

Slang

The word 'slang' was first used after the publication of John Kenney's of English language in 1755. It has a negative association about it since its coinage. It has been aptly described as a peculiar kind of vagabond language average has slang on the outskirts of legitimate speech. But continually striving or forcing its way into most respectable.

"In 1829, Webster describes" it is how vulgar & unmeaning language, language comprising certain widely current but usually ephemeral terms having a forced, fantastic or quite true meaning exhibiting extravagance humour or fancy.

The Westminster Desk Companion defines slang as "word or expression in common colloquial use but not regarded as standard English, and" Jargon peculiar to certain section of public, trades etc".

The Oxford English dictionary gives a fuller definition of slang as "language of a highly colloquial type considered as below the level of std educated speech and consisting either of new words or of current words employed in some special sense.

Slang can be considered as the kind of speech which stands below colloquialisms but above cant. The relationship between standard English

and the lower level of speech like colloquialism, slang and cant can be considered from the fact that a cant word which gains wider currency becomes accepted as slang. While slang which is widely used become colloquialism and colloquialism which is widely accepted find its way into the standard vocabulary. It is possible for a word which becomes used as the cant of a section of the community to become more and more widely used till at last it gains admission to the vocabulary of standard English, for the standard English words 'man', 'broke', 'core', 'cully' were first used as cant terms and these were later promoted as slang. Other slang terms for man are 'guy', 'stiff' and 'bozo' while the colloquial term is 'chap'. 'Doctor' in colloquial language is 'doc' and the slang term for the word are 'vet', 'creeper' and 'pill-shooter'. Slang germinates and flourishes best in conditions of "crowding and excitement and artificial life."

In his valuable work "Slang today and yesterday" Eric Partridge points out as many as sixteen reasons for the use of slang. People who are young in spirit or young in years may use slang for the sheer joy of living. Others may use it as an exercise in humour or wit and ingenuity or simply to be different from others or to be more picturesque in speech. Sometimes slang is employed to make one

language more arresting or attentional and at other times merely to avoid clichés. The desire for brevity, conciseness or ease of social intercourse may also be the reason for using slang. Slang is sometimes used to show that one belongs to a certain social class or profession or to prove that someone else does not.

Eric Partridge divides slang into four classes. Out of these two are undesirable while the other two are indisputably useful. The two bad classes of slang are ephemeral kind, living on the lip of men but for a few months or years and the other which includes the survivors of "Thieves Latin". These two varieties of slang are responsible for the dislike which people of delicate taste feel for slang in general.

Slang is worthy of study in any language. It is interesting to note that there is a great similarity between the slang of ancient world and slang of today.

The Comedies of Aristophanes and Menander, and of Plautus and Terence provide very good examples of slang used by ancients. A notable characteristic of slang is the tendency to shorten existing word by elision or by apocope (suppression of the end sounds).

Among the numerous slang terms which are most

Widely used are the synonyms for money, nonsense, excellent, depart etc. Slang being the peculiar and the particular down to the level of general comprehension.

With the passage of time there is the growth of a more objective and scientific attitude to this feature of language. Slang of the past have been the part of standard vocabulary, Today we get word like cheat (to rook) are some of the words which were considered as slang but now in standard vocabulary.

If contemporary English is surveyed, it is found that slang has constantly upgraded itself to the level of educated class.

But we also realize that it has its own character. So we can say that slang is the worthy of study of any language. As we know that a language is a medium which expresses our thought.