

SLANG AND ITS ROLE IN ENLARGEMENT OF THE ENGLISH VOCABULARY

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Slang is casual spoken language which differs from dialectical speech and jargon as well as formal speech. Some linguists think of it as the sprinkles of color in a language, since it is often unique, unusual, and sometimes startling. As a general rule, slang is not used in formal spoken language, or in writing, unless the speaker is attempting to achieve a deliberate effect. Some slang terms, however, make the jump to accepted common usage, as was the case with "OK."

Slang was the main reason for the development of prescriptive language in an attempt to slow down the rate of change in both spoken and written language. Latin and French were the only two languages that maintained the use of prescriptive language in the 14th century. It was not until the early 15th century that scholars began pushing for a Standard English language.

During the middle Ages, certain writers such as Chaucer, William Caxton, and William of Malmesbury represented the regional differences in pronunciations and dialects. The different dialects and the different pronunciations represented the first meaning for the term "slang."

However, our present-day meaning for slang did not begin forming until the 16th or 17th century. The English Criminal Cant developed in the 16th century. The English Criminal Cant was a new kind of speech used by criminals and cheats, meaning it developed mostly in saloons and gambling houses. The English Criminal Cant was at first believed to be foreign, meaning scholars thought that it had either originated in Romania or had a relationship to French. The English Criminal Cant was slow developing. In fact, out of the four million people who spoke English, only about ten thousand spoke the English Criminal Cant. By the end of the 16th century this new style of speaking was considered to be a language "without reason or order". During the 18th century schoolmasters taught pupils to believe that the English Criminal Cant (which by this time had developed into slang) was not the correct usage of English and slang was considered to be taboo .Because most people are individuals who desire uniqueness, it stands to reason that slang has been in existence for as long as language has been in existence.

A slang expression may suddenly become widely used and as quickly die (23-skiddoo). It may become accepted as standard speech, either in its original slang meaning (bus from omnibus, taxi, piano, phone, and pub mob, dandy) or with an altered, possibly tamed meaning (jazz, which originally had sexual connotations). Some expressions have

persisted for centuries as slang (booze for alcoholic beverage). In the 20th century, mass media and rapid travel

speeded up both the circulation and the demise of slang terms. Television and novels have turned criminal cant into slang (five grand for 5000). Changing social circumstances may stimulate the spread of slang. Drug-related expressions (such as pot and marijuana) were virtually a secret jargon in the 1940s; in the 1960s they were adopted by rebellious youth; and in the 1970s and '80s they were widely known. But this must be done by those whose mother tongue is English. They and only they, being native speakers of the English language, are its masters and lawgivers. It is for them to place slang in its proper category by specifying its characteristic features.

Many words formerly labeled as slang have now become legitimate units of the Standard English. Thus, the word "kid" (=child), which was considered low slang in the 19th century, is now a legitimate colloquial unit of the English literary language.

It sounds unbelievable but not so long ago the words: of course, to take care, to get up, lunch were considered to be slang. "Lunch" entered the language after World War I is not used in some books that prefer "dinner" to "lunch".

The understanding of the native speakers' language is the international problem for our people. Our secondary schools teach the students only the bases of the English language. Our universities do not prepare them to the British streets, accommodations, pubs where people use their own language, the language that differs from that of their parents. They use other words- they use slang. None of the most advanced and flexible ways of teaching English of any country can catch modern quickly developing English.

Some scholars divide the English language into two different languages: the Standard English language and slang. This fact proves that slang comes to be a very numerous part of English. Ignorance of slang causes a great miscommunication between students and native speakers.

The language of the previous centuries contrasts from the modern language. The life does not freeze in the same position. It always develops. And it makes the language develop too. That is why the present work is devoted to this social phenomenon.

Choosing the topic of my investigation I'm perfectly aware of the fact that slang is unlimited so it is almost impossible to analyze every word of it. I hope to summarize different points of view on slang and it is my hope that more readers should discover this interesting layer of the English language. Although the work could hardly cover all the aspects of the phenomenon the task is as exciting as challenging.

Slang is casual spoken language which differs from dialectical speech and jargon as well as formal speech. Some linguists think of it as the sprinkles of color in a language, since it is often unique, unusual, and sometimes startling. As a general rule, slang is not used in formal spoken language, or in writing, unless the speaker is attempting to achieve a deliberate effect. Some slang terms, however, make the jump to accepted common usage, as was the case with "OK."

Often, slang begins as group-specific argot, which is related to jargon. Unlike jargon, however, argot is not a collection of technical terms that are used within a group with

limited outside understanding. Instead, it is used to differentiate members of a group from others, and to foster a sense of collective belonging in the group. In addition, it can provide a way to talk about questionable or illegal activity without being obvious. When argot begins to spread from small subgroups to the rest of a group of language speakers, it becomes slang. Typically, slang is humorous, ribald, or shocking. It is designed to make speech more casual and playful, and it may not always be suitable for polite company. Many terms are related to human sexuality, for example, and slang can get rather graphic. The terms are also usually short-lived, rarely existing even long enough to make it into the dictionary.

Every adult speaker has a concept of slang-knowing at the least that some words and expressions transgress generally accepted norms of formality or appropriateness and in some way do not fit the measure of what "good" language is. Despite such recognition by almost all speakers, scholars with formal training in linguistic analysis have almost ignored slang-though they acknowledge having the same intuitions about this type of vocabulary as do all speakers. In truth, most linguists have given no more thought to slang than have people who claim no expertise in language. In the English-speaking world in particular, the description of the form and function of slang has been left largely to lexicographers rather than to others who study language for a living.

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