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FEATURES AND FUNCTIONS OF SLANG

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ABSTRACT

This research deals with slang and its interpretations. The peculiar characteristics of "slang" are presented. The study also encompasses information on the core reasons of both learning and teaching slang in the classroom. The functions of slang are examined and specified by examples representing the way they are used in speech by native speakers. The most common barriers in regard to teaching students slang by non-native teachers are analyzed.

Keywords: slang, features, barriers, advantages, reasons, functions, intimacy, mutual understanding, social situation, solidarity, novelty, emotion, expressiveness, target language

INTRODUCTION

Slang is undoubtedly an integral part of many languages including English. As people are living in the era of high speeds, it also necessitates expressing themselves succinctly in the language; thus, slang began progressing notably in recent years. Slang has a supreme role in the language as it is the reflection of modern life. By examining the specifications of slang, one can keep the track of the changes in the language and stay updated. Slang is also vital since learning it can steadily help non-native learners to be well aware of the cultural aspects of the language, as well.

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Being one of the heated and controversial themes of the language, slang is also counted to be a rather ambiguous and obscure topic; thus, no precise definition there still exists. Yet, one of the peculiarities of slang is that slang is usually restricted to particular groups or regions; hence, an opportunity arises for people to express their identity better and to have a secret code within their group and not to be understood outside the group. The scholars Anderson and Trudgill also state that it is more probable to use slang in order to preserve intimacy in the group and exclude outsiders. Another paramount feature of slang is that the proper as well as frequent use of slang labels to what extent you have an impressive command of the language and as a result, as a non-native speaker you have the inclusion in the target language.

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Semantically, slang is also characterized as the “poetry of everyday life” since people are able to create their own slang by sharing their socio-emotional experiences.

There is also the multitude of other reasons and advantages of mastering and using the slang both inside and outside the classroom. They are the following:

Personal benefit

To begin with, slang is beneficial personally. Namely, the person who is well aware of the correct usage of slang in certain settings also proves that he knows what is culturally in fashion and ultimately, it degrees his status, as well. Additionally, owing to the fact that slang is seen in virtually all the movies, cartoons, songs, literature, advertisements or TV shows, one can be fully able to experience as well as enjoy the art and the culture of the target country.

Solo mission

Since the desired target of mastering any foreign language is to be capable of conversing easily with native speakers, in this regard one cannot but agree that the use of slang leads to the confident communication between the participants and hence, mutual understanding is secured, too.

Avoid misperceptions

Like idioms or some phrasal verbs, slang carries an entirely different meaning than what the basic interpretation could be. To be more exact, slang word or phrase has no literal, but metaphorical meaning. Therefore, only the competent user who is regularly accustomed to exploiting slang in daily verbal conversation can avoid confusions and any potential misunderstanding regarding the slang usage.

Brevity

As the modern hectic day urges people to be dynamic and speedy, slang evokes the opportunity of saving the time by using short speech. It is especially essential in daily conversations or in instant chats to carry out a brief, simple and upbeat conversation.

Translation matters

Whether one is personal or professional translator, there is the likelihood of encountering slang and so, it absolutely requires apprehending the core meaning of the slang in order to prevent such dismal failures like incorrect translation or misinterpreted data.

Faux Pas

Unless one has any idea what slang stands for, he is bound to open himself up to the chance of faux pas. Precisely, in the English language, there are many words which can be misused if one is unable to keep in the know about modern slang.

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Unfamiliarity with such nuances in the language can consequently cause the creation of awkward social situations in which one might insult or swear somebody accidentally.

Emotional arousal

At times, using common language is rather fierce if there is a stressful, unpleasant, difficult or serious matter to express oneself or discuss with somebody. In respect of such cases, slang can also be of concern in expressing oneself emotionally much easily.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research was conducted in order to elaborate on exemplary functions of slang which make it an immense helper in establishing a free way to communicate in an authentic setting.

The following functions of slang can be deemed as the most obvious ones:

1. Slang can have a novelty value. There are many occasions where slang renewed the speech with such examples such as *sadventure*, which is interpreted as a sad adventure or an adventure undertaken by a sad person, or *I'm off to Bedfordshire* which means "I'm going to bed". In the former, it can be seen that the new slang word is coined by dropping the initial two letters in the word "adventure" and amalgamating the words *"sad"* and *"venture",* meanwhile, in the latter, two nouns "bed" and "fordshire" are joined together and formed as a compound noun.

2. Slang can embrace elements of a joke. For instance, in the slang words *nosecicle* which means *"*frozen snots dangling from noses, created during cold weather*", absobloodylootely* which is another slang word for absolutely, one can feel a sense of humor.

3. Slang can make speech emotional. Common apparent examples for this kind of slang can be *sadghetty* which is used when one eats spaghetti all alone being sad and depressed or *hangry* which is the amalgam of the words "hungry" and "angry" and means "feeling irritable because of being hungry".

4. Slang can possess expressiveness and evaluation. For example, the word *alpha* is used to name someone who desperately wants to lead a group or the slang word *anorak* is utilized to refer to a person who is weirdly interested in something. In these both cases, one can look through the negative evaluations of the slang words.

5. Slang can have nominative function. Some common examples of this slang are *morning selfie* that means a person who is in the habit of posting a selfie to a social media in the morning after having put on makeup and taken a shower, *daft cow*

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used for a female friend when they have done or said something silly, *flying coffin* for an airplane, *think-machine* for brain, *bonehead* for a stupid person or *magpie* for someone who talks obnoxiously.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned merits of slang, most of the non-native language teachers oppose to include slang as a theme in their syllabus as to their way of thinking, slang is a lower level of language and thus, not appropriate in an academic environment. They also hold the view if slang is taught in the class, it distorts the Standard English. However, such teachers who look down on slang with disdain, without reservation, are not knowledgeable enough what slang itself is and what a significant role it can possess. Even though, students are taught the main skills profoundly via course books and other supplementary materials, it is almost implausible to succeed in a real communication with native speakers or in experiencing authenticity.

CONCLUSION

In sum, being the living phenomenon of the language, slang has already turned into the integral part of our speech. Due to this factor, as a facilitator and guide, it shoulders a great responsibility on teachers to let students gain insight about slang so that learners can be better able to acquire communicative as well as cultural competence and enrich their vocabulary bank with such informal register.

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