# The evolution of English Slang: Contemporary Trends and Cultural Influences

**Prgomet, Antonio**

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Sveučilište J. J. Strossmayera u Osijeku

Filozofski fakultet Osijek

Sveučilišni prijediplomski dvopredmetni studij Informatologija i Engleski jezik i književnost

Antonio Prgomet

# Evolucija engleskog slenga: suvremene tendencije i kulturni utjecaji

Završni rad

Mentor: prof. dr. sc. Mario Brdar

Osijek, 2024.

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Bachelor's Thesis

Supervisor: Dr. Mario Brdar, Full Professor

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Bachelor's Thesis

Scientific Area: Humanities

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Supervisor: Dr. Mario Brdar, Full Professor

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**Prilog: Izjava o akademskoj čestitosti i o suglasnosti za javno objavljivanje**

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U Osijeku 15. lipnja 2023.

_Antonio Bryonet, 0122240530_

Ime i prezime studenta, JMBAG

**Sažetak:**

Slang u engleskome jeziku značajno je evoluirao tijekom godina, a svakim danom, nove riječi postaju prisutne u svakidašnjem govoru. Definiciju slanga nije jednostavno iznijeti zbog višeznačne prirode ovog dijela jezika. Usprkos tome, ono u čemu će se mnogi jezikoslovci složiti je to da slang pripada neformalnom dijelu jezika rezerviranom za svakidašnju komunikaciju između ljudi, a ne formalnom registru. On je društveni čimbenik koji povezuje ljude međusobno, ostvaruje socijalne veze te služi za procjenu druge osobe na temelju njihova govora. Također, slang je privremen, odnosno, ne zadržava se dugo u vokabularima ljudi. Neki od razloga za ovaj fenomen su učestalo osmišljavanje novih riječi, a sa svakom idućom generacijom, potreban je drugačiji kontekst za razumijevanje istih. Slang nije samo puki leksem već pokazatelj društva u kojem se nalazimo. Analizirajući govor pojedinaca, moguće je utvrditi njegovo obrazovanje, porijeklo, tendencije te pogled na svijet. Što se tiče raznolikosti slanga, ona se može ogledati kroz regionalnu raznovrsnost, razne društvene skupine, područja interesa ili pak zanimanja. S time izrečenim, važno je istaknuti važnost slanga u oblikovanju modernog društva, stvaranju socijalnih odnosa i povezivanja ljudi svih godina i pozadina.

**Ključne riječi**: slang, klasifikacija, utjecaj, engleski jezik, evolucija

**Summary:**

English slang has greatly evolved over the years, and with each day, new words are introduced into everyday speech. The definition of slang is rather hard to give due to the polysemous nature of this part of speech. However, most linguists will agree that it belongs to the informal part of speech reserved for everyday interpersonal communication, not in the formal register. It is a social factor that connects people with one another, creates social bonds, and serves as a way of evaluating people based on their speech. Slang is also temporary, meaning it does not last long in the people's vocabulary. Some of the reasons for this phenomenon lie in the fact that new words are constantly coined, and with each generation, a different context is needed for better understanding. Slang is not just an ordinary lexeme but a copy of the society in which we live. By analyzing the speech of an individual, it is possible to determine their level of education, origin, tendencies, and view of the world. When considering the diversity of slang, it can be observed through the spectacles of regional variety, different social groups, different areas of interest, or even different occupations. With that being said, it is important to note how important slang is in developing modern society, creating social bonds, and connecting people of all ages and backgrounds.

**Key Words**: slang, classification, influence, English language, evolution

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# Introduction

The notion of slang is a thought-provoking yet controversial part of linguistics. It offers an insight into a certain community and groups of people and it enriches the vocabulary of the daily speech. However, many scholars argue that slang is nothing else but the language of lower-class citizens, often labelled as "bad language". In sociology, slang has been linked to low-class membership, the secret language of certain people groups that are hostile to outsiders, and a form of rebellion of the younger population. Certain authors like Elisa Mattiello have challenged such views on this topic. It is a prejudice to see slang as an inferior and marginal part of language, an odd phenomenon that causes confusion in spelling, word formation, and semantics. One of the main problems is that scientists were focused more on the effect of the slang itself rather than the actual linguistic phenomenon. It is important to say that slang cannot be levelled with other linguistic terms such as jargon, cant, dialect, vernacular, or accent as they belong to their own categories even though they share many grammatical properties. The main task of this paper is to present an overview of slang in English in its grammatical and semantical form. It is important to note how it is not possible to give an overview of all slang forms and variations as this aspect of language is very wide and comprehensive. The first part of the paper will deal with the historical overview of slang, its origins, how it developed over the years, and how socio-political events and cultural shifts were crucial in slang development. Following that, a classification of slang will be presented which will mainly focus on differentiating slang from jargon, cant, dialect, and vernacular. After this, there will be a section dealing with the richness of the types of slang. In this part, slang will be divided into regional slang, social group slang, internet slang, and professional slang. Regional slang will be further divided into Cockney rhyming slang, American, and Australian varieties. The subsection on social group slang will deal with the vocabulary of the youth, and the criminal underworld. Lastly in this section, professional slang will be analyzed from the perspective of the IT sector and technology. The last part of the paper will deal with the influence of English slang on the languages, specifically the slang aspect, of other countries, those being Japan, Italy, and Norway. In the end, a short conclusion will be made to summarize the main points and aspects of the work.

# 1 Historical Overview

The phenomenon of slang is hard to define in the English language since many scholars view it differently, and not all words can be classified as slang. According to Davie (2019), slang can be defined as a distinguishable speech variety used by a group of people. The linguistic features of this part of speech can be additionally analyzed on a lexical, phonological, morphological, syntactical, and semantical level (Davie 2019). Similarly, Stenström (2008) argues that slang is a notoriously hard term to explain simply because it varies from one source to another. Even the etymology of the word *slang* is uncertain. One theory suggests how the word originated from Scandinavia, specifically from Norway and Iceland. The Icelandic word *slyngva* ("to sling") is remarkably similar to the Norwegian word *slengja* ("to sling the jaw") both grammatically and semantically (Stenström 2008). In her work, Mattiello (2008) explains why slang is so hard to define. Firstly, slang is a time-restricted form that varies from one culture to another. This means that certain words, like *groovy*, used to be seen as slang, but with time they have become obsolete, or have become a part of the standard lexicon. Secondly, slang is diverse and inclusive, meaning that it can be confused with some previously mentioned word groups like jargon, cant, vernacular, or occasionally accent (Mattiello 2008). According to Stenström (2008), the whole concept of slang was more straightforward in the old days, specifically 18th-century British criminals who used it in their secretive way in order to deceive the authorities. Certain linguists give a rather vague definition stating that it can be both casual and vulgar depending on the attitude, as presented in Swedish *Nationalencyklopedin*, while others avoid any kind of definitions as slang can be recognized by passing certain criteria, like being markedly lower at least in the moment. What is common among many scholars is the following: slang is short-lived and tentative; it is related to a certain people's group; it is a colloquial variety of speech that is below stylistically neutral language (Stenström 2008). When it comes to the comparison of slang with the standard language, Mattiello (2008) highlights the lack of formality as the main difference. Even though it may be commonly used by the masses, it cannot be accepted as a formal way of speaking, at least on the academic level. Another interesting property possessed by slang is its effectiveness in expressing the meaning of a complex idea. For example, the word *bloke* is a common slang word in Britain and other Commonwealth countries meaning a male person, and that is simply an informal synonym of an already existing accepted form. However, the word *grizzlethunk* carries much more to it. It denotes a situation that is hard to solve often because of its confusing and peculiar nature. Its phonological structure is also interesting as it blends sounds that are not commonly found together in English, making it original and unpredictable. The morphological feature is also intriguing as it is formed by compunding two words into one to convey a completely new meaning.

The word *grizzle* might induce the feeling that something is difficult or annoying to do, while the word *thunk* symbolizes an onomatopoeic sound of heaviness and dullness. This word is also abstract, and it carries a complex meaning of being in a state of confusion and intricacy. Other standard English words could not provide such definition, and paraphrases would be necessary. In addition, slang differs from the standard register in certain word formation processes only typical for slang. For instance, the suffix *-o,* as in *defo* (most definitely), suffix *-ers* as in *chillers* (to relax), final combining forms like *-head* as in *gearhead* (someone who is into cars), *airhead* (a foolish and simple-minded), and *bonehead* (a person involved in unpleasant actions due to its lack of intelligence), the infix like *-bloody* as in *fan-bloody-tastic* (absolutely brilliant) (Mattiello 2008). As Adams (2009) explains, slang has immensely changed over the years, and even one simple word like *drunk* can have numerous synonyms, each popular in its own time.

*Table 1: Examples of slang words for the word "drunk" over the period from the 1920s-1950s (Adams 2009):*

| |
|---|
| annihilated |
| bent |
| blasted |
| bombed |
| faced |
| fubar |
| fucked up |
| gone |
| gone Borneo |
| hammered |
| jammed |
| legless |
| lit/lit up |
| loaded |
| messed up |
| polluted |
| ripped |
| shit-faced |
| smashed |
| snockered |
| stoned |

| trashed |
|---|
| wasted |
| whacked/whacked out |
| wrecked |

What is more interesting is the socio-political and cultural factors that influenced the birth of the words above. They are not merely coincidental structures that appeared over time, but rather representatives of a certain time period. For example, many people were injured in the 1940s and 1950s due to the consequences of two World Wars, so as a result of that, new slang terms were coined from their comrades or the surroundings, like *legless, smashed, fucked up, bombed,* or *snockered.* In addition to this, not all slang words are accepted across all registers. An older citizen could hypothetically say that he is going to get drunk tonight by saying *stoned,* even though the word is more commonly linked to marijuana. One should carefully decide which word to choose when talking to his parents, his friends at a party, or when talking to someone with a significant age gap (Adams 2009).

# 2 The Classification of Slang
## 2.1 Slang vs. Jargon

As previously mentioned, jargon should be differentiated from slang. Britannica (2008) traces the jargon all the way back to colonial times when it meant a hybrid communication between people who had no other language in common due to the geopolitical situations of the time. Nonlinguists and ordinary people define jargon as a way of talking between a group of people who share the same profession, like lawyers or doctors (Brittanica 2008). Jargon is another rich and vibrant part of language, and there are countless examples of it in many different fields. For instance, the music jargon encompasses various music styles ranging from *techno, jazz, grunge, house, hardcore,* and many others. In the medical field, the word *stat* means the state of emergency, and it's of Latin origin *statim* meaning immediately. The acronym *CBC* stands for a complete blood count, used for evaluating overall health and checking for potential diseases. The army is no exception from using jargon vocabulary, and some of the most commonly used lexicons are *acker* (a piastre), *AWOL* (absent without leave; a service member who is not present at their expected place), *MRE* (meal ready-to-eat), and *FUBAR* (fouled up beyond recognition; an extremely messed up situation). Finally, what differentiates slang from jargon is its lack of prestige and image. Jargon is more specialized and used between professionals, while slang is used more spontaneously in a social group. Additionally, slang expresses humour and creativity, it bonds people together, and puts one on a social scale, while the main task of the jargon is to provide a specialized explanation for something which not everyone will be able to understand (Mattielo 2008).

## 2.2 Slang vs. Cant

Although many slang words may arise from cant vocabulary, there are some key differences to consider. As Mattiello (2008) defines it, cant is a subcategory of a colloquial language typically used by criminals, thieves, beggars, and other members of the outskirts of society. Unlike jargon, cant is used more as a tool to convey a secretive meaning or avoid any unnecessary attention. There is a variety of cant vocabulary for one specific instance, like drugs, police, money, guns, and prison (Mattielo 2008).

*Table 2: Cant vocabulary for various terms (Partridge 2006):*

| Drugs | Police | Money | Guns | Prison |
|-------|--------|-------|------|--------|
| dope | bill | green | piece | the joint |
| junk | filth | loot | heat | the slammer |
| stash | fuzz | dough | rod | the pen |
| stuff | heat | scratch | strap | the clink |
| speed | pigs | cheddar | iron | the can |
| skunk | feds | bread | banger | the big house |

## 2.3 Slang vs. Dialect

Similarly to the previous examples, dialect varies from slang in function and linguistic properties. Apart from slang, dialect can be defined more easily as it clearly denotes one's cultural background. According to Brittanica (2024), dialect, derived from the Greek word *dialektos* ("language") can be defined as a variety of language that marks a person's whereabouts, whether someone was born in a certain location, or has lived there for a certain period of time. With that being said, a dialect can either showcase one's geographical background, also known as regional dialect, or it can present a person's social background and level of education (social dialect). What differentiates a dialect from other dialects is the basic linguistic properties, such as grammar and vocabulary (Brittanica 2024). When it comes to the relation of slang and a dialect, slang from one region may be seen as a standard in another. This is often a result of geographical isolation, cultural, and temporal factors that are crucial in shaping language in general (Mattiello 2008).

*Table 3: Difference in vocabulary between AmE (American English) and BrE (British English) (Oxford Dictionary 2024):*

| words | British English definition | American English definition |
|-------|----------------------------|------------------------------|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| boot | the back of a car | to kick someone out or to dismiss them |
| fag | a cigarette | a derogatory term for a homosexual person |
| pants | something that is considered low-quality | synonym for trousers |
| biscuit | a sweet or savory baked product | a type of soft bread roll |
| rubber | an eraser | a condom |
| lift | an elevator | to give someone a ride with a vehicle |
| bonnet | the hood of a car | a type of hat usually meant for women or babies |
| chips | fried potato slices | a long thin piece of potato fried in oil or fat |
| pissed | being drunk | being angry |
| banger | a sausage | an old unreliable car / good song / a powerful car |

Apart from dialect, slang does not rely on the region or the social class of an individual. It is mutually understandable and used by many people of different age, status, or background. Some of the examples of slang used and understood both in the UK and the USA are *cool* (excellent), *dude* (a term usually reserved for a male person), *chill* (to relax), and *nerd* (a person with a high interest in academic pursuits, often excluded from social activities) (Oxford Dictionary 2024).

## 2.4 Slang vs. Vernacular

Merriam-Webster (2024) defines *vernacular* as a language or a dialect distinctive to a certain country or region. It is often seen as a nonstandard as it does not follow the usual grammatical conventions (Merriam-Webster 2024). Although slang is not vernacular, it can vary in pronunciation and realizations of a sound due to the linguistic tendencies of a certain people group. Another key difference is that slang is more global, while vernacular is limited to a specific people's group, even narrower than the dialect (Mattiello 2008). In one of their works, Johnson et al. (2012) studied the use of vernacular elements in the ever-growing computer-mediated communication with the main study group being people of Jamaican origin. They found out how

certain Jamaican vernacular words were of great importance in carrying the desired meaning and expressing humour, identity, and power. The Jamaican research group simultaneously switched from Jamaican Patois to standard English when sending emails or writing blogs thus showcasing the richness and creativity of the language (Johnson et al. 2012).

*Table 4: Expressions in Jamaican Creole from the standard English (Johnson et al. 2012)*

| Jamaican Creole | standard English |
|---|---|
| blakk wi blakk | we are black |
| wi nah tun back | we are not turning back |
| wi on de attack | we are on the attack |
| yu / yuh (subj. pronoun) | you |
| mi (obj. pronoun) | me |
| dem (subj. pronoun) | them |
| neva / nevva / nevuh / nevvuh | never |
| Well gal me sarry fi tel u seh u carna dark. | Well, girl, I am sorry to tell you that your corner is dark. |

# 3 Types of English Slang
## 3.1 Regional Slang
### 3.1.1 Cockney

The city of London is one of the most influential and remarkable cities in the world. It is the melting pot of many different cultures, people, languages, and following that, the ways of speaking. Over many years, different nationalities have accumulated over the city, and each has brought its linguistic individualities. When it comes to the Cockney rhyming slang, its beginnings can be traced all the way back to the nineteenth century. Although it is mostly connected with London and its parts, rhyming slang is prevalent in other parts of the English-speaking world, primarily the UK. Because of its connection with the criminal world, there has always been a certain shame or disgrace related to this type of slang, but under the surface lays another reality. Even though it was popular among the criminals from the East End, Cockney slang has been used by people all over the social spectrum, primarily the male population. In its essence, slang works in a way that certain words are substituted by another word, or even a phrase, that rhymes with the original word. This enabled the speakers to convey their message in a more secretive way without

revealing their message to the external speakers. The outside speakers understood all the words, and they were not unconventional to standard English, like the Jamaican Creole word *blakk,* but their arrangement and use in certain contexts made the message unintelligible to others. For example, if a person said that she was going up the apples and pears to bed, it would imply that she was going to bed by going up the stairs. Even more confusing would be if the person said that she was going up the apples, which is often the case with Cockney speakers as they like to shorten the phrases. Without proper background knowledge, the outside speaker would not understand the phrase, even though all lexemes are known (Blake 2010).

*Table 5: Examples of various Cockney rhyming slang phrases (Blake 2010):*

| Cockney rhyming slang | standard English version | use in context |
|---|---|---|
| dog and bone | phone | "Can you answer the dog and bone?" |
| trouble and strife | wife | "I have the best trouble and strife in the world." |
| bread and honey | money | "It's high time I started saving some bread and honey." |
| Adam and Eve | believe | "I cannot Adam and Eve what just happened!" |
| Ruby Murray | curry | "Can you pass me some of that Ruby Murray please?" |
| Butcher's hook | look | "Don't you dare to give me that butcher's hook young man!" |
| Barnet fair | hair | "This lady has a nice barnet fair." |

## 3.1.2 American Slang

When discussing the American variety of slang, not only does one expand one's vocabulary and knowledge, one is also introduced to the American culture, their way of living, and understanding of the world. That means that slang is the image of society, a product of people's minds and behavior. In a study by Zhou and Fan (2013), it can be deduced that American slang influences not only Americans but most of the globe, specifically the English-speaking world.

When it comes to the features of the American slang, humour is one of them. It must be concise, witty, and comedic in order to achieve its purpose. One of the most common tools for achieving the comedic effect is rhyming and wordplay. By doing so, people feel connected to the speaker, and the tension disappears. Some of the countless examples are the following: *couch potato* (a person who spends a lot of time in front of the couch); *hangry* (a state in which a person is both hungry and angry); *bumfuzzled* (to be confused or perplexed); *cool as a cucumber* (to be very calm and composed). Another key element is shortness since any longer phrases would not obtain themselves. Being short and punctual is a distinctive trait of Americans not only in language but in general. Certain phrases like *vamp* for vampire, *fam* for family, *guac* for guacamole, *totes* for totally, and *deets* for details are just some of the representatives of this criteria. It is not possible to talk about American slang without mentioning freshness and creativity. A number of slang expressions have become popular due to them being original, which furthermore encourages youngsters to use them. Without proper use, words become worthless and slowly fade out into history. The words *think-machine* (brain), *sparkler* (diamond), and *pickers* (hands) all exemplify the wittiness and versatility of American slang. Lastly, a criterion that additionally describes American slang is tentativeness.   Even though slang can be entertaining and creative, its lifespan is usually of a short time. The reason for this is that new generations create new slang that have been born in a completely different socio-political environment, so the older slangs lose their value. The word *drunk,* already mentioned in the previous chapters, perfectly describes this characteristic. This trait is already visible in a language itself since language is a living entity that constantly changes and evolves over time (Zhou and Fan 2013).

## 3.1.3 Australian Slang

The number of slang words in Australian English is immense, and as Coleman (2014) describes it, it has been so integrated into society that even the big names like *Australian Oxford Dictionary* and *Macquarie Dictionary* do not even see it as colloquial language anymore. Many of the slang words came as a result of the political state of the country, by way of illustration the word *wog* has a rather wide spectrum of different meanings. Shortly after the end of WW2, Australian citizens came up with the word *wog* to describe the immigrants from Southern Europe, and this meaning was mostly up to the date till the late 1950s. Afterward, the term became used to denote persons from the Middle East, India, and Pakistan, and nowadays, it is ascribed to any non-white person. One word that sticks out for the number of synonyms is *fools,* and the reason for that could lie in Australian mentality who are often seen as laidback, relaxed, and open-minded. Another characteristic prevalent in Australian slang is the frequent use of the suffixes *-ie, -y,* and *-o.*

Although they are used all across the English-speaking world, they are more frequently found in the Australian variation. Their main role is to express a form of informality between speakers thus creating a more friendly atmosphere (Coleman 2014).

*Table 6: Synonyms for the word "fools" in Australian English (Coleman 2014):*

| Slang synonyms for the word *fools* | Origin and meaning |
|---|---|
| boof/boofhead | alternation from standard English *buffalo head;* a person with a big head / limited intelligence |
| dill | comes from the British dialect *dilly;* strange and cranky |
| drongo | originated from the race-horse named Drongo; someone keen to failure |
| galah | an Australian bird known for its clownish behavior; silly person |
| nong | likely comes from the word nincompoop; an idiot |
| nuff-nuff | reduplication of the word *nuff,* coming from enough |
| wally | originates from the British cartoon in the 1920s; a naïve person |
| muppet | originates from the famous show "The Muppet Show"; a silly person |
| dunny | derived from the Australian term for an outdoor toilet; a useless person |

## 3.2 Social Group Slang
## 3.2.1 Youth slang

As it has been said, slang is an indispensable part of modern life. It is a way of expressing yourself, putting yourself on a social scale, and a way of understanding other people. These needs are necessary for the younger population who strive for a good image in society, need to make friends, and want to feel needed and a part of a group. In a study by Verheijen (2022), youth slang can be characterized as a telegraphic way of speaking, just like in the old days when the text had

to be short and concise. The grammatical structures also have to be as simple as possible in order to convey the message more quickly, and save yourself time in this busy world. When asked about their speaking and writing habits, the respondents simply answered: "People around me say so; It's the way I speak; I'm used to speaking like that." This implies how society is an important mediator in our lives, and the way we speak, think, and act. Even though it is an important part of their identity, students did not use slang among their parents or someone older than them simply because they saw it as inappropriate, or it could cause linguistic confusion between the two sides. What is more interesting is also the way students used certain slang words among their parents. Even when such instances were present, slang words were used in a more positive and neutral coloring. Moreover, the use of slang has become so common and repetitive that the students cannot explain the origin or development of certain words, meaning that the younger generation simply soak up new words, and use them in certain contexts. One thing that may disrupt general discourse is the polysemy of the slang words. Due to different national, economic, geographical, and educational backgrounds, certain slang words may be attributed different meanings. Verheijen (2022) also studied computer-mediated communication (CMC) among Dutch students to see their common traits. The author also wanted to discover the differences between CMC's colloquial language and standard Dutch. He found that numerous changes have been made to the standard language compared to Dutch slang on WhatsApp. It was revealed that students used various shortening forms when writing, such as contraction, and clipping. Other frequently occurring features were the use of phonetic and single-letter homophones, respelling, reduplication, accent stylization, and the use of acronyms and abbreviations (Verheijen 2022).

## 3.2.2 Criminal Slang

As Blake (2010) explains it, in rural or smaller societies it is difficult to create a new way of speaking as most inhabitants speak the same vocabulary, while in bigger societies, such as cities and metropolitan areas, people are distinguished by a lot of things, so it makes it easier for them to create a distinctive way of speaking. Some of the main factors for this notable difference are the higher population, more diverse occupations, different social and racial backgrounds, class, and influence. With all those factors in mind, it was possible for criminal slang, also known as argot, to thrive in such places. Although argot means to be a part of a particular social class by means of speaking, it usually refers to the language of criminals, impoverished ones, and people not fitting in with standard society. Apart from criminals, argot is also used by any group of people who somehow stand out from traditional values or norms, such as LGBTQ members, Gypsies, beggars, street performers, circus staff, people working in prostitution, the drug industry, and many more.

Each group has its unique vocabulary, different grammar properties, structures, and phonetic variations. What connects them all, including the criminal slang, is the use of terms and words that somehow describe the group and the emphasis on secrecy. In order to achieve this, the speakers had to come up with numerous synonyms for the same term to confuse authorities, or to replace an already debunked term, which contradicts with the values of argot. For instance, there are myriads of examples of naming authorities or evading them. Some of the terms that denote authorities are *cops, fuzz, pig the man, heat, five-o, po-po, old bill, boys in blue,* and *Johnny Law.* Some of these terms have become so specialized in their fields that they have no proper counterpart in standard English. One such word is *shiv,* a homemade knife used as a weapon, particularly in prisons. Also, the word *angler,* which describes a thief who steals with a hook attached at the end of a stick. The more contemporary term would be *shoulder-surfer.* This term describes a person looking over people's shoulders at ATMs or banks to gather valuable private information (Blake 2010). In his book, Adams (2009) makes a clear difference between argot and jargon. Although the two are similar at first, and even deploy the same lexemes, their difference arises in the context they are used. The word *mongo* can be classified as both argot and jargon depending on who uses it. If one says that thieves stripped his walls of mongo, the word is argot, since criminals used that word in a more secretive way. However, if one says: "Sanitation workers are picking up mongo off the curb.", the word is jargon since it is used by a professional in his field (Adams 2009).

## 3.3 Internet Slang

In the old days, it was harder for information to make headway into the world, and knowledge in general was spreading slower. Nowadays, with the advancement of technologies and the internet, information dissemination has seen a massive upgrade, and the amount of information has grown significantly. The same could be said for slang. With the birth of the internet, language, specifically English, became more prominent, and even new slang appeared. Eble (2004) points out that digital communication serves as a potential threat to the slang itself. Two important characteristics of slang – presence in oral communication, and the role of slang in maintaining group position – could be lost since the internet mostly offers written communication, and there are no group boundaries. In contrast, the internet also offers various forms of visual communication, either through videos or calls, so the written form is not as exclusive as it used to be (Eble 2004). In his book *Internet Linguistics,* Crystal (2011) emphasizes how the dynamics of the internet make it hard for a proper linguistic analysis to be made, since the relevancy of the work quickly fades out. This relatively new area of linguistics, however, is believed to have a great influence on the way people speak (Crystal 2011). When it comes to the forms in which internet

slang appears, Barseghyan (2013) states that there is no homogenous variety of slang, but rather a complex web of categories that depend on the users. In the SMS language, users are keen to replicate certain bits of words with their phonetic counterparts to express themselves quickly. Some of the examples are *2nite-tonight, u-you, 4u-for you, gr8-great*, and *y-why*. Certain creative structures can only be possible in the digital world since they are a combination of the characters found on the classic typing keyboard. These characters can even replace whole words in a sentence and can help in making shapes of a certain concept. For instance, the symbol "@" can be used in a sentence by replacing a preposition: "You can find me @ my home for the most of the day." Users can also combine various symbols in order to replicate an image of something, like "<3" for a heart, ";)" for a smiley face, and "(∩>o<∩) ♡" for a whole expression. Another very popular form of internet slang is the use of acronyms and abbreviations. With each day, there are more and more of these examples, and it is hard to keep track of all the new abbreviations. These can be just simple phrases, like "wyu" (where you at), or even the whole sentences, "WYSIWYG" (What you see is what you get). When discussing written communication via the internet, it is harder for users to express their true emotions, so they have to discover new ways of doing so. One of them is by repetitive use of punctuation, and certain letters. In the sentence "I CAN NOT believe that", the user is expressing their disbelief by emphasizing the words "can" and "not". In this sentence, "I am done with this……", the user is expressing their apathy towards the other speaker, as the repetitive use of period imitates silence in real life (Barseghyan 2013). One cannot talk about internet slang without mentioning emojis. These are, as Kralj Novak et al. (2015) defines them, Unicode graphic symbols used as a shorthand to express emotions or ideas. Their origin can be traced to the 1990s in Japan, and since then, they have evolved to be an unreplaceable part of virtual communication. The fact that there are over 10 billion emojis sent per day, and the number is on the rise, confirms their popularity among internet users (Kralj Novak et al. 2015).

## 3.4 Professional and Occupational Slang
### 3.4.1 Technology slang
IT-related slang is one of the most challenging aspects of spoken communication for outsiders and those unfamiliar with the field. As Bușu (2022) portrays it, IT slang is often seen as gibberish to the layman as it is related to the specific parts of technology, multimedia, automation, and programming. It is important to note how not all words can be seen as slang, as many of them fall under the category of jargon. The problem arises with the constant mix of the two as the experts in this field use them interchangeably. The author divides this vocabulary into six general categories: pieces of data; e-mail-related terms; computers; social media; web terms; and

communication. The first category gathers all the words that describe a quantitative piece of data, such as *byte, bit, dword*, and *nibble*. These expressions help the interlocutors to express themselves more specifically without having to use long and redundant paraphrases. The second category, e-mail-related terms, contains more abstract terms that describe various concepts and situations. One such word is *phishing* which was coined by a famous hacker Khan C. Smith. The word describes a form of a malicious e-mail that is intended to deceive the recipient by exposing his personal information. It was borrowed from the word *fishing* as the original sender sends countless such messages to various people and then waits for an error to occur. The category of computers contains a wide selection of expressions dealing with both software and hardware. For the hardware part, there are many examples: *a brick* (an unusable device); *a mouse* (a type of input device); *a box* (a general term for a computer); *a MoBo* (motherboard); and *a dock* (a station that provides additional ports and connectivity for a laptop). The software does not lack the number of expressions either, with the lexemes such as *blob* (a large amount of data); *a crapplet* (a useless application); *an Easter Egg* (a hidden message in a game or code); *Kludge* (a poorly maintained software); and *malware* (a virus causing damage to the software). When discussing social media, the terms become more understandable. The words such as *troll* (a person who posts abusive content); *hashtag* (a formal marker of a conversation); and *stories* (short videos or photos uploaded on one's account) are just some to name a few. In the category of web terms, certain empirical knowledge is needed for better understanding. For example, a word *cookie* in this context means a small amount of data stored on one's computer to track one's preferences. Lastly, the category of communication contains a bunch of acronyms and abbreviations similar to internet slang, such as *AFK* (away from keyboard); *AMA* (ask me anything); and *TBH* (to be honest) (Bușu 2022).

## 4 English Influence on the Slang of Other Languages

With English being a lingua franca of the modern era, it is unimpeachable that it had a significant influence on other languages, especially their slang. Coleman (2014) lists Norway, Japan, and Italy as examples of how English benefited in creating global slang. What all these countries have in common is that mostly younger population adopts these features, and that could be the reason why slang is the most common linguistic feature adopted in these countries. In the case of Japanese, there are plenty of English words that made their way into Japanese, and even into their dictionary. One such example is the word デパート/*depato* which means a department. This form of acceptance is fairly common in Japanese as many native speakers find it difficult to pronounce standard English words. Other examples include アパート/*apato* (apartment), サンキュー / sankyuu (thank you); and コンビニ / konbini (convenience store). In Norwegian, many

slang words have been adapted to fit into the Norwegian style of spelling, like *perfekt* (perfect), and *idjit* (idiot). The reason why English is so influential in the Nordic countries is not simply for its popularity, but also the fact that it is taught from a very young age. English is seen as a language of opportunities and wealth, with kids showing signs of fluency from a young age. Even though Italy remains loyal to its customs and traditions, English influence is still visible in certain aspects. Unlike the case with the Nordics, Italians mostly adopted the English language through slang, and jargon due to their different mentality. English is seen as a popular language, but not something of utter importance. Its influence can be seen through American popular culture, mostly movies and music. Some of the more popular slang in Italian include *briffare* (adj. brief); *chattare* (v. to chat); *floppare* (v. to perform badly); and *spoilerare* (v. to spoil something) (Coleman 2014).

## Conclusion

To conclude, English slang has always been seen as a lower form of speech due to its negative connotations with the colloquial language of the youth. It is also hard to give a proper solid definition as well because of its polysemy, and numerous variations around the world. What can be certainly said is that slang is an informal way of speaking that involves creative and innovative phrases. It is evolving quickly due to its temporal boundaries with each generation, so it is necessary to look at it from that perspective as well. Slang also varies with each culture and subculture, which shows its richness in vocabulary, and grammar. In addition, its main role is to portray one's identity, social stance, and relationship with other people. Even though it has been underestimated by many linguists over the years, its diversity, pervasiveness across languages, and global influence show how important slang is in understanding our modern society.

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