
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Sociolinguistic Study of Jargon Language in Al-Najaf Industrial District

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| ABSTRACT

Jargon or technical dialectal language is the particular terminology related to a particular area of activity. Jargon is usually employed in a specific communicative situation and may not be well understood outside that context. The context is typically a particular occupation (that is, a certain trade, profession, vernacular, or academic field), but any ingroup can have jargon. The key characteristic that distinguishes jargon from the rest of a language is its specialized language, which includes terms and definitions of words that are unique to the context and terms used in a narrower and more exact sense than when used in colloquial language. Jargon is typically used in a specific setting of communication and may not be easily understood outside of that context. The context is typically a specific profession, trade, or academic area, but jargon can exist within any ingroup. Jargon has a unique vocabulary, with some words that are only used frequently and have different meanings for words that outgroups would typically interpret in a different way. The present study seeks to investigate the jargon language as a social phenomenon in the Al-Najaf industrial district. To achieve this aim, the study draws on some interviews that the researcher has conducted with professionals in such districts, collecting twenty vocabulary words that can be applicable to analyzing them as jargon words. The study concludes that car repair workers and professionals in the Al-Najaf industrial district use jargon terms widely. Each profession has its own terms. These terms have various reasons for being used, and at the same time, they have an impact on the city origin language.

| KEYWORDS

Sociolinguistics, society, language, language variety, register, jargon

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

The majority of jargon is technical terminology (technical words), which may also include terms from the industry with unique meanings within that business. Easiness and acceptability in communication are key factors in the development of technical jargon because they are appropriate and easy to use. Jargon adds valuable information to ordinary lexicon and has the potential to become a catchphrase. Jargon raises the tablet of comprehension for outsiders, even though it allows for more effective communication among those who are familiar with it. Although this is typically seen as an important trade-off, it can also be a tool for social exclusion or desire.

This study tries to shed light on these technical terms, presenting some unique and may be unknown terms. Thus, the study asks the following questions and tries to answer them through analysis, results, and discussions.

1. What are the most common jargon terms used in the Al-Najaf industrial district?
2. What are the most important motivations for using these terms?
3. What is the impact of these jargon terms on the city language?

The study aims at the following answers:

1. Identifying the most common jargon terms that are used in the Al-Najaf industrial district.
2. Exploring the most important motivations behind using jargon terms.
3. Discovering the impact of these jargon terms on the city language.

The study hypothesizes the following:

1. Each profession of car repair has its own jargon terms.
2. The function and shape of the tools and the parts of the car are the most important reasons behind using jargon terms.
3. The jargon terms spread to be used by public people.

The study plans the following stages:

1. Review the literature about sociolinguistics and the associated topics such as language and society, language variation, style and register, and finally, the topic of research jargon language.
2. Analyzing the terms qualitatively.
3. Finding and discussing the results of the analysis.
4. Ending with the final conclusion.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics is a very broad field, and it can be used to describe many different ways of studying language. A lot of linguists might describe themselves as sociolinguists, but the people who call themselves sociolinguists may have rather different interests from each other, and they may use very different methods for collecting and analysing data. This can be confusing if you are new to the field (Meyerhoff, 2006:1).

With the aim of better understanding language structure and how languages work in conversation, sociolinguistics is concerned with examining the connections between language and society. (Wardhaugh, 2010:12).

Sociolinguistics is the study of language in everyday life, including how it works in casual conversations, the media we watch, and whether there are any societal norms, laws, or principles governing language. We might already be knowledgeable and engaged in topics like non-sexist language, multilingualism, regional dialects, and language policy. We may also be conscious of the potential relationships between language use and social class, ethnicity, and other factors, as well as the causes of our inability to always express ourselves clearly and the significance of language in education. (Wardhaugh and Fuller, 2015:1).

2.2 Language and Society

Trudgill (2000: 8) argues that different dialects and accents are regarded differently because language is a social phenomenon that is closely linked to the social order and value systems of a community. For instance, Standard English enjoys greater prestige and standing than any other English dialect. Many people greatly value this dialect, and those who speak and write it often reap favorable economic, social, and political outcomes.

The RP accent also has very high prestige, as do certain American accents. In fact, the 'conventional wisdom' of most English-speaking communities goes further than this. So statusful are Standard English and the prestige accents that they are widely considered to be 'correct', 'beautiful', 'nice', 'pure', and so on. Another nonstandard, non-prestige varieties are often held to be 'wrong', 'ugly', 'corrupt', or 'lazy'. Standard English, moreover, is frequently considered to be the English language, which inevitably leads to the view that other varieties of English are some kind of deviation from a norm, the deviation being due to laziness, ignorance, or lack of intelligence. In this way, millions of people who have English as their mother-tongue are persuaded that they 'can't speak English' (ibid).

2.3 Language Variations

The vocabulary we use on a daily basis is incredibly diverse. There is variance among speakers, which reflects the various accents or social groups that people use when speaking, as well as variation within a single speaker's speech. Everyone speaks differently at different times, and they continually use language variation for a variety of purposes. The result is a kind of paradox: while many linguists would prefer to view any language as a homogeneous entity, in reality, that language will show significant internal variation. This will allow them to make the strongest theoretical generalizations possible (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015: 6).

2.4 Register and Style

We have seen that variants can be thought of as a grouping of features. Two further variations that sociolinguists frequently discuss are register and style, in addition to regional and social dialects. While our regional dialect and social dialect reflect our origins and social position, respectively, our register provides information about our current activities.

The idea of register usually refers to how language can vary depending on uses as opposed to users and takes into account the setting or context of usage, the goal, subject matter, and content of the message, as well as the relationship between participants. The language of police detectives analyzing a case reflects a register specific to their profession and the subject under discussion, as opposed to, for instance, two lawyers discussing a legal matter using the register of law (Romaine. 2000: 21).

2.5 Jargon Language

In contrast to pidgins, which have a certain degree of stability, jargon is a speech variety with a basic linguistic structure and substantial individual variation used for communication in certain settings amongst speakers of different languages, such as trade (Romaine, 2000:191).

During the nineteenth century, Native Americans in the coastal northwest of North America—from as far south as northern California and along the coast of British Columbia into Alaska—used Chinook Jargon extensively as a lingua franca. Its apex occurred in the latter half of the 1800s, and it is now all but extinct. Despite its name, Chinook Jargon was a well-established pidgin that was heavily based on the Native American language of the Northwest known as Chinook, which is thought to have formed before the arrival of Europeans but was also spoken locally by English and French speakers (Thomason, 1983: 820 cited in Wardhaugh and Fuller, 2015:116).

Slang and jargon are frequently used interchangeably to refer to the technical language of professions and disciplines (such as stylistics), although slang is more properly referred to the colloquial usages of all native speakers. Admittedly, drawing distinctions is not always simple.

From science to stylistics, marketing to the internet, various professions and fields have developed their own terminologies out of necessity, and jargon can be used very neutrally to describe these. What is frequently criticized, however, is the (sometimes deliberate) use of jargon for the purposes of pomposity, obfuscation, or merely verbosity. Organizations like the Campaign for Plain English in Britain have gained widespread support for their criticisms of the language used in legal contracts, Civil Service leaflets, and political discourse (Wales, 2011: 32, 242).

3. Methodology

The study seeks to perform its objectives by analyzing qualitatively the jargon terms collected from some interviews with cars' professionals in Al-Najaf industrial district. The study is limited to analyze the jargon terms that are collected by the researcher through several interviews with various professionals in Al-Najaf industrial district. The questions are limited to the most common jargon terms they use, the reasons behind the use of these terms, and the impact of these terms on the outside the industrial district. Collecting the jargon terms is limited to four professions; they are repairing car engines, repairing car front suspension, modifying car's body, and car's body painting.

3.1 Data Collection and Description

When referring to their method of data collection as a sociolinguistic interview, sociolinguistic fieldworkers frequently use a wide definition, allowing the word to stand for any face-to-face interaction that is documented for use as sociolinguistic data. This chapter makes a distinction between this general definition of "sociolinguistic interview" and what I refer to as "The Sociolinguistic Interview," which is here defined more specifically as a methodology created within the Labovian variationist paradigm with the aim of systematically eliciting variation across contextual styles for use as the primary evidence for sociolinguistic stratification and linguistic change.

A strict definition allows for an emphasis on the specific utility of data gathered from the Sociolinguistic Interview in relation to other recordings of naturalistic speech and is meant to stress the importance of making informed methodological choices when gathering sociolinguistic interview data (Mallinson et al., 2018: 99).

Concerning the current study, the method of collecting the data is interviewing car's professionals of various professions and questioning them about the most common jargon terms (special and unique to their professions) that they use. In addition, they are asked some other questions, such as what these jargon terms refer to, why they use these terms and some other related questions.

4. Data Analysis

The study analyzes the twenty selected terms of four car repair professions.

4.1 Repairing Car Engine Profession

"اذانات المحرك" "ears" "Engine bases."

This term is used to refer to the bases on which the car engine is based. This term is used metaphorically because of the association between the term and the actual shape of the engine bases.

"ميصفي" "The engine crank is not usable."

This term is used by the car's engine fitter to mean that the engine crank is no longer usable. It is named as such because of the measurement of the crank ends.

"تشتغل تك" "one or more of the spark plugs of the engine is not working".

This term is used by the car engine fitter to refer to the fact that the car engine does not operate naturally. This name is used because the engine lacks the double operation standard.

"تعمي بلك" "car spark plugs malfunction."

This expression is used by the car engine fitter to refer to the rising of engine oil to the spark plugs, causing malfunctioning the spark plugs. It is called as such due to the lack of spark.

4.2 Car Front Suspension

"المغازل" "spindles"

A pair of stanchions in the car's front suspension. This term is used to indicate the stanchions in the car's front suspension. It is also used metaphorically because these stanchions are like the spindles.

"المشروحات" "divided"

This term is used to refer to two blockers of rubber that have a cut that allows the front steering suspension linkers to enter them. They are called this term because of the cut they have.

"الطوب" "balls"

It refers to two parts used in the front steering suspension. The term is used because they like the ball in their shape.

"الجوراب" "sock"

It is a rubber cover used to cover the driveshaft to protect it from entering the water. It is called so because of its function and shape.

"ترس" "repeating the process of squeezing the brakes."

It is a term used by the worker of cars front steering suspension to direct his servant to press the brakes frequently. It is named as such due to the process of repeated pressing.

"هوزن" "the tool that is placed under the car after it is lifted."

It is a tool used under the car after it is lifted to ensure that it does not fall off. This name may be borrowed from the English language "housing", indicating the process of accommodating the car.

4.3 Modifying Car's Body Profession

"الخشوكة" "spoon"

This term is used to refer to a device used by the car's plumber to modify car's body. It is used because of its shape, like the spoon.

"القارصة" "pincher"

It is a tool used by the car's fitter to clutch things. It is called so because of its function in clutching things.

"الصابونة" "soap"

It is a tool used by the car's plumber to modify the car body. It is called so since its shape is like the shape of the soap.

"العوجة" "serpentine"

This term is used to refer to the twisting screwdriver. It is named so because of its shape.

"مقصف" "sharp head screwdriver"

It is a tool used for drilling. It is called so because of its pointed head that looks like a bullet.

"العكرب" "scorpion"

It is a tool used by the car's plumber to modify the car's body. It is called as such because of its shape, which is like the shape of the scorpion.

4.4 Car's Body Painting Profession

"المسدس" "gun"

It is the name of a tool used by car painters to spray cars with paint. It is used because of its shape and function.

"صقل" "smoothing"

It is the term used by car painters to refer to the process of smoothing car putties. It is used because of the manner of the process.

"بطش" "paint remover"

It is the term used to refer to the remover of the car's paint. It is named so due to its function in removing the car's paint.

"بوليش" "polish"

It is used to refer to the process of shining the car's paint. This name is borrowed from the English language.

5. Results

According to the qualitative analysis, the study reveals the following findings:

1. The study reveals twenty jargon terms that are used by various car repair professionals. Each profession has its own terms. This is what proves the first hypothesis.
2. The most common motivations beyond using these terms are the shape of the tools, the functions of the tools, the manner, and the borrowing of words. In this regard, the second hypothesis is verified.
3. As the interviewees answered, the impact of these jargon terms on city language is that the terms eventually seemed more familiar to the people, and they are used by many people in public situations. This is what verifies the third hypothesis. Accordingly, the third hypothesis is valid.

5.1 Discussions

According to the above results, the study discusses the following:

There is a huge number of vocabulary used by car repair professionals in the industrial district of Najaf, but the twenty words that were chosen may be the most used and different from the original language used in the city. The motives for using the jargon vocabulary that appeared in the results are logical and acceptable because car repair workers use this vocabulary once to relate the word to the shape of the tool or part of the car, and again to their functions or work, and once to their manner of work, or because the word is borrowed from another language, and all these uses are for facilitating work procedures and make it more flexible.

Many of those interviewed car repair professionals confirmed that these terms began to spread to different parts of the city and are used as common and easy-to-use terms.

6. Conclusion

The study concluded that the industrial area in Al-Najaf, like other industrial and commercial areas, uses a different language and terms of its own. The motives for using these terms differed, where they are used either because they are associated with the shape of the tools, their function, or their manner of work or because they are a borrowed word that is easy to use. These terms have been widely used in the city by non-professionals in the field of auto repair. Jargon allows greater efficiency in communication among those familiar with it. A side effect is that it raises the threshold of comprehensibility for outsiders. This is usually accepted as an unavoidable trade-off, but it may also be used as a means of social exclusion (reinforcing ingroup–outgroup barriers) or social aspiration (when introduced as a way of demonstrating expertise).

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