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## Slang

Slangizms are a very interesting groups of words. One of the characteristics of slangizm is that they are not included into Standard English

EG: mug = face; trap = mouth

Such words are based on metaphor, they make speech unexpected, vivid and sometimes difficult to understand.

Slang appears as a language of a subgroup in a language community. We can speak of black-americans’ slang, teenagers’ slang, navy and army slang.

## Feature Articles: Magical Slang: Ritual, Language and Trench Slang of the Western Front

Unprecedented in its conditions, ferocity, and slaughter, the First World War was also unprecedented in its effect on the psyches of the men who fought and on the languages they spoke.  Like the soldiers who spoke it, English emerged from the war, as Samuel Hynes maintains, a "damaged" language, "shorn of its high-rhetorical top..." (1)

French linguistic purists, led by the Academie Francaise, vigorously denounced damaging incursions of journalistic language and trench slang into standard French. (2)  Only in Germany did a nationalist ideology with its high rhetoric of struggle, sacrifice, and military glory survive, adopted and nourished first by rightist veterans' groups and paramilitary formations, and finally institutionalised by the National Socialists and their leader, former Frontsoldat Adolf Hitler.

But whatever damage the war may have wrought on the "high" language is, in a sense, compensated by the emergence of two new popular "languages" of great interest to the historian.  One is the language of popular journalism; already well-established in 1914, it was characterised by its own chauvinistic diction and aggressively patriotic attitude and was the means by which most civilians got information about the war.

Universally excoriated by the fighting troops as bourrage de crone (head stuffing, i.e. false stories) and Hurrah-patriotismus (hurrah patriotism), journalistic prose nevertheless significantly shaped civilian attitudes about the war and soldiers' attitudes about the press. (3)  French troops called the official war bulletin le petit menteur (the little liar).  The other language was, of course, what we call trench slang, the common idiom of the front.  The literate mass armies trapped in the entrenched stalemate of the First World War provided a fertile medium for the development and dissemination of the special language of the trenches. (4)

In this essay, I intend to focus on the two predominant roles of slang in the context of the Western Front: its denotation of membership in the community of combat soldiers, and its magical or talismanic function as the protective language of that community and its individual members.  The selected examples are meant to be illustrative rather than exhaustive.

Among the many rhetorical and social functions of slang and jargon, that of defining and delimiting a social group by reinforcing its social, professional and often visual identity with a verbal one is broadly significant. (5)

Robert Chapman has noted that "an individual... resorts to slang as a means of attesting membership in the group and of dividing himself... off from the mainstream culture." (6)

Niceforo neatly pinpoints the genesis of slang: "sentir differement, c'est parler diffJrement; - s'occuper differement, c'est aussi parler differement" ("to feel differently is to speak differently; - to occupy oneself differently is also to speak differently"). (7)  The creation of a verbal identity based on occupation and feeling is particularly marked in military society, where social function, enforced separation from the civilian world, and uniform appearance already distinguish the members of a circumscribed, hierarchical society from outsiders.

It would be useful at this point to differentiate between the terms "jargon" and "slang" in a military context, as both exist, are sometimes commingled, and often confused. (8)  By jargon I mean the language of the profession, consisting primarily of technical terms (including acronyms) proper to the military service, what Flexner calls "shop-talk." (9)  In current American military jargon, for example, the acronym PCS, which stands for Permanent Change of Station, appears occasionally as a noun, as in "Did you have a good PCS?" but more frequently as a verbal structure, as in "He PCSed last month" or "She's PCSing in January."

The "alphabet soup" of acronyms, an enduring characteristic of military jargon, first appeared in bewildering array in the First World War, although some had existed earlier. (10)  Military jargon is, of course, not limited to acronyms, but includes such things as abbreviations for weapons and equipment, terms for promotion and failure, punishments under the code and the like.

Genuine slang, on the other hand, generally eschews technical terms in favour of the renaming of objects and actions, and the invention of neologisms.  Chapman remarks that slang relies heavily on "figurative idiom... (and) inventive and poetic terms, especially metaphors." (11)  Partridge likewise signals the importance of metaphor and figurative language of all sorts. (12)

Drawing again on current American usage, the gold oak leaves on a field-grade army officer's hat become "scrambled eggs" and the collective designation for senior officers is "brass hats" or simply "the brass," a phrase which, along with many others from the two world wars, has migrated into the general vocabulary. (13)

The hats of field-grade air force officers are decorated with stylised clouds and bolts of lightning, universally dubbed "darts and farts."  Similarly a colonel, who wears eagles as his insignia, is distinguished from a lieutenant colonel by being called an "eagle-colonel," or with the fine pejorative edge present in "scrambled eggs" and "darts and farts," a "chicken colonel."  To the disparagement implicit in such phrases, I shall shortly return.

The military proclivity for acronyms occasionally and amusingly spills over into true slang.  A famous instance is that Second World War favourite "SNAFU," politely rendered as "situation normal, all fouled up."  A rudimentary knowledge of scatological language will quickly provide the ruder and more popular version. (14)

In wartime, the general store of military slang is augmented by a special subspecies - the slang of combat troops.

Such troops use the general slang but employ, in addition, a vocabulary unique to their situation.  The slang of combat troops distances its users from the safe, punctilious (and by implication, cowardly) rear echelons, while concomitantly reinforcing the separate identity and moral superiority of the combat units. (15)

Anyone familiar with the literature of World War I will immediately recall the pervasive "us vs. them" mentality of front and rear and the suffocating smugness of staff officers.  The front line troops psychologically and linguistically occupied the moral high ground of courage, suffering and sacrifice, leaving the rear to hold the low ground of shirking and blind adherence to form and tradition at the cost of lives.  Franz Schauwecker wrote that there was a crack in the structure of the army that "ran parallel to the front somewhere just outside the range of enemy fire." (16)

Before examining the characteristic language of the trench soldiers of World War I, let us briefly review the physical and psychological stresses inherent in the static trench systems of the Western Front, and the ways in which the troops coped with those pressures.  In the forty years of European peace that followed the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, the general staffs of the armies analysed the campaigns, drew their conclusions, and plotted their strategies for the rematch that most were convinced was inevitable.

Unlikely as it may seem, the generals of victorious Germany and defeated France arrived at the same conclusions: only total offensive - offensive B l'outrance - could ensure victory.  While the Germans planned the von Schlieffen offensive, Revanche became the motive force behind French military planning in the years between the wars. (17)

With all sides (including the British, despite their experience in the Boer War) committed to the theory of the offensive, the sudden concretion of the long-awaited war into defensive entrenchment baffled even the generals.  In their obsession with the offensive, and with its psychological component of troop morale, they had failed to recognize that the enormous technological advances in weaponry worked more to the benefit of defence than of offence.  The Western Front was shaped by artillery, the machine gun, barbed wire, and the spade.  As early as October of 1914, a prescient young German officer wrote to a friend that

(t)he brisk, merry war to which we have all looked forward for years has taken an unforeseen turn. Troops are murdered with machines, horses have almost become superfluous... The most important people are the engineers... the theories of decades are shown to be worthless. (18)

Unfortunately for the miserable troops mired in the wet, cold, and filthy trenches, the generals refused to accept the deadly efficacy of the defensive weapons, and spent the first three years of the war mounting one costly frontal assault after another, until the abortive Nivelle offensive of May 1917 precipitated the mutiny of the French army and ended what J.M. Winter calls "the great slaughter." (19)

What, then, was the effect of trench warfare on the soldiers?  First, the experience of war was an initiatory one.  That is, the experience is, per se, so remarkable that no one who has not experienced it can ever share it or understand it. (20)

For Aldington soldiers were "men segregated from the world in this immense barbaric tumult."  (21) "Ein Geschlecht wie das unsere ist noch nie in die Arena der Erde geschritten," ("A generation such as ours has never before stepped into the arena of the earth") proclaimed Ernst Junger. (22)

This "initiate mentality" among combat troops was immeasurably strengthened in World War I by the characteristics of the fighting, the first of which was a tactical stasis that imposed physical inertia on the front line troops.  The soldiers were literally immobilised in a maze of trenches, subjected to severe shelling and regular sniping, to say nothing of the rigours of outdoor life in northern Europe, with virtually no reliable protection from any of them.  It is little wonder that the most common metaphor for the trench system, and by extension the war itself, was the labyrinth, a true "initiatory underground." (23)

It was not lost on German troops that the root word of der Schhtzengraben (trench) was das Grab, a grave.  In Otto Dix's lost painting, Der Schhtzengraben, the trench becomes a grotesque grave filled with horribly mutilated bodies.

The group identity of the "troglodytes" (to borrow Fussell's term) emerges in the striking special language of trench slang.  In his preface to Dechelette's dictionary, Georges Lentre recounts hearing a conversation between two soldiers that appeared to be mutually intelligible, but which he found incomprehensible. (24)

Against the incomprehension of the rear and the patriotic drivel of the press, the troops erected a linguistic wall that Jacques Meyer perceptively calls "le language d'une franc-mahonnerie" ("a language of free-masons"). (25)

The sense of identity and community is evident in what the soldiers called themselves.  The usual two-week stint in the front and reserve lines tended to leave soldiers filthy, lousy, unshaven, and exhausted. (26)  For the Germans, a front line infantryman was a Frontschwein, a front pig.  For the French, he was a poilu, literally a hairy beast, as the noun poil is used primarily for the hair of animals.  Dauzat points out that the term implies more than just an unshaven man, because the poilu is hairy, as he delicately puts it, "au bon endroit," - a traditional symbol of virility. (27)

In neither case is the animal reference pejorative.  Bill Mauldin's World War II cartoons of "GI Joe" stand in the same tradition of affectionate commonality, all contempt reserved for those who are not a part of the community of combat.

The sense of community felt by the combat troops (a bond particularly marked among the Germans) was reinforced by the mass of war material thrown against them.

The Germans, in fact, use the phrase "war of material" (Materialschlacht) instead of "war of attrition" for the 1916-1918 period.

Front line soldiers often felt that they had more in common with the enemy soldiers in the trenches opposite than with their own rear echelon troops and the people at home.  That sense of a common bond of suffering is reflected in the slang names for opposing and even allied forces.  With the exception of boche, and perhaps "Hun," to which I shall return, epithets for opposing forces were generally based on a stereotypical national name or characteristic or a deformed foreign phrase, and were largely inoffensive.

On the German side, the favoured names for the French were Franzmann and several names based on germanised French phrases: Parlewuhs (parlez-vous), Wulewuhs (voulez-vous), Olala, and the very popular Tulemong (tous le monde). (28)  For British soldiers, the Germans, like the French, used "Tommy," although naturally deforming the pronunciation.

English soldiers employed a variety of epithets for the Germans.  "Fritz" was popular early in the war, with "Jerry" favoured later.  According to Brophy, "Hun," a journalistic creation, was used almost exclusively by officers, as was the borrowed French "Boche."

Although the French used Fritz as well, Boche was the term of choice.  Its etymology is complex and uncertain, (29) but its pejorative implications of obstinacy and generally uncivilised behaviour are undeniable.  The Germans loathed the word and considered it a profound insult.  Bergmann claimed that the Germans used no such derogatory terms, for "wir Deutschen wissen uns zum Glhck frei von... kindischen Hass" ("we Germans know ourselves to be happily free from such childish hatred"), but Dauzat disputes that. (30)

The unusually derogatory nature of Boche may reflect French bitterness over the defeat of 1870 and the invasion of 1914.  Dauzat insists that Boche is a "mot de l'arripre" ("a word of the rear"), and that the soldiers preferred Fritz, Pointu (for the pre-1916 German spiked helmets) or even Michel for artillerymen. (31)  Nevertheless, the other collective epithets suggest, in their general mildness, that the front line troops considered enemy soldiers less dangerous than the men to their rear.

Entrapment, immobility, and alienation led to what Leed has called "the breakdown of the offensive personality."  (32) Instead of being a mobile offensive warrior, the soldier of trench warfare was "humble, patient, enduring, an individual whose purpose was to survive a war that was a 'dreadful resignation, a renunciation, a humiliation.'" (33)

A young German soldier, Johannes Philippson, wrote home in the summer of 1917 that "only genuine self-command is any use to me." (34)  French historian Marc Bloch described the feelings of his troops in December 1914: "Trench warfare had become so slow, so dreary, so debilitating to body and soul that even the least brave among us wholeheartedly welcomed the prospect of an attack." (35)

How, then, could soldiers combat the soul-killing existence in the trenches and the ever-present fear of death and wounds?  One method was through a reliance on talismans and rituals.  As Fussell has noted "no front-line soldier or officer was without his amulet and every tunic pocket became a reliquary... so urgent was the need that no talisman was too absurd." (36)

Luck also depended on ritual - on doing some things and refraining from others, doing things in threes for example, or Graves' conviction that his survival was due to the preservation of his virginity. (37)  Another form of talismanic protection was provided by the use of slang.  Niceforo defines "magical slang" ("l'argot magique") as the language used by individuals when they fear (for reasons having a magical basis) to call things and people by their real names. (38)

Slang allowed the troops to create a ritualised discourse, fully intelligible only to the initiates, that suppressed fear by avoiding any mention by name of death, wounds, weapons, and the authorities whose orders could expose a soldier to those dangers.  In short, the trench slang of World War I served a protective function by creating a language that familiarised, trivialised, and disparaged those objects and persons posing the greatest danger to the individual soldier.

One of the most important taboos in the language of soldiers was any mention of death.  While the author of a novel or memoir may state in a narrative capacity that someone was killed or wounded, such statements are nearly non-existent in the dialogues of soldiers.  Niceforo notes that the taboo against mentioning death is very widespread, even in modern cultures. (39)

The taboo is particularly strong when death is omnipresent.  A "Tommy" might say "He's gone west" or "He's hopped it."  The Germans simply said Er ist aus (He's gone, done for). (40)  A poilu remarked that his comrade had earned la croix de bois, the wooden cross, probably an ironic formation on croix de guerre.  The important decorations for valour on all sides in the First World War were in the shape of a cross, providing ample scope for metaphoric formations.

As an interesting comment on the insignificance of medals to common soldiers, German Frontsoldaten scathingly called all decorations Zinnwaren, (tinware), while the French referred to them as batterie de cuisine (cookware).

Wounds were handled in much the same way.  British and German troops had similar expressions for desirable wounds, just serious enough to ensure that the wounded man would be evacuated home.  For the British, such a wound was a "Blighty," a term derived from a Hindu word meaning a foreign country and taken up by British troops in India to refer to Britain.

For the Germans, it was a Heimatschuss (a home shot), or an Urlaubschuss (a leave shot), or even a Deutschlandschuss (a shot that gets one to Germany).  For the French, who were already on home ground, une fine blessure, (the adjective weakens the gravity of the noun), nevertheless ensured evacuation and convalescence far from the front.

The tendency to familiarise and trivialise is most apparent in the names for weapons.  In the age of the Materialschlacht, the terrifying killing and maiming power of high explosives posed the greatest threat to infantrymen on the Western Front, followed by rifle and machine-gun fire.  The distant impersonality of the killing (one scarcely ever saw the enemy), and its unpredictability made it particularly threatening.

Trivializing names for weapons and their projectiles reduced the psychological sense of danger.  Bergmann notes that the tradition of naming heavy guns reaches at least to the early seventeenth century. (41)  The soldiers of the Great War, faced with the most destructive technology then known, were not behindhand.  All the combatants referred to the various artillery weapons by their calibres.  Everyone spoke of "75s," the French 75 millimetre field gun, and "180s," the German heavy howitzer.

German field guns of various calibres were variously dubbed wilde Marie, dicke Marie, dicke Bertha (the famous "Big Bertha"), der liebe Fritz, der lange Max, and schlanke Emma. (42)  The manoeuvrability of the French 75 was honoured in the name Feldhase (field hare).  The French called their 75 Julot, which seems to have been one of the few French names in general circulation for heavy artillery pieces.

The French trench mortar, a squat, blunt-nosed gun with angled supports, was called "le crapouillot," a word formed from "crapaud" (toad), either from its shape or the fact that its shells fired almost vertically and then dropped into the opposing trench line, much like the hop of a toad.  Bergmann has correctly assessed the effect of naming guns for people (especially women) and animals: "...man sucht auch auf diesem Wege sich die unheimlichen Kriegsmaschinen n@her zu bringen, sie sich vertrauter zu machen und ihre Gefahr gleichsam geringer erscheinen zu lassen" ("in this way one seeks to bring the sinister war machines closer, to make them more familiar and, as it were, to let their danger appear slighter"). (43)

The British seem to have been disinclined to name their guns, but all three languages are richly furnished with names for the projectiles, probably because ordinary infantrymen tended to be on the receiving end.  Because of the large quantity of black smoke produced by the explosion, a heavy shell was called a "Jack Johnson", or a "coal-box."

In French, a similar shell was un gros noir, and one that exploded with greenish smoke was un pernod, named after the popular drink.  Others were saucissons (sausages), sacs B terre (sand bags) and marmites, named after the large, deep cooking pot of the same name.  Germans called a heavy shell an Aschpott (ash pot) or a Marmeladeneimer (jam pot).  The British trivialised the German mine thrower - the Minnenwerfer - by calling its whistling shells "singing Minnies," thus reducing a dangerous weapon to the status of a harmless girl. (44)

Similarly, the German hand grenades, which had handles, quickly became known as "potato mashers," which they did, indeed, resemble.  The oval hand grenades of France and Britain were called les tortues (turtles) by the French and Ostereier (Easter eggs) by the Germans.  A German discus-shaped hand grenade was a Nhrnberger Lebkuchen, the famous gingerbread Christmas cookie.  In all of these cases, the movement is to trivialise and familiarise the weapons by noting a resemblance to something common, familiar, and above all, harmless.

The racial and sexual innuendo inherent in several of the slang names (i.e. Jack Johnson, Big Bertha) is part of the same pattern and reflects the attitudes of the period; it is not like the deliberately derogatory and ironic slang used for the rear echelons, as we shall see.

The front line troops also displayed the greatest inventiveness in their slang names for infantry weapons, colouring the euphemism with an ironic twist.  Take, for example, the machine gun, the most dangerous infantry weapon.  The Germans generally used the acronym MG for Maschinengewehr, although Stottertante (stuttering aunt) and Nuhmaschine (sewing machine) were current. (45)  The British called their own machine guns Lewis guns and the enemy's Maxim guns, named for their inventors.

But for the poilu, the machine gun became un moulin B cafe - a coffee mill - first because the early gatling-gun types were hand-cranked, and secondly for the sound they made.  In any event, the gun was reduced to being a familiar household object in everyday use.  Later in the war irony took over, and the machine gun was also called la machine B decoudre - a machine to rip open seams, ironically formed on machine B coudre (sewing machine).  The verb decoudre also denotes the action of a horned animal ripping open its attackers, giving the phrase a sinister undertone.

But the cleverest French slang involves the bayonet.  The French army had succumbed to a veritable cult of the bayonet in the period before the war.  It was regarded as the infantry weapon par excellence, the embodiment of the offensive spirit, and the bayonet charge as the surest indication of military elan among foot soldiers - the infantry equivalent of a cavalry charge.

In the realities of trench combat, as Jean Norton Cru has shown, the bayonet, despite its sinister appearance and exalted reputation, was little used and produced minor wounds in comparison to the effects of shrapnel and bullets. (46)

But it was a favourite for nicknames, the most famous of which is Rosalie, from a 1914 song far more popular among civilians than among soldiers. (47)  The bayonet was known as la fourchette (the fork), and le cure-dents (the toothpick), as well as a tire-Boche and a tourne-Boche.  In the last cases Boche, as the general slang term for the Germans, is substituted into existing phrases.

The former comes from tire-bouchon, a corkscrew, possibly a reference to the twisting movement that soldiers were taught to use in a bayonet thrust.  The latter, tourne-boche, is formed from tournebroche, a kitchen spit for roasting meat and fowl in the fireplace.

One of the most striking characteristics of slang is its inclination toward degradation rather than elevation, what Partridge following Carnoy has called dysphemism.  (48)  Niceforo calls it "l'esprit de degradation et de depreciation," ("the spirit of degradation and depreciation") and goes on to speak of slang as a form of assault directed at a higher class by an underclass. (49)

In its deliberate deformation of words, mispronunciation and taste for impropriety, slang may serve as the only act of rebellion allowed soldiers at war.  While most mispronunciations of French place names were probably just that, a few are so wonderfully ironic that they must have been deliberate, such as the German deformation of Neufchatel to Neuschrapnell (new shrapnel). (50)

Fear, and the hatred it spawned, was directed above all toward the "powers that be," the perfidious and murderous ils (they) as Meyer calls them. (51)

The combat soldiers' hatred of the rear, which certainly involved some envy as well as a sense of moral superiority, rested also on a sense of betrayal - the certainty that the powers, civilian or military, that ordered their lives cared little for them.  As we will see, slang terms for rear echelon troops in French and German abound in animal and vegetal metaphors, constituting a figurative vilification of intelligence, courage, and manhood.

The conviction that their lives were not valued emerges in numerous guises in the slang, including slang used for food, which was, naturally, a major preoccupation of troops who were often badly fed.  The men exercised their traditional right to grumble about the food and create disparaging epithets to describe it, a custom going back to the "grognards" of the Napoleonic Wars and beyond, and certainly continuing to our own time.

One of the staple rations in World War I was British canned beef, called "Bully" beef by the troops.  ("Bully" is probably a corruption of the French bouillie, boiled).  The Germans also called it "Bully," and liked it so well that they rarely returned from a trench raid without some, especially since German rations worsened as the war lengthened and the allied blockade cut off German resources.

By 1916, the staple of the German soldier's diet was a mixture of dried vegetables, mostly beans, that the Frontsoldaten called Drahtverhau (barbed wire).  Other German culinary delights included Stroh und Lehm (straw and mud - yellow peas with sauerkraut), and Schrapnellsuppe (shrapnel soup - undercooked pea or bean soup).

Jam, essential for softening stale bread, was Heldenbutter (hero's butter), Wagenschmiere (axle grease), and Kaiser-Wilhelm-Ged@chtnis-Schmiere (Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Spread). (52) Some of these terms may refer specifically to the notorious turnip jam that became standard issue after the blockade and crop failures created severe shortages.  Spread on ersatz bread made with sawdust and other fillers, it was neither appetizing nor nourishing.

The French did not share their enemy's or ally's taste for "Bully".  They referred to it as singe, (monkey), and boTte B grimaces, for the grimaces it produced.  Other regular items in the French soldier's diet included schrapnells (undercooked peas or beans), and lentils, known as punaises (bugs).

They called a stew a rata, a shortened form of ratatouille, which in its general sense refers to a stew, not merely the vegetable stew which it designates in modern French.  Rata however, also suggests the verb ratatiner (to shrivel or dry up), which may be a remark on the quality of army cooking.

The use of slang as insult, as defensive and offensive weapon, reached its peak in the front line soldier's contempt for rear echelon soldiers and for civilians.  The universal distain for the staffs, soldiers and officers alike, in their relatively safe and sheltered jobs, surfaces in all three languages with vitriolic implications of cowardice, greed, and self-seeking.

In the British army, staff officers were distinguished by the wearing of bright red shoulder tabs and hat bands.  The colour constituted a visible symbol that the wearer did not belong to the colourless khaki and field-grey world of the front, where distinguishing marks were abolished because they made good targets for snipers.  The frontline troops soon dubbed the tabs "The Red Badge of Funk." (53)  Along this line, one of the trench newspapers provided the following definition of "military terms":

DUDS - These are of two kinds.  A shell on impact  
failing to explode is called a dud.  They are unhappily  
not as plentiful as the other kind, which often draws a  
big salary and explodes for no reason.  These are  
plentiful away from the fighting areas. (54)

The implication of cowardice is less obvious in the French and German terms for staff officers, but the scorn is deepened by the use of animal references.  In the German Frontschwein, used for the front soldiers, Schwein was an expression of community and commonality, almost of endearment.

But the equivalent term for headquarters soldiers, Etappenschwein, was entirely pejorative.  The German focus, understandably, since the German troops were very ill-fed, was greed.  Rear echelon troops were often called Speck (bacon), and one writer even referred to the Etappenschweine as "bellies on legs." (55)

The French slang is inventively pejorative.  For them, the headquarters sergeant was a chien de quartier, a headquarters dog.  The choice of animal is significant, as chien is a broadly-used pejorative in French, common in such phrases as chien de temps (bad weather), chien de vie (a dog's life) and Ltre chien (to be stingy).

The term in widest use for someone who had a safe job was embusquJ, whose first meaning is someone lying in ambush.  The word consequently carries connotations both of hiding and, worse, of betrayal.

Another term, planquJ, has the original meaning of lying flat, ie. safely out of the line of fire; a similar term is assiettes plates (flat plates).  The most insulting epithet is the opposite of poilu, JpilJ (someone who has been depilitated), implying the loss of the vaunted courage and virility of the poilu.

High ranking officers, invariably staff officers, since the troops rarely saw anyone above the rank of captain, were reduced to lJgumes (vegetables) and generals to grosses lJgumes (big vegetables).  A brigadier's stripes of rank were sardines, suggesting in French, as in English, a small, smelly fish.

In conclusion then, the unique conditions of the First World War (a war of defensive weapons led by generals obsessed with offensives) engendered a level of psychological stress in the combatants hitherto unknown in Europe.  Along with talisman and ritual, the slang of the trenches provided a stylised discourse for the initiates of the labyrinth, through which they could define themselves as initiates, and simultaneously protect themselves from the constant awareness of their horrific situation.

As John Brophy has said of Great War soldiers' songs, the slang may not have diminished the soldier's danger, but it "may well have reduced the emotional distress caused by fear, and aided him, after the experience, to pick his uncertain way back to sanity again." (56)

## Background of Cockney English:

Due to the fact that London is both the political capital and the largest city within England, Wells, (1982b) doesn’t find it surprising that it’s also the country’s "linguistic center of gravity." Cockney represents the basilectal end of the London accent and can be considered the broadest form of London local accent.(Wells 1982b) It traditionally refers only to specific regions and speakers within the city. While many Londoners may speak what is referred to as "popular London" (Wells 1982b) they do not necessarily speak Cockney. The popular Londoner accent can be distinguished from Cockney in a number of ways, and can also be found outside of the capital, unlike the true Cockney accent.

The term Cockney refers to both the accent as well as to those people who speak it? The etymology of Cockney has long been discussed and disputed. One explanation is that "Cockney" literally means cock's egg, a misshapen egg such as sometimes laid by young hens. It was originally used when referring to a weak townsman, opposed to the tougher countryman and by the 17th century the term, through banter, came to mean a Londoner (Liberman, 1996). Today's natives of London, especially in its East End use the term with respect and pride - `Cockney Pride'.)

Cockney is characterized by its own special vocabulary and usage, and traditionally by its own development of "rhyming slang." Rhyming slang, is still part of the true Cockney culture even if it is sometimes used for effect. More information on the way it works can be found under the Cockney English features section.

## Geography of Cockney English:

London, the capital of England, is situated on the River Thames, approximately 50 miles north of the English Channel, in the south east section of the country. It is generally agreed, that to be a true Cockney, a person has to be born within hearing distance of the bells of St. Mary le Bow, Cheapside, in the City of London. This traditional working-class accent of the region is also associated with other suburbs in the eastern section of the city such as the East End, Stepney, Hackney, Shoreditch Poplar and Bow.

## Sociolinguistic issues of Cockney English:

The Cockney accent is generally considered one of the broadest of the British accents and is heavily stimatized. It is considered to epitomize the working class accents of Londoners and in its more diluted form, of other areas. The area and its colorful characters and accents have often become the foundation for British "soap operas" and other television specials. Currently, the BBC is showing one of the most popular soaps set in this region, "East Enders" and the characters’ accents and lives within this television program provide wonderful opportunities for observers of language and culture.

## Features of Cockney English:

Some of the more characteristic features of the Cockney accent include the following:

* **Monophthongization**

This affects the lexical set mouth vowel.

* **MOUTH vowel**

Wells (1982b) believes that it is widely agreed that the "mouth" vowel is a "touchstone for distinguishing between "true Cockney" and popular London" and other more standard accents. Cockney usage would include monophthongization of the word mouth

Example:

mouth = mauf rather than mouth



* **Glottal stop**

Wells (1982b) describes the glottal stop as also particularly characteristic of Cockney and can be manifested in different ways such as "t" glottalling in final position. A 1970’s study of schoolchildren living in the East End found /p,t,k/ "almost invariably glottalized" in final position.

Examples:

cat = up = sock =



It can also manifest itself as a bare as the realization of word internal intervocalic /t/



Examples:

Waterloo = Wa’erloo City = Ci’y A drink of water = A drin' a wa'er A little bit of bread with a bit of butter on it = A li'le bi' of breab wiv a bi' of bu'er on i'.



As would be expected, an "Estuary English" speaker uses fewer glottal stops for t or d than a "London" speaker, but more than an RP speaker. However, there are some words where the omission of ‘t’ has become very accepted.

Examples:

Gatwick = Ga’wick

Scotland = Sco'land

statement = Sta'emen

network = Ne’work

* **Dropped ‘h’ at beginning of words (Voiceless glottal fricative)**

In the working-class ("common") accents throughout England, ‘h’ dropping at the beginning of certain words is heard often, but it’s certainly heard more in Cockney, and in accents closer to Cockney on the continuum between that and RP. The usage is strongly stigmatized by teachers and many other standard speakers.

Examples:

house = ‘ouse

hammer = ‘ammer

* **TH fronting**

Another very well known characteristic of Cockney is th fronting which involves the replacement of the dental fricatives, and by labiodentals [f] and [v] respectively.



Examples:

thin = fin



brother = bruvver



three = free



bath = barf



* **Vowel lowering**

Examples:

dinner = dinna



marrow= marra



* **Prosody**

The voice quality of Cockney has been described as typically involving "chest tone" rather than "head tone" and being equated with "rough and harsh" sounds versus the velvety smoothness of the Kensington or Mayfair accents spoken by those in other more upscale areas of London.

* **Cockney Rhyming Slang**

Cockney English is also characterized by its own special vocabulary and usage in the form of "cockney rhyming slang". The way it works is that you take a pair of associated words where the second word rhymes with the word you intend to say, then use the first word of the associated pair to indicate the word you originally intended to say. Some rhymes have been in use for years and are very well recognized, if not used, among speakers of other accents.

Examples:

"apples and pears" – stairs

"plates of meat" – feet

There are others, however, that become established with the changing culture.

Example:

"John Cleese" – cheese

"John Major" – pager

Numerous examples and usage of rhyming slang can be found online. See Note 2 for information.

Slang and the Dictionary

*Slang ... an attempt of common humanity to escape from bald literalism, and express itself illimitably ... the wholesome fermentation or eructation of those processes eternally active in language, by which froth and specks are thrown up, mostly to pass away, though occasionally to settle and permanently crystallise.*

*Walt Whitman, 1885*

What is slang?

 Most of us think that we recognise slang when we hear it or see it, but exactly how slang is defined and which terms should or should not be listed under that heading continue to be the subject of debate in the bar-room as much as in the classroom or university seminar. To arrive at a working definition of slang the first edition of the Bloomsbury Dictionary of Contemporary Slang approached the phenomenon from two slightly different angles. Firstly, slang is a style category within the language which occupies an extreme position on the spectrum of formality. Slang is at the end of the line; it lies beyond mere informality or colloquialism, where language is considered too racy, raffish, novel or unsavoury for use in conversation with strangers … So slang enforces intimacy. It often performs an important social function which is to include into or exclude from the intimate circle, using forms of language through which speakers identify with or function within social sub-groups, ranging from surfers, schoolchildren and yuppies, to criminals, drinkers and fornicators. These remain the essential features of slang at the end of the 1990s, although its extreme informality may now seem less shocking than it used to, and its users now include ravers, rappers and net-heads along with the miscreants traditionally cited.

There are other characteristics which have been used to delimit slang, but these may often be the result of prejudice and misunderstanding and not percipience. Slang has been referred to again and again as ‘illegitimate’, ‘low and disreputable’ and condemned by serious writers as ‘a sign and a cause of mental atrophy’(Oliver Wendell Holmes), ‘the advertisement of mental poverty’(James C. Fernal). Its in-built unorthodoxy has led to the assumption that slang in all its incarnations (metaphors, euphemisms, taboo words, catchphrases, nicknames, abbreviations and the rest) is somehow inherently substandard and unwholesome. But linguists and lexicographers cannot (or at least, should not) stigmatise words in the way that society may stigmatise the users of those words and, looked at objectively, slang is no more reprehensible than poetry, with which it has much in common in its creative playing with the conventions and mechanisms of language, its manipulation of metonymy, synechdoche, irony, its wit and inventiveness. In understanding this, and also that slang is a natural product of those ‘processes eternally active in language’, Walt Whitman was ahead of his time.

More recently some writers (Halliday being an influential example) have claimed that the essence of slang is that it is language used in conscious opposition to authority. But slang does not have to be subversive; it may simply encode a shared experience, celebrate a common outlook which may be based as much on (relatively) innocent enjoyment (by, for instance, schoolchildren, drinkers, sports fans, Internet-users) as on illicit activities. Much slang, in fact, functions as an alternative vocabulary, replacing standard terms with more forceful, emotive or interesting versions just for the fun of it: hooter or conk for nose, mutt or pooch for dog, ankle-biter or crumb-snatcher for child are instances. Still hoping to find a defining characteristic, other experts have seized upon the rapid turnover of slang words and announced that this is the key element at work; that slang is concerned with faddishness and that its here-today-gone-tomorrow components are ungraspable and by implication inconsequential. Although novelty and innovation are very important in slang, a close examination of the whole lexicon reveals that, as Whitman had noted, it is not necessarily transient at all. The word punk, for example, has survived in the linguistic underground since the seventeenth century and among the slang synonyms for money - dosh, ackers, spondulicks, rhino, pelf - which were popular in the City of London in the 1990s are many which are more than a hundred years old. A well-known word like cool in its slang sense is still in use (and has been adopted by other languages, too), although it first appeared around eighty years ago.

Curiously, despite the public’s increasing fascination for slang, as evinced in newspaper and magazine articles and radio programmes, academic linguists in the UK have hitherto shunned it as a field of study. This may be due to a lingering conservatism, or to the fact that it is the standard varieties of English that have to be taught, but whatever the reasons the situation is very different elsewhere. In the US and Australia the study of slang is part of the curriculum in many institutions, in France, Spain, Holland, Scandinavia and Eastern Europe slang, and especially the slang of English, is the subject of more and more research projects and student theses; in all these places slang is discussed in symposia and in learned journals, while in Russia, China and Japan local editions of British and American slang dictionaries can be found on school bookshelves and in university libraries.

Slang Lexicographers

The first glossaries or lexicons of European slang on record were lists of the verbal curiosities used by thieves and ne’er-do-wells which were compiled in Germany and France in the fifteenth century. A hundred years later the first English collections appeared under the titles The Hye Waye to the Spytell House, by Copland, Fraternite of Vacabondes, by Awdeley, and Caveat for Common Cursetours, by Harman. Although dramatists and pamphleteers of seventeenth-century England made spirited use of slang in their works, it was not until the very end of the 1600s that the next important compilation, the first real dictionary of slang, appeared. This was A New Dictionary of the Terms ancient and modern of the Canting Crew by ‘B. E. Gent’, a writer whose real identity is lost to us. In 1785, Captain Francis Grose published the first edition of his Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue, the most important contribution to slang lexicography until John Camden Hotten’s Dictionary of Modern Slang, Cant and Vulgar Words, 1859, which was overtaken its turn by Farmer and Henley’s more sophisticated Slang and its Analogues in 1890. All these were published in Britain and it was the New Zealander Eric Partridge’s single-handed masterwork A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English, also published in London, in 1937, that, despite its lack of citations and sometimes eccentric etymologies, became the yardstick of slang scholarship at least until the arrival of more rigorously organised compendiums from the USA in the 1950s. Since then several larger reference works have been published, usually confining themselves to one geographical area and based mainly on written sources, together with a number of smaller, often excellent specialist dictionaries dealing with categories such as naval slang, Glaswegian slang, rhyming slang, the argot of police and criminals and the jargon of finance and high technology.

The Bloomsbury Dictionary Of Contemporary Slang

The Bloomsbury Dictionary of Contemporary Slang was first produced with the idea of combining the enthusiasms and instincts of a user of slang - someone who had been part of the subcultures and milieux where this language variety has flourished ( and in later life still ventures into clubs, bars, music festivals, football matches and, on occasion, homeless shelters) - with the methods of the modern lexicographer (earlier work on the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English being a particular influence) and applied linguist. The first edition set out to record the 6,000 or so key terms and 15,000-odd definitions which formed the core of worldwide English language slang from 1950 to 1990: the new, updated edition, published in Autumn 1997, extends the time-frame almost to the millennium and expands the number of entries by two thousand, losing a few obscure, doubtfully attested or just plain uninteresting terms in the process. The dictionary aims to pick up the elusive and picturesque figures of speech that really are in use out there in the multiple anglophone speech communities, and many terms which appear in its pages have never been recorded before. In keeping with the modern principles of dictionary-making, the headwords which are listed here are defined as far as possible in natural, discursive language. The modern dictionary ideally moves beyond mere definition and tries to show how a term functions in the language, who uses it and when and why, what special associations or overtones it may have, perhaps even how it is pronounced. Where possible a history of the word and an indication of its origin will be included and its usage illustrated by an authentic citation or an invented exemplary phrase or sentence.

As with all similar dictionaries, the Bloomsbury volume is based to some extent on consulting written sources such as newspapers, magazines, comic books, novels and works of non-fiction. Other secondary sources of slang are TV and radio programmes, films and song lyrics. Existing glossaries compiled by researchers, by journalists and by Internet enthusiasts were also checked, but treated, like fictional texts and broadcasts, with caution; investigators may be misled by their informants and, as society becomes more self-conscious in its treatment of new and unorthodox language, varieties of so-called slang appear that are only partly authentic, such as the gushing 'teen-talk' (a variety of journalese) appearing in UK magazines like Just Seventeen, My Guy or Sugar directed by twenty- and thirty-something journalists at their much younger readers, or the argot developed by writers for cult movies such as Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey, Wayne's World and Clueless. The embellishing or inventing of slang is nothing new; Damon Runyon, Raymond Chandler and P. G. Wodehouse all indulged in it, as did British TV comedy writers for Porridge, Minder, Only Fools and Horses, etc., over the last three decades. For the Bloomsbury dictionary terms have been admitted if they can be verified from two or more sources, thereby, sadly, shutting out examples of idiolect (one person's private language), restricted sociolects (terms shared by very small groups) and nonce terms (one-off coinages).

Any description of slang that is based purely on secondary or written sources (and most still are) cannot hope to do justice to a language which is primarily transmitted orally. Slang terms may exist in spoken usage for many years, even for centuries, before being written down; some are never committed to paper, so there is an absolute need for work ‘in the field’ with primary sources; eavesdropping on and interviewing the users of slang themselves, and, where they are not able to report objectively on the words and phrases they are using, their neighbours, parents, colleagues, fellow-students and friends must be mobilised. This is the most exciting part of lexicography, if sometimes the most risky. The modern language researchers going undercover to listen in on conversations or setting up networks of informants at street-level can imagine themselves as successors to the pioneering anthropologists of the last century, rather than ‘harmless drudges’ (Dr Johnson's memorable definition of the lexicographer) toiling alone in dusty libraries or staring at flickering screens.

Slang at the Millennium

The traditional breeding grounds of slang have always been secretive, often disenfranchised social groups and closed institutions with their rituals and codes. This has not changed, although the users in question have. Where once it was the armed forces, the public schools and Oxbridge that in Britain dominated socially and linguistically, now it is the media, the comprehensive playground and the new universities which exercise most influence on popular language: the office, the trading-floor and the computer-room have replaced the workshop, the factory and the street-market as nurturing environments for slang. The street gang and the prison, whence came nearly all the ‘cant’ that filled the early glossaries, still provide a great volume of slang, as do the subcultures of rave, techno and jungle music, crusties and new agers, skaters and snowboarders. Football metaphors and in-jokes have long since ousted the cricketing imagery of yesteryear. Some special types of slang including pig-latin (infixing)and backslang (reversal, as in yob )seem virtually to have disappeared in the last few years, while the rhyming slang which arose in the early Victorian age continues to flourish in Britain and Australia, replenished by succeeding generations, and the even older parlyaree (a romance/romany/yiddish lingua franca) lingers on in corners of London’s theatre-land and gay community. The effect of the media and more recently of the Internet means that slang in English can no longer be seen as a set of discrete localised dialects, but as a continuum or a bundle of overlapping vocabularies stretching from North America and the Caribbean through Ireland and the UK on to South Africa, South and East Asia and Australasia. Each of these communities has its own peculiarities of speech, but instantaneous communications and the effect of English language movies, TV soaps and music means that there is a core of slang that is common to all of them and into which they can feed. The feeding in still comes mainly from the US, and to a lesser extent Britain and Australia; slang from other areas and the slang of minorities in the larger communities has yet to make much impression on global English, with one significant exception. That is the black slang which buzzes between Brooklyn, Trenchtown, Brixton and Soweto before, in many cases, crossing over to pervade the language of the underworld, teenagers ( - it is the single largest source for current adolescent slang in both the UK and US), the music industry and showbusiness. Within one country previously obscure local slang can become nationally known, whether spread by the bush telegraph that has always linked schools and colleges or by the media: Brookside, Coronation Street, Rab C. Nesbitt and Viz magazine have all helped in disseminating British regionalisms. This mixing-up of national and local means that past assumptions about usage may no longer hold true: the earnest English traveller, having learned that fag and bum mean something else in North America, now finds that in fashionable US campus-speak they can actually mean cigarette and backside. In the meantime the alert American in Britain learns that cigarettes have become tabs or biffs and backside is now often rendered by the Jamaican batty .

Speakers of English everywhere seem to have become more liberal, admitting more and more slang into their unselfconscious everyday speech; gobsmacked , O.T.T ., wimp and sorted can now be heard among the respectable British middle-aged; terms such as horny and bullshit which were not so long ago considered vulgar in the extreme are now heard regularly on radio and television, while former taboo terms, notably the ubiquitous British shag , occur even in the conversation of young ladies. In Oakland, California, the liberalising process reached new extremes late in 1996 with the promotion of so-called Ebonics : black street speech given equal status with the language of the dominant white culture.

Youthspeak

The greatest number of new terms appearing in the new edition of the dictionary are used by adolescents and children, the group in society most given to celebrating heightened sensations, new experiences and to renaming the features of their world, as well as mocking anyone less interesting or younger or older than themselves. But the rigid generation gap which used to operate in the family and school has to some extent disappeared. Children still distance themselves from their parents and other authority figures by their use of a secret code, but the boomers - the baby boom generation - grew up identifying themselves with subversion and liberalism and, now that they are parents in their turn, many of them are unwilling either to disapprove of or to give up the use of slang, picking up their children's words (often much to the latters' embarrassment) and evolving their own family-based language ( helicopters, velcroids, howlers, chap-esses are examples).

The main obsessions among slang users of all ages, as revealed by word counts, have not changed; intoxication by drink or drugs throws up (no pun intended) the largest number of synonyms; lashed, langered, mullered and hooted are recent additions to this part of the lexicon. These are followed by words related to sex and romance - copping off, out trouting, on the sniff and jam, lam, slam and the rest - and the many vogue terms of approval that go in and out of fashion among the young (in Britain ace, brill, wicked and phat have given way to top, mint, fit and dope which are themselves on the way out at the time of writing). The number of nicknames for money, bollers, boyz, beer-tokens, squirt and spon among them, has predictably increased since the materialist 1980s and adolescent concern with identity-building and status-confirming continues to produce a host of dismissive epithets for the unfortunate misfit, some of which, like wendy, spod, licker, are confined to the school environment while others, such as trainspotter, anorak and geek , have crossed over into generalised usage.

Other obsessions are more curious; is it the North American housewife’s hygiene fetish which has given us more than a dozen terms (dust-bunny, dust-kitty, ghost-turd, etc.) for the balls of fluff found on an unswept floor, where British English has only one (beggars velvet )? Why do speakers in post-industrial Britain and Australia still need a dozen or more words to denote the flakes of dung that hang from the rear of sheep and other mammals, words like dags, dangleberries, dingleberries, jub-nuts, winnets and wittens ? Teenagers have their fixations, finding wigs (toop, syrup, Irish, rug) and haemorrhoids (farmers, Emma Freuds, nauticals) particularly hilarious. A final curiosity is the appearance in teenage speech fashionable vogue terms which are actually much older than their users realise: once again referring to money, British youth has come up with luka ( the humorous pejorative "filthy lucre" in a new guise), Americans with duckets (formerly "ducats", the Venetian gold coins used all over Renaissance Europe).

**There are some examples of nowadays’ slang which I found from very interesting site:**

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| **A:** An A tuning fork.  **Example:** Man, my guitar's way out of tune. Can you pass me my A? |

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| **a (good) kay and a half:** One and a half kilometres; the distance to anywhere from anywhere else; a long way.  **Example:** Where's Christie's Beach? About a kay and a half that way.  How far are we from home? We'd be a good kay and a half, I reckon. |

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| **A Buck One-Eighty:** You have A Buck Three-Eighty. I have always heard it this way--so there's a variant.  **Example:** Wonder if a buck three-eighty is actually the same amount as a buck one-eighty? |

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| **a buck three eighty:** The price for anything.  **Example:** Q: How much is this, sir? A: That's a buck three eighty. |

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| **a case of the ass or redass:** Highly annoyed, pissed off. Currently used in US Army.  **Example:** Sergeant Greenfield has this huge case of the ass with me ever since I wrecked his humvee. |

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| **a couple two three:** I guess this means two or three. (We don't say this in Chicago. It's a weird thing they say out west or something.)  **Example:** He had a couple two three dogs in his yard. |

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| **a dollar three eightyfive:** A nonsensical price for when one does not want to give the real price.  **Example:** How much did my Lexus cost? A dollar three eightyfive. |

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| **a double:** A twenty dollar bill.  **Example:** I've got eighty dollars on me, all I need is a double to make it a hundred.  [A double sawbuck is a twenty. Read Dashiell Hammett or Raymond Chandler to see fin, sawbuck, and double sawbuck in action.] |

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| **a fin:** Five dollars. (Gamblers use it for $500.)  **Example:** All I have is a fin and two dollars in change in my pocket. |

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| **a freddy:** a pint of beer, more specifically a pint of heineken, named after the late freddy heineken  **Example:** Two freddys and a ginger ale, please. |

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| **a happy Birthday:** A phrase mostly used by guys when they catch themselves in a situation when  a girl exposes some part of her anatomy without knowing it, clothed or not.  Usually happens at the gym.  **Example:** Did you see that girl's shirt? Now that is a happy birthday. |

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| **A List:** The people at school who are cooler than anyone else in the school.  **Example:** I'm not cool enough to go out with her--she's A list. |

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| **a Monet:** Someone who is very good looking from a distance, yet from up close the attraction diminishes.  **Example:** He was hot from afar, but he turned out to be a Monet when I went up to speak. |

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| **a mouse in his pocket:** Phrase used to describe someone large, probably very strong, but intensely stupid. From \_Of Mice and Men\_[?]  **Example:** We've got a new guy at work who worries me; I swear I think he's got a mouse in his pocket. |

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| **a nifty:** A fifty dollar bill.  **Example:** I borrowed a nifty from my mom and she upped it five bucks more.Now I owe her fifty-five dollars. |

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| **a pig in your pocket:** Used when a person doesn't want to assist another.  **Example:** What do you mean we? Is there a pig in your pocket? |

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| **a sims moment:** Brief moment in which you can relate something in real life to something in the computer simulation game The Sims. Usually occurs after rounds of playing said game.  **Example:** I'm having a sims moment. This kitchen looks almost like what I did in The Sims last night. |

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| **a sleeve:** A hundred dollar bill.  **Example:** I got seven hundred dollars, all in sleeves. |

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| **a solid:** A favor.  **Example:** Do me a solid and send me that website link. |

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| **a whole 'nother:** An entirely different. I've noticed this phrase in the vocabulary of many people of various backgrounds and have even heard it on national TV, but I have yet to see it written down (before now).  **Example:** That's a whole 'nother story. |

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| **A's and C's:** n. (plural) abbr. of Arts and Crafts. Slang form, creative endeavour.  **Example:** They're letting me out of that place today so I can do some A's and C's. |

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| **A'stake:** A mistake, (Thanks, Erin.)  **Example:** I'm sorry, I made a'stake. |

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| **A-Bag:** Real estate exchanger term meaning a keeper property that would not be traded off without a substantial advantage gained.  **Example:** That's a good property--it's A-Bag. |

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| **A-D-orable:** Really adorable and cute.  **Example:** Look at that guy, he's A-D-orable! |

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| **a-delic:** Usually seen after funk, mack, or shag. Emphasizes the previous word to its maximum.  **Example:** That lowrider is pimp-a-delic. |

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| **a-dollar-three-eighty:** The price for anything.  **Example:** Question: How much is it? Answer: A-dollar-three-eighty. |

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| **a-game:** To do your best effort possible in any endeavor, not just pertaining to sports.  **Example:** I didn't do to well on that test last week, next time I'm going to bring my A-game. |

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| **A-list:** A mythical group of weblogs and personal sites (and their creators) who are simply Much Cooler Than You. It is worth noting that (a) no such list actually exists, (b) those who are on the list adamantly deny its existence, and (c) it is not the same as the Cabal. A-list is frequently used in a mocking manner by those who are not members.  **Example:** Oh, one link from kottke.org and now you go all A-list on us! OR You haven't seen this yet? All the A-listers linked to it. |

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| **a-loin:** Used in the place alone. Especially leave me alone.  **Example:** I'm having a bad day, so just leave me a-loin. |

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| **A-madnay:** (uh-mad-nay) From the French, un moment donné, at a given time.  **Example:** We really need to catch up. Maybe we could go for coffee a-madnay. |

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| **a-scared:** Like afraid, but not as dramatic. Usually an adjective, but sometimes a verb.  **Example:** Oh, you a-scared me, I didn't know anyone was here. |

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| **A.R. three-eighty:** An anal rententive person. A perfectionist.  **Example:** Ugh, look at how he constantly straightens his hair. What an A.R. three-eighty. |

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| **Aabar:** To use sly, deceitful, or illegal tactics to occupy the first place in any ordered listing, esp. phone directories.  **Example:** You will have to aabar well to rank higher in the dictionary than this. |

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| **aaboos:** Abuse. Brummie translation of the Welsh.  **Example:** You are aaboosing me, you naughty Welshman. |

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| **aaiight!:** All Right! Used in times of intense emotion.  **Example:** Dad: Son, get in there and clean your room. Son: Aaiight! |

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| **aarqeunaamaaei:** (Pronounciation: arch-ay-nay-mey) Used in the place of arch enemy. However, aarqeunaamaaei usually refers to political enemies. (Plural: aarqeunaamaaeis)  **Example:** Fidel Castro and George W. Bush are aarqeunaamaaeis. |

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| **Aazing:** Like amazing, but not quite.  **Example:** The 30-story building was aazing. |

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| **abacoral:** The backbone of a snail.  **Example:** Hello, class. We're going to look for abacorals today. |

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| **Abal:** Used by the younger generation to label a person as dumb, uncouth, unsophisticated.  **Example:** You're just an Abal. |

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| **abbamatically:** The tendency for an unbearably cloying song to  repeat over and over in your head all day after hearing it on the radio.  **Example:** More Than a Woman has been playing abbamatically in my head since breakfast. |

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| **abbeverate:** To feed a person a drink, to offer a drink, or provide a drink.  **Example:** I'm going to abbeverate our guests before they die of thirst. |

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| **Abdicate:** To give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.  **Example:** If you drink 24 beers a day you must be prepared to abdicate seeing your toes again. |

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| **abeer:** used in place of ahmen, usually as a type of thanks.  **Example:** Paul-I'll get the next round of sodas. Group (in unision)-abeer! |

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| **abella:** Someone who owns everything possible.  **Example:** That abella rules at Counter-strike. |

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| **Aberzombie:** One who wears only Abercrombie & Fitch clothing.  **Example:** Trust me, you're not his type. He's only into other Aberzombies like himself. |

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| **abnatural:** an obscene violation of what is natural.  **Example:** McDonald's food, industrial pollution, and repression of happiness are all abnatural, screaming contradictions to healthy existence. |

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| **abode:** A board. A piece of lumber used to build a structure.  **Example:** Is that abode fence? |

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| **aboot:** About. Used to emphasize Canadianess.  **Example:** You're Canadian? What are you talking aboot, eh? |

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| **abra-kebabra:** The inevitability that the kebab you are consuming at 3am after one too many beers  with your mates will reappear in the very near future.  **Example:** We had almost made it home after a big night out when suddenly....abra-kebabra. |

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| **ABS:** Asshole Behavior Scale. Logarithmic scale from 1 to 10 used to measure how much of an asshole someone is being. Similar to the Richter scale for earthquakes with each whole number representing an intensity 10 times greater than the next lower number.  **Example:** Chris's extremely cranky again today. Had to be at least a 6.2 on the ABS. |

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| **absogoddamnlutely:** Ultimate absolutely.  **Example:** I am absogodamnlutely sure I've used this word hundreds of times. |

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| **absoludacris:** Something absolutely ludicrous--say, to Mr. T, for example.  **Example:** Drugs are \*bad\* Drugs are absoludacris. |

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| **absoludicrous:** The peak of ridiculousness. Absolutely ludicrous.  **Example:** Look! That guy has blue hair. How absoludicrous. |

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| **absonotly:** Used when the intent is to most definitely decline in no uncertain terms.  **Example:** I absonotly won't do that. |

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| **absopause:** (n) When, for some odd reason, everyone shuts up and listens when you talk. Rare.  **Example:** During the absopause, everyone heard Rob's plan. |

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| **absopositively:** (adj) Absolutely and positively combined.  **Example:** I am absopositively sure that Milton likes you. |

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| **absosilence:** (n) When everyone in a noisy room becomes silent at the same time with no apparent cause.  **Example:** Three-hundred people shut up at the same time. The absosilence was weird. |

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| **Absotively:** Combination of absolutely and positively. Usually used an answer to a request.  **Example:** Q: Will you go to the store for me? A: Absotively. |

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| **absotively-posilutely:** Scrambled absolutely and positively.  **Example:** I am absotively-posilutely sure about that. |

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| **abstractional-dopmology:** The study of brown dots in any carpet.  **Example:** I see you've been catching up on your abstractional-dopmology. |

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| **Absurdbaijan:** (n) The realm or domain of absurd ideas.  **Example:** John must be from Absurdbaijan; he thinks aliens are spying on him with mashed potatoes. |

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| **abuba:** Huh?  **Example:** My math teacher asked me, Can you prove that there are infinitely many real numbers? I replied, Abuba? |

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| **abyssagation:** A void before a great discovery, as well as a person who has writers' block and then writes better than he's ever written.  **Example:** Any inventor has experienced abyssagation in his life at least once. |

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| **Abyssicaletphedence:** An endless nothingness of boredom.  **Example:** James sat in abyssicaletphedence druing class. |

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| **abyssinia:** I'll be seeing you.  **Example:** Abyssinia! |

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| **AC:** Atlantic City, New Jersey.  **Example:** AC is a pretty ghetto town. |

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| **Accckkkk:** Exclamation.  **Example:** Accckkkk! The monkey sold the liver I was planning on using for the transplant. |

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| **accellurate:** To add (a lot, and fast) extra minutes to your cellular plan.  **Example:** I've been accellurated to 3000 minutes on nights and weekends. |

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| **accipurp:** A deliberate act intended to appear accidental  **Example:** I hit him by accipurp. |

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| **accipurpodentally:** Accidentally on purpose, when you meant to do something but pretend you really didn't.  **Example:** I accipurpodentally hit on my sister's guy friend. |

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| **accordianated:** Being able to refold a road map and drive at the same time.  **Example:** She showed how accordianated she was by folding up the road map and steering the car at the same time. |

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| **accribitz, deccribitz:** Used in an episode of the TV show \_Veronica's Closet\_ when a character  could not think of a synonym for increase or decrease.  **Example:** I expect sales figures to accribitz in the next quarter. |

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| **ace:** One's best friend.  **Example:** Jim's my ace. |

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| **ace:** excellent, great  **Example:** I had an ace time at Jeff's party! |

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| **ace:** Ass, fool.  **Example:** I ran into a wall today, and felt like an ace. |

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| **aces:** Said in a very excited moment, when there is just nothing else to say. From poker, where the best hand is five aces.  **Example:** A. That gorgeous babe over there just asked me for your phone number. B. Aces! |

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| **achecanantooch:** To eat foreign food.  **Example:** I'm hungry. Let's achecanantooch all night! |

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| **acheye:** The pain you feel in your eyes after looking at a screen for ages.  **Example:** Acheye is really setting in now; but, boy, is this screen entertaining. |

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| **Achoo:** Used when a conversation is boring, to stir excitement or some type of response, using follow by something like Oh, all the silence is making me sneeze.  **Example:** .... Achoo! Oh, Bless me, I'm allergic to silence. |

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| **achuwie:** A varation of the word actually; a poor pronunciation of actually, often caused by speaking too fast.  **Example:** I achuwie am getting too excited. That's why my speech is slurred. |

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| **ack:** Exclamation used to indicate surprise, irritation, or disgust, often with one's own actions.  **Example:** Ack! I deleted my entire inbox! |

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| **acklapootis:** Cool, awesome, etc.  **Example:** Angelina Jolie is one acklapootis babe when she gets to talkin' about her and Billy Bob. |

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| **aclueistic:** Incapable of having a clue  **Example:** If you have to ask, you must be aclueistic. |

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| **acluistic:** Not having a clue.  **Example:** Those cable repair guys are acluistic. |

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| **acrapulate:** Word used for describing a large amount of useless junk collected over a period of time .  **Example:** I can't believe how much I've acrapulated over the years. |

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| **acribit:** To increase.  **Example:** There are many ways to acribit your wealth. (P.S. Why would you write, Please use the word you are submitting in the example? Are people honestly that stupid? Err, sorry, forget I said that. ;) |

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| **acrojumble:** Using too many acronyms. Such as, I'd love to, but it is the DFR deadline week for all KIXs and ZSWs.  **Example:** Her memo was unreadable because of severe acrojumble. |

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| **acronize:** To provide an acronym for.  **Example:** I tried to acronize his name into a befitting insult, but failed to produce anything suitable. |

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| **Acronyze:** (verb) The process of shortening phrases, via an acronym, for the purpose of simplifing statements. Typically used in technical data reporting or inter-office e-mails. (IE FUBAR or KISS)  **Example:** I didn't realize that phrase had been acronyzed. |

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| **Action tooth:** A gold tooth. Can also mean to smile, as in Show me your action tooth.  **Example:** I got some pictures of you the other night flashing your action tooth. |

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| **adalada:** Ay-duh-la-duh. Not a lot.  **Example:** Brandon: What's goin on? Nicky: Adalada. |

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| **adam henry:** From the phonetical representation for the letters a and h.  Typically used by law enforcement officers on the radio to inform another officer that the person  they are dealing with is behaving like an asshole.  **Example:** 104 to Control; start additional assistance for an adam henry |

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| **adda be:** Congratulatory phrase, often used in a sarcastic manner.  **Example:** Your girlfriend just slapped you in front of the whole school? Adda be, doofus. |

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| **addictant:** what you are addicted to  **Example:** Nicotine is quite an addictant. |

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| **addictefreak:** One who is addicted to something 24/7.  **Example:** Boy, Sam is sure an addictefreak when it comes to StarCraft. |

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| **Addy:** short form of address  **Example:** What is your addy? What is the addy? |

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| **adevo:** A generally exaggerated amount. Also used to refer to smack downs in video games.  **Example:** Who wants to feel the adevo power? |

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| **Adger:** A mistake, or pathetically stupid remark in conversation, usually involving disastrous consequences, which could have been avoided with even the slightest amount of forethought.  **Example:** Oh, mate, that certainly was an enormous adger you made there, and now you look a right tit. |

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| **adipolli:** Superb,Fantastic.  **Example:** The stage show was adipolli. |

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| **admin:** Administrator. Also used to describe one who knows nothing about her job and ends up doing it poorly.  **Example:** Slim: Grrr. Who chose these workstations anyway? And why this software? Bob: Oh, that'd be the admin. |

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| **administraitor:** A semi-high-level government employee who blows the whistle on her agency.  **Example:** Our former boss, Harvey, sure put a lot of us out of work. Damned administraitor. |

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| **administrivia:** Small print at the bottom of written documents, particularly those written by corporate lawyers.  **Example:** |

You can see here: http://www.slangsite.com/

Conclusion

The use of slang usually involves deviation from standard language, and tends to be very popular among adolescents. However, it is used to at least some degree in all sectors of society. Although slang does not necessarily involve neologisms (some slang expressions, such as quid, are very old), it often involves the creation of new linguistic forms or the creative adaptation of old ones. It can even involve the creation of a secret language understood only by those within a particular group (an antilanguage). As such, slang sometimes forms a kind of sociolect aimed at excluding certain people from the conversation. Slang words tend to function initially as a means of obfuion, so that the non-initiate cannot understand the conversation. The use of slang is a means of recognizing members of the same group, and to differentiate that group from society at large. In addition to this, slang can be used and created purely for humorous or expressive effect.

Slang terms are frequently particular to a certain subculture, such as musicians, and members of a minority. All the same, slang expressions can outside their original arena and become commonly understood; recent examples include "cool". While some such words eventually lose their status as slang, others conti to be considered as such by most speakers. In e of this, the process tends to lead to their replacement by other, less well-recognised, expressions by their original users.

Slang is to be distinguished from jargon, the technical vocabulary of a particular profession, as the association of informality is not present. Moreover, jargon may not be intended to exclude non-group members from the conversation, but rather deals with technical peculiarities of a given field which require a specialized vocabulary.

According to Bethany K. Dumas and Jonathan Lighter[1], an expression should be considered "true slang" if it meets at least two of the following criteria:

It lowers, if temporarily, "the dignity of formal or serious speech or writing"; in other words, it is likely to be seen in such contexts as a "glaring misuse of register."

Its use implies that the user is familiar with whatever is referred to, or with a group of people that are familiar with it and use the term. "It is a term in ordinary discourse with people of a higher social status or greater responsibility." It replaces "a well known conventional synonym". This is especially to avoid "the discomfort caused by the conventional item [or by] further elaboration."

Functions and origins of slang One use of slang is simply to circumvent social s. Mainstream language tends to away from everything explicitly evoking certain realities, and slang can permit one to talk about these realities, whether euphemistically or not. For this reason, slang vocabularies are particularly rich in certain ns, such as uality, violence, crime, and s. They can be quite regional, and in the case of easily parodied examples, short-lived, such as 'valspeak'.

Alternatively, slang can grow out of mere familiarity with the things described. Among Californian connoisseurs, Cabernet Sauvignon might be known as "Cab", Chardonnay as "Chard" and so on[2]; this means that naming the different s expends less superfluous effort. It also serves as a shared code among connoisseurs.

There is not just one slang, but very many varieties — or dialects — of it. Different social groups in different times have developed their own slang. The importance of encryption and identity, of having a secret code or language, varies between these instances. For slang to maintain its power as a means of encryption, it must constantly renew its process of expression, so that those not part of the group will remain unable to understand it. Many slang words are replaced, as speakers get bored of them, or they are co-opted by those outside the group. For this reason, the existence of slang dictionaries reduces the perceived usefulness of certain slang words to those who use them.

Numerous slang terms pass into informal mainstream speech, and thence sometimes into mainstream formal speech, perhaps changing somewhat in meaning to become more acceptable.

Examples of slang Historical examples of slang are the "thieves' cant" used by beggars and the underworld generally in previous centuries: a number of cant dictionaries were published, many based on that published by Thomas Harman. For example a 'dingbat' means a person.

Another famous example, still in use, is ney rhyming slang in which, in the simplest case, a given word or phrase is replaced by another word or phrase that rhymes with it. Often the rhyming replacement is abbreviated further, making the expressions even more obscure. A new rhyme may then be introduced for the abbreviation and the process contis. Examples of rhyming slang are apples (and pears), for stairs, and trouble (and strife), for wife. An example of truncation and replacement of rhyming slang starts with bottle and glass being used for arse (ass). This was reduced to bottle, for which the new rhyme Aristotle was found; Aristotle was then reduced to Aris for which plaster of Paris became the rhyme. This was, in turn, reduced to plaster. Ergo, plaster means arse.

Backwards slang, or Backslang, is a form of slang where words are reversed. English backward slang tends to reverse words letter by letter while French backward slang tends to reverse words by syllables. Verlan is a French slang that uses backward words, similar in its methods to the back slang. Louchebem is French er's slang, similar to Latin. Vesre is the Río de la Plata's region version of a backwards language which reverses syllables; it is closely associated with lunfardo.

Slang very often involves the creation of novel meanings for existing words. It is very common for such novel meanings to diverge significantly from the standard meaning. Thus, "cool" and "hot" can both mean "very good or impressive." In fact, one common process is for a slang word to take on exactly the opposite meaning of the standard definition. This process has given rise to the positive meaning of the word "bad," as in the Michael on song of that title, for example.

Polari is an interesting example of slang that drew on various sources, including ney and Italian. Polari was used in London fish markets and the subculture in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s, becoming more widely known from its use by two camp characters, Julian and Sandy, in Round the Horne, a popular radio show.

Slang terms are often only known within the community of users. For example, Leet Speak (Leet or "1337") is a "language" that is popular among online video gamers. Another example of slang being derived from a specific element in popular culture is Nadsat, a form of slang used in the book A Clockwork Orange, which borrows words from the Russian language and from various forms of English slang.

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