

SLANG AND ITS RELATION TO THE OTHER NON STANDARD VARIATIONS OF THE LANGUAGE

Tairova Shahnoza Bahromovna

Teacher, Department of Linguistics and English literature, UzSWLU

shahnozatairova4@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article focuses on slang and other nonstandard forms of the language. The study also entails information on the distinctive features between standard and nonstandard language. The interpretations of general and specific types of slang are also provided. In the research, the peculiar nature of nonstandard variations of the language, namely slang, jargon, cant, dialect, accent, vernacular language and colloquial language is presented. The following nonstandard forms of the language are thoroughly studied and specified by clear examples representing the way they are used in the spoken discourse.

Keywords: standard language, non-standard language, language forms/variations, discourse, interaction, relation, distinctive feature, characteristics, slang, jargon, argot, cant, dialect, accent, vernacular language, colloquial language

INTRODUCTION

English, without reservation, is the most successful and globally recognized language of the present. Regarded as the lingua franca, the English language is acknowledged as the core international language of communication, education, trade, technology and other domains. English covers both the standard and nonstandard forms. However, in terms of standardization, sociolinguists have a sheer of divergent views on the complexity of the existing language varieties. To be more exact, at current time there is still plenty dispute and little explicit agreement on the classification and categorization of standard and nonstandard variations in the English language. It is a common belief that a standard language is a form of language that is primarily utilized in the media, in official settings, in authority and for international communication. The standard variations of the language can also geographically be divided into Australian English, Scottish English, North American English, Indian English and so on. These standard forms might also be of distinction in terms of the syntax, vocabulary and pronunciation. While a standard language is estimated as a superordinary variety owing to its accurate and prestigious usage, nonstandard language variation

can only be confessed with reference to a corresponding standard language.

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In this respect, before moving to the various forms of nonstandard English language variation, it is vital to define succinctly what language variation is. A variation is deemed any social, regional or contextual difference of a particular language. In accord with the notions of Holmes (2001), variation is termed as “Some features of speech, however, are shared by groups, and become important because they differentiate one group from another”. Language variation can be characterized by linguistic (regarding lexical, syntactic and phonetic elements), social, ethnical, educational and professional distinctions as well as age related and gender associated differences.

Oxford dictionary defines slang, one of the prominent nonstandard variations of the English language, as a type of language consisting of words and phrases that are regarded as very informal, are more common in speech than writing, and are typically restricted to a particular context or group of people. In accord with Adams (2009) “The speaker uses slang in order to achieve social dynamics with the people to whom he/she is speaking and slang outlines social spaces, and attitudes towards slang helps identify and construct social groups and identity”. It necessarily means that when slang is used, one typically expresses his ideas, feelings, emotions and attitudes. Slang can be of two types: general and special slang. General slang is known for any social or professional group. Yet, special slang is only associated with specific groups such as internet slang, college slang or football slang. The most common examples of slang primarily used amongst the youngsters are displayed below:

1. Nerd - an individual persecuted for his superior skills or intellect, most often people fear and envy him/her
2. Ball – a good time
3. Chicken – not a brave person
4. Zero – an unimportant person

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Apart from slang, there are a good number of nonstandard variations of the English language such as jargon, argot, dialect, accent, vernacular and colloquialism. Although many features of the aforementioned varieties of nonstandard language bear a striking resemblance with slang,

there are many salient characteristics which distinguish slang from these forms. They will be discussed further in this article.

Jargon

Jargon is acknowledged as the specialized vocabulary to a certain group in any particular sphere or context. However, slang is a broader concept to embrace all members of society with various groups and preferences. Another functional factor which draws a line between slang and jargon is that slang is used to show speaker's attitude while jargon is used by interlocutors who have the same profession in communicating about their profession. The most common examples of jargon are as follows:

1. All-hands meaning is an example of jargon used in the business world meaning a meeting that all employees are supposed to attend.
2. Agonal is a medical term to show a significant negative change in a patient's condition.
3. POTUS is an example of political jargon which stands for President of the United States.
4. Suspect is a police jargon which means a person whom the police think may have committed a crime.

Argot

Linguistically, argot is a secret and code language peculiar to a particular group of mainly underclass people and associated with vulgar social groups. In this respect, the term "cant" can also be used interchangeably. Argot, having the intention of not being understood by other people, is used and favored by criminals, thieves and drug dealers. Argot is principally in informal nature and thus, entails specialized colloquial vocabulary from a particular field of study, profession, hobby, sport and many others. Below are the examples of argot (cant):

1. Gambaren is a term used for asking somebody to look at the situation before stealing.
2. Joki is an example of argot which means a person who brings the stolen things.
3. Penyakit, pig, fuzzy are the special terms for police.
4. Charlie, rock, speed are the terms which refer to drugs.

Dialect

Generally, dialect is a nonstandard language variety spoken in a certain geographical area and is distinguished according to the user. At the same time, this variation possesses its own

vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. Dialects can also be of regional, social and socio-regional type and hence, dialects can elaborate the geographic and social background of any character. Specifically, regional dialects are associated with the geographical area and as time goes by, because of mobility and globalization, regional dialects slowly fade away. On the contrary, social dialects are associated with the social status and ethnic groups and thus, there exists the language of aristocracy versus the language used by the low-paid industrial workers.

Here are some apparent examples of Northern and Southern dialect:

- Pail – bucket
- Pop – soda
- Press the button – mash the button

Accent

An accent is characterized how a person pronounces words and where one puts stress on vowels and consonants. Accents are of paramount importance to identify nationality, locality and social class of people since they are closely associated with the geographical area, socioeconomic background as well as social status. Accent can also be deemed to be a part of a dialect. Accent mainly encompasses distinctive variations in pronunciation.

Vernacular language

Vernacular is the everyday speech of the ordinary local and native people of a country or region. Vernacular is mostly based on a variation of sounds. Vernacular language typically includes distinctive stylistic register, regional dialect, sociolect and independent language. Below are some statements where vernacular language is evident:

1. They've gone up the road a piece.
2. You want I should do it for you?

Colloquial language

Colloquial language is associated with the linguistic style predominantly used for informal communication. Colloquialism is featured by the broad use of idioms, interjections and other expressive language, contractions, abbreviations, as well as non-specialist terminology. Below it is demonstrated the most common examples of colloquialism:

- Wanna – want to
- Y'all – you all
- Go bananas – to go insane
- Buzz off – go away
- Fam – family

- Nana – a silly person

CONCLUSION

To conclude, language is an ever changing social phenomenon and thus, in the light of globalization and advancements in technology, there is always high probability that some terms fade away and on the contrary, new terms are coined. Language embodies both standard and nonstandard variations which in this respect the latter cover slang, jargon, cant, dialect, accent, vernacular language and colloquial language. Comprehending the appropriate use of these nonstandard varieties in various contexts enables one to communicate freely, naturally and effectively.

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