

# SLANG AS A CONSTITUENT PART OF FUNCTIONAL STYLE AND ITS LINGO-STYLISTIC VALUE

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**Abstract:** *slang is a language style, a way of speaking that contains informal words and expressions, restricted in their use to a particular social group; that may be replace the terms used in formal, standard language by other terms with a strong emotional impact. They are expressive, mostly ironical words serving to create fresh names for some things that are frequent topics of discourse. All languages, countries and periods of history have slang. This is true because they all have had words with varying degrees of social acceptance and popularity. All the strata of society use some slang, including the most educated, cultivated speakers and writers.*

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There is hardly any other term that is as ambiguous and obscure as the term slang. Slang seems to mean everything that is below the standard usage of present-day language. The notion of slang has caused much controversy for many years. Much has been said and written about it. A lot of different opinions have been expressed concerning its nature, its boundaries and the attitude that should be adopted towards it [6, 546].

Slang is usually simple and overt rather than complex or subtle. It tends to shorten and simplify rather than to develop and elaborate; to omit the incidental and the marginal rather than to describe in full; to render metaphorical, pictorial, picturesque; to take nothing too seriously, yet clearly, though very lightly and briefly; to refer to human nature rather than to Nature. From another angle slang is rather a spoken than a written language – or more accurately, a vocabulary – and it normally springs from speech rather than from the printed page [5, 65].

Slang comes to be a very numerous part of the English language. It is considered to be one of the main representatives of the nation itself.

It is convenient to group slang words according to their place in the vocabulary system, and more precisely, in the semantic system of the vocabulary. If they denote a new word and necessary notion they may prove an enrichment of the vocabulary to be accepted into Standard English. If, on the other hand they make just another addition to a cluster of synonyms, and have nothing but novelty to back them, they die out very quickly, constituting the most changeable part of the vocabulary [4, 1550].

Very often slang is compared with such non-standard language varieties as **argot** and **jargon**. Though they have some similar features, it would be logical to differentiate each other. Thus, the essential difference between slang and argot results from the fact that the first has an expressive function, whereas the second is primarily concerned with secrecy. Slang words in consequence are clearly motivated, e.g. *cradle-snatcher* (an old man who marries or courts a much younger woman); *belly-robber* (the head of a military canteen); *window-shopping* (feasting one's eyes on the goods displayed in the shops, without buying anything), etc. Argot words, on the contrary, do not show their motivation, e.g. *rap* (kill), *shiv* (knife), *book* (a life sentence) and so on [1].

**Jargon** is a recognized term for a group of words that exists in almost every language and whose aim is to preserve secrecy within one or another social group. Jargonisms are social in character. They are not regional. In Britain and in the USA almost any social group of people has its own jargon. For instance, grease (money); loaf (head); a lexic (a student preparing for a law course), etc.

Slang, on the contrary, is a language that speakers deliberately use to break with the standard language and to change the level of discourse in the direction of informality. It shows the speakers' intention to be fresh and starting in their expression, to ease social exchanges, to create friendly atmosphere, to reduce excessive seriousness and avoid clichés, in brief, to enrich the language. It includes words that are not specific for any social or professional group. E.g. everybody knows that *a nerd* is "an intelligent person" and *the crackers* means "crazy", or *bevy* means "an alcoholic drink", *caff* means "café" and *fiveer* meaning "a five pound bank note". There are many slang words that can mean "money", e.g. "Cash", "Dos", "Dough", "Moolah", "Notes", "Readies". The British refer to their currency as "Quid" or "Nicker". The US dollar, on the other hand, is called "Buck" or "Green-Buck" [7].

The best part about written is the ability to say whatever you want whether or not the words actually exist. Hell, *The Lord of the Rings* isn't really so much a fantasy trilogy as it is a chance for a stodgy linguist to make up languages. Anthony Burgess did much the same with *A Clockwork Orange*, as did George Orwell in 1984.

So this is the list of some slang words and phrases from the world of literature.

**FEWMETS** – Fewmets means dragon poop. It was an actual Old English word before the writing world got a hold of it. Specifically, the word refers to the droppings of an animal by which hunters identify their prey.

However, the word entered the fantasy lexicon back in 1958 when T. H. White published his Arthurian novel *“The Once and Future King”*. King Pellinore *tracks the questing beast by its fewmets*, and the word has since gone on to be associated with other fantastical creatures. Madeleine L’Engle made mention of fewmets in *“The Wind in the Door”*, as did Jane Yolen in the acclaimed *Dragon’s Blood* novels.

**GROK** – *“Stranger in a Strange Land”* is one of those novels they will never, ever make a movie out of. Robert A. Heinlein remains one of the most well-known and controversial science fiction writers, and many would point to *Stranger* as the best thing he ever wrote. The story details the last son of a doomed space mission to Mars who returns to Earth after having been raised to adulthood by the Martians. He possesses superhuman powers, and establishes a religion that completely changes the world.

*“Grok”* is the only Martian word that is actually printed in the novel, though many other words and phrases are described. The actual definition is *“to drink”*, but that is only one of the hundreds of uses the word has. On barren Mars, water is seen as a something holy and sanctified. To drink water is an act of communication. The characters in *Stranger* use *“grok”* to communicate love, hate, understanding, compassion, sex, and any other powerful emotion or action that must be felt by complete empathy. To grok is to observe so thoroughly that you become one with what you are observing.

**WHO IS JOHN GALT?** – Just like *Lord of the Rings*, bringing Ayn Rand’s masterpiece *Atlas Shrugged* into the medium of cinema is quite an accomplishment. It remains to be seen if it will help Rand’s most famous phrase enter more common usage. It’s very hard to define the phrase *“Who is John Galt?”* as it is used in several different instances. Most often, the phrase is an exclamation of the inability to fight the decay of a society. As the country’s best minds disappear one by one to escape from the growing power of corrupt and incompetent businessmen and bureaucrats, America slowly sinks into a chaotic state where accomplishment is punished in the name of looting the efforts of the geniuses. At every turn, all efforts to stave off the decline are met with failure, and characters are reduced to shrugging their shoulders and asking, *“Who is John Galt?”*

Who is John Galt? Galt is the man who begins the exodus of the brightest and best of American art and science in the novel. He himself is an unparalleled genius who invents a motor that would forever solve the energy crisis. He leaves his discovery rusting in an abandoned auto factory, having quit at a meeting run the factory as a collective. As he storms away he promises to stop the motor of the world, and his coworkers begin to whisper the iconic phrase.

**THAGOMIZER** – Gary Larson is one of the most influential comic strip creators ever, and *The Far Side* has also been influential. One of Larson’s most famous comics was of a caveman symposium where a lecturer is showing anatomy slides of a Stegosaurus. He points to the spiked tail and calls it the Thagomizer after the late Denver Museum of Natural Science realized there wasn’t really a name for the spiky part of tail of a Stegosaurus. As a result, Thagomizer has become the informal term, making Larson the person who has reached the highest on this list for getting his slang entered into academia.

**ROBOT** – It is interesting that the term *“robot”* was born not out of science, but literature. The word first appears in 1920 Karel Capek play called *Rossum’s Universal Robots*. The play deals with a factory that produces life-like androids as servants, and whether or not exploiting begins who appears to be happy to be exploited is a crime. Capek did not actually come up with the term, though. For that, credits his brother Josef as the originator, and wrote a letter to the Oxford English Dictionary to make sure he received proper credit. Use of the word exploded mostly through the science fiction works of Isaac Asimov who coined the word robotics as the study of robots.

**GRANFALLOON** – When Kurt Vonnegut introduced this term in *Cat’s Cradle*, it was as a term used in his fiction religion of Bokononism. A granfalloon is a false collective, a group of people who have pledged shared identity or loyalty to the group, but whose actual associations are meaningless. Basically, a grandfalloon is grand, but pointless organization. The word has since gone on to have technique amended to it, and is used to described the promise by which people are encouraged to give up their personal identity in favor of loyalty to a group ideal. In one study, two groups of people were formed by dividing them a coin toss. Even though the act that divided the two groups was completely pointless, once in the group people tended to act as if the people they were teamed with were close friends or family.

**VORPAL** – No list of made-up terms would be complete without a trip to Lewis Carroll’s nonsense poem *“Jabberwocky”*. Many of the terms used are actually just neologisms of common words, so tracking down the real meaning isn’t too terribly difficult. It literally has no meaning whatsoever. Even Carroll couldn’t come up with an origin for the word. The vorpal blade has gone on to be a famous sword so great.

The ironic thing is the meaning of the word has actually come to be, *“something badass enough to slay a Jabberwocky”*. So in a sense, Carroll somewhere managed to come up with a word that would supply its own definition later on down the line.

Other examples of slang derived from literary classics are:

**Elizabitching** – to be a snaky character everyone loves.

**Heathcliffing** – to still be dating, courting a girl when the relationship or any possible relationship is clearly doomed.

**A Virgil** – someone who's there for, with you for your toughest, wildest adventures.

**Doing, getting a Madam Bovary** – doing something sexual with a guy or receiving a sex act from a girl in a moving vehicle.

**Miss Havishaming** – waiting on a former partner to return to you when it's clearly not going to happen.

**He/she's Yossarianed** – ditching a party they didn't really want to go to.

**Grapes of Wrathing** – seeking work.

**I'm Josef Okay** – feeling lost, overwhelmed but still searching i.e. for a party or a club.

**We're waiting for Godot** – waiting for someone that isn't going to show up.

**John's hanging himself** – someone feeling guilty for sex acts they've participated in, received, performed.

**She Lolita'd** – a hot girl ruined by pregnancy

**He's Lady Chatterley's Lover** – a guy who had an affair with a girl in a monogamous relationship

**He/she is my Sal Paradise** – a crazy friend you idolize, following them wherever they go.

The most important peculiarity of slang concerns not the plane of content. The lexical meaning of a slang word contains not only the denotational component, but also an emotive component. It is expressive, evaluator and stylistically colored.

Slang is normal and natural human linguistic creativity. It is mostly word play and the intelligent manipulation of sound and meaning for all sorts of social purposes. There are no stabilizing influences, such as grammars and stylebooks, to stifle creativity, limit expansion, or prevent the making of errors. Users are free to innovate, make errors, and repeat misinterpretations that become new slang.

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