

## CLASSIFICATION OF SLANG WITHIN NON-STANDARD VARIETIES

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**Аннотация:** Мақолада замонавий инглиз тилидаги сленгнинг мураккаб хусусиятларидан бири ҳақида сўз боради. Мақола хусусан, сленг ва шева, сленг ва жаргон, сленгга сўзлашув тили каби стандарт бўлмаган инглиз тили тил қатламларинг таснифини таҳлил қилади ва ушбу стандарт бўлмаган инглиз тили тил қатламлари ва сленг сўзлар ўртасидаги фарқ ҳақида батафсил маълумот беради.

**Калит сўзлар:** Сўзлашув тили, кант, диалект, жаргон, тил турлари, нормал услуб, нутқ, стандарт тил, халқ тили.

**Аннотация:** Статья посвящена изучению одной из сложных особенностей сленга в современном английском языке. В частности, анализируется классификация сленга в нестандартных английских разновидностях, таких как сленг против диалекта, сленг против жаргона, сленг против разговорного языка, и предоставляется подробная информация о разнице между этими нестандартными английскими разновидностями и сленговыми словами.

**Ключевые слова:** Разговорный язык, кант, диалект, жаргонизм, языковые разновидности, нормальный стиль, речь, литературный язык, просторечие.

**Abstract:** The article deals with the study one of the challenging features of slang in Modern English. It particularly analyzes the classification of slang within non standard English varieties such as slang vs dialect, slang vsjargon, slang vs

colloquial language and provides the detailed information about the difference between these non standard English varieties and slang words.

**Keywords:** Colloquial language ,cant, dialect, jargon, language varieties normal style, speech, standard language, vernacular.

Slang has become a controversial topic nowadays, and the debate on its definition, classification is still heated. The concept of slang has been inaccurately defined by many lexicographers who tend to restrict it to colloquial or bad language, and the term has been imprecisely used by many sociolinguists who confuse it with such language varieties as cant, jargon, dialect, vernacular or accent. This can be defined because of the fact that, there is a conceptual and terminological overlap which makes slang hard to distinguish from other similar language varieties (e.g. cant, jargon, dialect). Moreover, the nature of slang is so vast and all-encompassing that a sub-distinction between specific and general slang is definitely required

Among the numerous non-standard language varieties of English, slang finds its place both as a diastratic variety and as a diatopic variety. Nonetheless, as a diastratic variety, it diverges from both jargon and cant, whereas, as a diatopic variety, it departs from dialect as well as from vernacular and accent. Lastly, slang may also be viewed as a diaphasic variety, although it differs from colloquial language.

### **Specific vs. general slang**

Slang may be classified as a social variety characterizing a group (e.g. music slang, military slang, navy slang, drug slang, thieves' slang, teenage slang, college slang, etc.), as a regional variety distinguishing an area (e.g. British slang, American slang, Anglo-Irish slang) or a district (Cockney slang), and as an informal style of the language. It must be further subdivided into either specific or general slang. Basically, specific slang is language that speakers use to show their belonging to a group and establish solidarity or intimacy with the other group members. It is often used by speakers to create their own identity, including such aspects as social status and geographical belonging, or even age, education, occupation, lifestyle and special interests. It is largely used by people of similar age and experience (like teenagers or

college students) to strengthen the bonds within their own peer group, keeping outsiders out.[5] It is also used by people sharing the same occupation (like military men and computer users) to increase efficiency in communication; or by those sharing the same living conditions (like prisoners and criminals) to hide secret information from people in authority. Lastly, it is used by people sharing an attitude or a lifestyle (like drug addicts) to reinforce their group cohesiveness. [1] Items like chick (‘a girl; a young woman’), cool (‘all right, ‘OK’’) and dude (‘a fellow or ‘chap’’) can be considered specific slang words, as they are related to the young and hardly understood by adults, and rock (‘a crystallized form of cocaine’), smack (‘a drug, spec. heroin’) and smoke (‘opium’, ‘marijuana’) are likewise specific, as they belong to the vocabulary of drug addicts and drug dealers, but they have a different meaning in the standard language. General slang, on the other hand, is language that speakers deliberately use to break with the standard language and to change the level of discourse in the direction of informality. It signals the speakers’ intention to refuse conventions.[6] and their need to be fresh and startling in their expression, to ease social exchanges and induce friendliness, to reduce excessive seriousness and avoid clichés, in brief, to enrich the language.[9] General slang words have a wider circulation as they are neither group- nor subject-restricted: for example, items like bevvie (‘a drink, esp. beer’), caff (‘a café’) and footy (‘football’) are much more likely to get established as informal or colloquial English.

Yet some slang words are both specific and general, according to their pragmatic meaning and context of occurrence: e.g., the word grass in slang takes on both the specific sense of ‘marijuana, used as a drug’ (drug slang), or of ‘a police informer’ (criminals’ slang), and the more general sense of ‘green vegetables

#### Slang vs. colloquial language

Slang does not correspond to colloquial language, although, like familiar speech, it departs from neutral and formal styles.[9] Slang is informally used among people who belong to the same social group, or, more generally, among friends, intimates or family members, but its purposes differ from mere familiarity. Consider, for instance, the expressions belly and beer belly: the former is a colloquial term referring to one’s

‘stomach’, while the latter is a slang expression which refers to ‘a protruding stomach caused by drinking large quantities of beer’, and may also be used as a derogatory definition for people having such a stomach, as in They described Pa as aber-belly and said Ma was unfriendly. Similarly, nana is an abbreviation of banana in colloquial English, but, in English slang, it rather refers to ‘a foolish or silly person’, as in A frank admission that he had made a nana of himself.

#### Slang vs. jargon

Slang is not jargon, a widely used term referring to the specialized vocabulary and phraseology of a set of people sharing a trade or profession [7], although slang may be a choice within jargon. For example, musicians employ specific slang terms to refer to different music styles (e.g. funk, grunge, handbag, hardcore, house, jazz, jungle, ragga, techno, etc.), doctors use medicine slang terms to describe the diseases or physical conditions of their patients (e.g. O sign orig. and chiefly U.S. ‘the open mouth of a patient who is in a coma, dying, or dead’), soldiers use such services’ slang words as acker (‘a piastre’) and skunk (‘an unidentified surface craft’) in their military life, and seamen use such nautical slang expressions as Harry Flakers (‘exhausted’), Harry Flatters (‘(of the sea) calm’) and Harry Frees (‘free’) –jocularly from flaked, flat and free – with their ship-mates. Slang differs from jargon in its lack of prestige and pretentiousness. In fact, slang terminology is much more familiar and spontaneous than the technical jargon of science, medicine, academics, law, bureaucracy, business, etc. Slang may be used within a particular group like musicians, doctors, soldiers or seamen, but it does not exactly deal with status or reputation

#### Slang vs. cant

Slang is not cant, the specialized and usually secret language of thieves, professional beggars, and other groups operating on the fringes of society (OED). Yet many slang words arise from the language of the underworld and are used for the purposes of secrecy and conspiracy. For instance, drug dealers use such specific slang names as Charley/-ie, rock, skag, skunk and speed for drugs in their traffics, and criminals use a number of different in-group slang words to refer to the police

(e.g. bill, filth, fuzz, heat, pigs) in their illicit trades. Despite its sometimes cryptic character, slang cannot be reduced to the private language of the criminal world. It may be used by those people in society who have reason to hide from actual authority (like drug addicts and criminals), but it may also suit certain subgroups who want to keep the content of their conversations secret from adult people (like teenagers and college students), either to gain acceptance in a group or to preserve their group solidarity [8]

### *Slang vs. dialect*

Slang is not geographically restricted, like dialect [3], even if it is often regional and “may vary from place to place, dialect to dialect”. [1] Therefore, what is slang in British English may be standard in American English, or may have a different meaning within the two regional varieties. For example, the slang word bomb is used in British English to refer to ‘a success (esp. in entertainment)’ (e.g. like a bomb ‘with considerable effectiveness or success’), but in American English, some of which is gaining currency in Britain, it is used in the exactly opposite sense of ‘a failure’. Similarly, the vulgar slang word fanny refers to ‘the female genitals’ in British English, but it means ‘the posterior or rump’ in American English. Despite its local peculiarities, slang is not necessarily associated with one region or social class. Some slang words are of more general use or they happen to be understood by practically anyone within the language community: for example, this is the case with words like nerd (‘an insignificant or socially inept person’) or crackers (‘crazy, mad’), though they may not be accepted as proper British or American English words

### *Slang vs. vernacular*

Slang is not vernacular, the native speech of a particular country or district (OED), but it frequently includes variation of sounds or mispronunciation of words which are typical of a limited area. The expressions bejesus, bollox and eejit are Anglo-Irish alterations of by Jesus, bollocks (‘a stupid, contemptible man or boy’) and idiot, while bovver (‘trouble or fighting’) and garn are Cockney pronunciations of bother and go on. Slang is a wider concept than vernacular [13], as it is not strictly indigenous local speech. It is instead a hybrid language and often permeated with

foreign lexical material, as in the case of smack (‘heroin’), which comes from Yiddish schmeck, and ackers(‘money, cash’), which in turn is an adaptation of Arabian fakka(‘small change, coins’) via Egyptian akka.

#### Slang vs. accent

Since slang is pertinent to word form and meaning, it is not accent, which simply refers to word pronunciation (tone quality, pitch, stress, etc.).[11] In actual fact, some slang words are created by changing some sounds of standard items: e.g., Gawblimy! and Gor blimey! are corruptions of the imprecation Godblind me!, heck is a slang euphemistic alteration of hell, lickle(‘small’) is a childlike corruption of little, and thang is the Southern U.S slang pronunciation of thing.[8]

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