities play an important role in the characters interactions in the *Bookworm* (2024) movie script. Other categories appear less frequently, including standard slang (2), taboo slang (2), fresh and creative slang (2), and borrowed slang (1). The use of taboo slang adds emotional intensity to certain dialogues, while fresh and creative slang contributes expressive and humorous elements. Meanwhile, standard slang and borrowed slang demonstrate the diversity of language choices used by the characters. Overall, these findings illustrate how different types of slang contribute to the humour, emotional expression, and dynamics of character interactions throughout the movie.

Discussion

In *Bookworm* (2024), the analysis of slang expressions demonstrates how informal language contributes to character development and interpersonal communication through five types and six functions. According to Eble (2012), slang is closely related to social identity and group interaction, while Allan and Burridge (2006) explain the social implications of taboo language. Dynel (2015) discusses the relationship between impoliteness and interaction, while Cutting (2005) emphasizes the importance of context in interpreting language. In *Bookworm* (2024), slang expressions reflect the characters attitudes, familiarity, anger, and humour through their conversations. Similar findings were reported by Ardira and Simatupang (2026) in their study of *Deadpool* (2016), which showed that slang contributes to character identity, emotional expression, and humour. However, the use of slang in each movie reflects different characters and conversational contexts.

Community Slang

Data 1

Dotty: “What do you mean, **mate**?”

(Dotty asks for clarification during a conversation)

(*Bookworm* page 7)

In data 1 above, the word “mate” is categorized as community slang because it is commonly associated with informal English-speaking communities, particularly in Australia and New Zealand. In this dialogue, Dotty uses the expression when asking for clarification. Instead of addressing the other speaker formally, she chooses a familiar term that reflects the informal nature of the interaction. The use of “mate” also contributes to the regional linguistic character represented in the movie. This expression functions to address because Dotty uses it to refer to the person she is speaking to. The term can also signal familiarity and reduce social distance between speakers. Its use demonstrates how language choices reflect interpersonal relationships and regional speech practices. In this context, “mate” contributes to a relaxed conversational atmosphere and presents Dotty as a speaker who uses familiar forms of address in everyday communication.

Data 2

Arnold: "My name's Arnold. And this here is my missus, Angelina."

Angelina: "His long-suffering **missus**."

(Arnold introduces Angelina, who responds humorously to his description.)

(*Bookworm* page 49)

In data 2, The word "missus" is an informal term for a wife, commonly found in British and Australian English. Arnold uses it to introduce Angelina, choosing a familiar expression rather than the more formal word "wife." Angelina then repeats the term and adds "long-suffering," creating a humorous response to her husband's introduction. This exchange demonstrates how an informal expression can become part of a playful interaction between characters. In this context, "missus" functions to express impressions because Angelina's response communicates her attitude toward Arnold through teasing humor. Her remark suggests that she is familiar enough with Arnold to make a playful comment about their relationship. The expression also contributes to their characterization as a couple who interact through informal language and light criticism. Socially, the exchange illustrates how familiar vocabulary can communicate relationship dynamics beyond its literal meaning.

Data 3

Arnold: "Listen, you **muppets**! It wasn't personal before, but it's highly personal now!"

(Arnold angrily confronts the people he considers responsible for the incident.)

(*Bookworm* page 83)

In data 3, The word "muppets" is used figuratively as an insult for people considered foolish or incompetent. Arnold uses the expression while confronting the people he is addressing. Rather than using a neutral term, he chooses a recognizable and expressive word that makes his criticism more direct. The following statement, "It wasn't personal before, but it's highly personal now," reinforces the confrontational situation and shows that his attitude has changed. The expression functions to humiliate because Arnold uses it to belittle the people he addresses. It communicates disapproval and establishes a negative relationship between the speaker and the targets of his criticism. This choice also characterizes Arnold as someone who expresses anger through direct and insulting language. Its social implication is that slang can reinforce conflict by positioning the addressees as inferior or incompetent. Although the document classifies "muppets" as community slang, that classification should be supported by the specific definition of community slang adopted in the research.

Standard Slang

Data 4

Mildred: "I don't like people who say 'hell yeah' or 'buddy'. And I despise the word '**dude**' with every atom of my being."

(Mildred expresses her dislike of certain informal expressions.)

(*Bookworm* page 51)

In data 4, The word "dude" is widely recognized as an informal expression in English, often used to address another person. In this scene, however, Mildred mentions the word while explaining her dislike of particular expressions. She does not use "dude" to address someone directly; instead, she makes the word itself the subject of her criticism. This distinction reveals that slang can carry different social meanings depending on how it is used. The expression

functions to address in the classification recorded in the research data because “dude” is conventionally associated with informal address. However, its actual function in this particular utterance is to express impressions, as Mildred communicates her strong negative attitude toward the word. Her statement characterizes her as particular about language and unwilling to accept expressions she dislikes. Socially, this example demonstrates that a term commonly used to establish friendliness may be perceived negatively by another speaker. Therefore, the function assigned to this specific occurrence should be revised to reflect its actual context.

Data 5

Mildred: “I know. I’m bloody **jazzed** too.”

(Mildred agrees with another speaker and expresses enthusiasm)

(*Bookworm* page 80)

In data above, The word “jazzed” is an informal expression meaning excited or enthusiastic. Mildred uses it to communicate her positive reaction while agreeing with another speaker. Rather than simply stating that she is excited, she chooses a more expressive term that suits the informal conversation. The intensifier “bloody” further strengthens the emotional tone of the statement. The expression functions to express impressions because it communicates Mildred’s enthusiasm about the situation. Its use helps the audience understand her emotional involvement and presents a more expressive side of her personality. Unlike her earlier critical statements, this dialogue shows that Mildred can also express excitement through informal language. Socially, “jazzed” allows her to share her reaction in a direct and relatable way, helping maintain the energy of the interaction.

Taboo Slang

Data 6

Mildred: “And I’m doing my best not to punch you in the **goolies**. Whatever.”

(Mildred expresses her frustration while talking to Strawn.)

(*Bookworm* page 3)

In the data above, The word “goolies” is an informal expression referring to the male genital area. In this dialogue, Mildred uses it in a statement about punching Strawn, giving the utterance an aggressive and provocative tone. Instead of expressing her frustration in neutral language, she chooses an explicit expression that emphasizes the intensity of her irritation. The dismissive “Whatever” further reinforces her unwillingness to continue the interaction on friendly terms. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the expression functions to reveal anger because it communicates Mildred’s frustration toward her father. It also characterizes her as direct and verbally forceful when dealing with conflict. Socially, the expression challenges expectations of polite conversation and increases the intensity of the exchange. This interpretation relates to Allan and Burridge (2006), who discuss taboo language and its social implications. The example demonstrates how taboo expressions can convey strong emotions and distinguish a character’s conversational style.

Data 7

Zo: “But do you know the magic words? Say them and I’ll **bugger off** and make your bloody toast triangles.”

(Zo responds to Mildred during a conversation about making toast.)

(*Bookworm* page 3)

In the data above, The expression “bugger off” is an informal and potentially offensive phrase meaning to leave or go away. Zo uses it while discussing an ordinary domestic task, combining blunt wording with a reference to making toast triangles. This contrast gives the dialogue a distinctive tone because the expression sounds forceful even though the surrounding situation concerns a simple household activity. Zo’s choice of words reflects an informal and direct manner of speaking. The expression is classified as functioning to initiate relaxed conversations in the original data. However, its meaning in this context is more closely related to expressing a willingness to leave after Mildred says the expected words. The phrase may contribute to an informal interaction, but it does not necessarily initiate the conversation itself. Its social implication is that blunt slang can make everyday exchanges sound more forceful or teasing than neutral wording would. Therefore, the function should be interpreted according to the full dialogue rather than assigned solely because the expression is informal.

Fresh and Creative Slang

Data 8

“Panthera Pardus. Nom de plume. You sure do know a **crapload** of words, don’t you, young lady?”

(Zo comments on Mildred’s extensive vocabulary.)

(*Bookworm* page 3)

In the data above, The expression “crapload” informally refers to a large quantity or amount. Zo uses it after Mildred demonstrates her knowledge of words, emphasizing the extent of her vocabulary. Instead of choosing the more neutral expression “a lot,” Zo uses a more emphatic form that makes the comment sound casual and expressive. The element “crap” also gives the expression a mildly vulgar tone. The expression functions to express impressions because Zo emphasizes how many words Mildred knows. Depending on the delivery, the comment can also sound teasing rather than purely descriptive. It characterizes Zo as someone who uses informal and emphatic language when responding to Mildred’s knowledge. Socially, the expression illustrates how speakers use creative combinations to make an observation more vivid. The original data classifies “crapload” as fresh and creative slang, although this label should be supported by a definition showing why its formation or usage qualifies as creative slang rather than simply informal vocabulary.

Data 9

Arnold: “Come back here immediately, you thieving bloody **ratbags**!”

(Arnold shouts at the people he accuses of stealing.)

(*Bookworm* page 82)

The word “ratbags” is used as an insult for people considered troublesome or objectionable. Arnold combines it with “thieving” and “bloody” while demanding that the people return. This combination makes the accusation more forceful than a neutral description such as “thieves.” The expression reflects the intensity of the situation and Arnold’s negative evaluation of the people he addresses. In this context, “ratbags” functions to humiliate because Arnold uses it to insult and belittle the people he considers responsible for the theft. The expression reinforces his anger and creates a clear division between himself and those he condemns. It also characterizes Arnold as someone who responds to perceived wrongdoing with direct verbal aggression. Socially, the insult can intensify conflict and undermine the addressees’ social standing in the interaction. Although the original data categorizes “ratbags”

as fresh and creative slang, the analysis should acknowledge that its figurative or insulting use alone does not establish that the word is newly created or linguistically innovative.

Borrowed Slang

Data 10

Angelina: “This is a **pukka** little camera. Crisp HD visuals. You look handsome, pet.”
(Angelina praises the camera while commenting on its quality.)

(*Bookworm* page 84)

The word “pukka” is associated with Indian-origin vocabulary and is used in some varieties of English to mean genuine, excellent, or first-rate. Angelina uses it to describe the camera positively. Rather than choosing a more ordinary adjective such as “good,” she uses “pukka,” which gives the statement a distinctive lexical character. The following phrase, “Crisp HD visuals,” reinforces the positive evaluation by highlighting the camera’s image quality. The expression functions to express impressions because Angelina uses it to communicate a favorable judgment about the camera. It also contributes to the characterization of her speech by introducing vocabulary with a particular linguistic and cultural history. Socially, borrowed vocabulary illustrates how English incorporates words from other languages and uses them in different communicative contexts. Nevertheless, a word’s foreign origin alone does not automatically establish that it is borrowed slang. Its classification should be supported by a reliable lexical source and the operational definition of borrowed slang used in the research.

D. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study shows that slang in the *Bookworm* (2024) movie script revealed five types of slang: community slang, standard slang, taboo slang, fresh and creative slang, and borrowed slang. Among the ten selected expressions, community slang was the most frequent category, with three occurrences. The slang expressions served six functions: addressing, humiliating, initiating relaxed conversations, forming an intimate atmosphere, expressing impressions, and revealing anger. Theoretically, this study contributes to sociolinguistic research by showing how slang reflects emotions, attitudes, and social relationships. Practically, the findings can be used as learning material for understanding informal language and its contextual meanings. In film discourse studies, the findings demonstrate how slang contributes to character portrayal and interaction. However, this study was limited to ten selected expressions from one movie script. Future researchers are encouraged to examine more data, compare different movie genres, and investigate slang use in both movie scripts and spoken dialogue.

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