



The Language of the Game: Analyzing Slang in EAFC 24

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Abstract. This study delves into the use of slang expressions among players of EAFC 24, a widely played online football simulation game, examining both the linguistic structures and communicative functions of the slang employed during gameplay and community interactions. The dataset, comprising nineteen slang expressions, was gathered from in-game chat messages and discussions on platforms like Reddit and Discord. The analysis draws on Mattiello's (2008) morphological framework to classify the slang based on word-formation processes, and Allan and Burridge's (2006) theory to examine the communicative roles performed by these expressions. The findings reveal that the slang in EAFC 24 is shaped by various linguistic processes, including clipping, acronyms, borrowing, coinage, semantic shift, and compounding. Functionally, these expressions serve multiple purposes: they convey emotions, assert group identity, build solidarity, deliver informal critique, entertain, and soften messages through euphemism. These findings highlight that slang in EAFC 24 is not only a tool for efficient communication but also a reflection of cultural dynamics and group affiliation in digital gaming communities.

Keywords: EAFC 24; digital discourse; online gaming; slang; sociolinguistics

1. Introduction

The rapid growth of the online gaming industry has significantly changed the way people communicate in the digital space. Far from being a mere entertainment platform, online games now serve as interactive environments where language plays a central role in facilitating cooperation, expressing emotions, and shaping group identity. EAFC 24, the latest football simulation game from EA Sports and the successor to the FIFA series, offers a highly dynamic linguistic landscape. With its real-time multiplayer gameplay and global user base, the game facilitates the emergence of informal, fast-paced, and creative communication styles, particularly in the form of slang.

Slang in online gaming is not a random or chaotic phenomenon. Slang serves as a tool for effective interaction under pressure, allowing players to convey messages quickly and intuitively. According to Allan and Burridge (2006), slang often has expressive, humorous, and identity-based functions, which become increasingly prominent in high-risk environments such as competitive gaming. In EAFC 24, where quick decision-making and emotional intensity are constant, slang serves to reduce verbal friction, create a shared vocabulary, and signify membership in a group. As emphasized by Holmes (2022), digital slang can also reflect and reinforce a sense of social belonging within close-knit online communities.

Previous studies have examined similar phenomena in various gaming environments. Putra et al. (2024) investigated how Mobile Legends players use slang and game-specific abbreviations to maintain teamwork. Rafilis and Nugraheni (2022) explored the prevalence of code-mixing and abbreviations in PUBG. In another context, Chien (2019) analyzed how vocabulary in Minecraft evolves through player interaction and spontaneous language creation. These studies demonstrate that online games are a fertile

ground for linguistic innovation, where communication is adapted to the demands of gameplay and social dynamics. However, despite its widespread popularity and linguistic richness, EAFC 24 remains under-explored from a sociolinguistic perspective.

Furianto and Simanjuntak (2021) emphasize that gaming language is a legitimate component of digital humanities, reflecting broader cultural and linguistic trends. Similarly, Bucholtz and Hall (2021) argue that language use in digital spaces is central to the formation of sociolinguistic identity. In the case of EAFC 24, players do not merely exchange commands. They also play social roles, build alliances, express frustration, and joke with one another using an ever-evolving set of informal expressions. This interplay between function and form makes EAFC 24 a relevant subject of study, especially during the transition from the more familiar FIFA brand to a new digital space with a fresh community of players and evolving discourse.

This research aims to analyze the use of slang expressions in EAFC 24, focusing on two main aspects: (1) the types of slang found during gameplay and online interactions, and (2) the communicative functions performed by these slang terms within the gaming community. This analysis employs Mattiello's (2008) morphological classification to categorize slang based on word-formation processes, such as abbreviations, acronyms, and neologisms. Additionally, this study employs Allan and Burridge's (2006) theory to interpret the social and pragmatic functions of these expressions. By analyzing the linguistic strategies employed by players, this research contributes to the ongoing debate about language, identity, and digital culture in modern online environments.

2. Method

This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the use of slang expressions in the online soccer game EAFC 24. The data consists of nineteen slang expressions collected from real-time game interactions and online community platforms such as Reddit and Discord. Purposive sampling techniques were used to select chat logs and discussion threads that featured consistent and meaningful slang usage. These expressions were then categorized based on their morphological structure and communicative function.

To look into how slang terms are formed, the study used Mattiello's (2008) morphological framework, which covers processes like clipping, acronyms, borrowing, coinage, semantic shift, and compounding. The communicative functions were examined using Allan and Burridge's (2006) theory of slang, which identifies functions like expressive, identity, strategic, humorous, euphemistic, and solidarity. The data were analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns, with reference to context and social usage. Selected excerpts from gameplay and forum interactions were used to illustrate each category. Triangulation was applied by cross-referencing in-game data with community discussions to ensure credibility.

3. Discussion

The slang employed in EAFC 24 reflects a variety of word-formation processes that align with Mattiello's (2008) classification of modern slang morphology. Throughout gameplay and community interactions, players frequently utilize linguistic shortcuts that are both efficient and expressive. Clipping is a common phenomenon, with abbreviated forms such as lag (from lagging) and stat (from statistics) being used to streamline communication. Acronyms such as AFK (Away From Keyboard) and OP (Overpowered) are also widespread, serving as quick, compact expressions to convey player status or in-game evaluations.

Other slang expressions emerge through coinage, where entirely new words like noob and smurf take on specific meanings within the gaming context, referring to inexperienced players and skilled players using alternate accounts, respectively. Borrowed terms, such as nerf, glitch, and spam, originate from broader digital or real-world domains but are adapted to fit the discourse of EAFC 24. Semantic

shift is another common feature, with words like clutch and sweaty acquiring new, game-specific

meanings. Although less common, compounding is also present in expressions like spam tackle, which combine existing words to describe gameplay behaviors in more precise ways.

Beyond their morphological forms, these slang expressions serve a variety of communicative functions as identified by Allan and Burrige (2006). The expressive function is often the most important, as players frequently use slang to express emotions like frustration, excitement, or annoyance. Words like noob, lag, and toxic let players quickly share their feelings without needing to explain further. Slang also plays a key role in establishing group identity. Using terms like meta or smurf shows familiarity with gaming culture and implicitly identifies the speaker as part of the community.

The function of solidarity is evident when players exchange phrases such as GG or bro to affirm camaraderie and mutual respect, even after competitive matches. Strategically, slang is used to issue commands or updates efficiently, terms like push, AFK, or buff help maintain fast-paced coordination during matches. Humor also plays a key role. Expressions like sweaty or clutch are often delivered with sarcasm or exaggeration, allowing players to tease or entertain one another in a light-hearted manner. Lastly, slang can function euphemistically, softening criticism or downplaying failure. Instead of blunt insults, players may refer to someone as a bot or blame a glitch, which is a more socially acceptable way to express dissatisfaction.

These discoveries indicate that slang in EAFC 24 is not merely an informal layer of language used for convenience. On the contrary, it plays a central role in shaping the social and emotional dynamics of online gameplay. Through its structural variation and multiple functions, slang enables players to navigate complex interactions, perform social identities, and maintain a shared cultural code. In a virtual environment where speed, performance, and connection are essential, these expressions become critical tools for both communication and community-building.

An additional analysis of the data indicates that the use of slang in EAFC 24 is not static but evolves in response to changes within the game and its community. Updates to gameplay mechanics, balancing patches, and even viral trends within the gaming world often lead to the emergence of new expressions or shifts in the meaning of existing ones. For instance, the term meta, which originally referred to the most effective tactics available, may change in connotation depending on which formations or player builds dominate the competitive scene at a given time. Similarly, slang terms borrowed from other games or platforms often get absorbed into the EAFC 24 lexicon, modified by context and player culture. This dynamic quality of slang highlights the adaptability of online gamers to linguistic innovation and reinforces the idea that language in digital environments is in a constant state of negotiation. These evolving expressions serve not only as communication tools but also as historical traces of in-game events, updates, and social developments, making them relevant not just linguistically, but also culturally.

4. Conclusion

The analysis of slang expressions used in EAFC 24 reveals that players engage in a variety of word-formation processes, including clipping, acronyms, coinage, borrowing, semantic shifts, and compounding. These forms enable fast, efficient, and highly contextual communication during gameplay and in online discussions. Beyond structure, the analysis also reveals that these expressions serve multiple communicative functions, such as conveying emotion, asserting group identity, fostering solidarity, issuing commands, delivering humor, and softening criticism. These findings imply that slang in EAFC 24 is not merely a linguistic shortcut but an essential component of how players navigate digital interaction. In this context, slang becomes a reflection of cultural norms, identity construction, and social dynamics within virtual gaming spaces. By highlighting the structural and functional roles of slang, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of language use in digital communities and adds to the broader conversation in sociolinguistics and online discourse analysis.

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