

DICTION AND AUDIENCE

People talk in different registers or levels of understanding, even formality. We refer to these registers as high, middle, and low.

High refers to almost Latinate words, Gobbledygook, Jargon, and Scientific and Technical talk such as *Quercus Suber* (a Cork Oak Tree) or phrases like Central Processing Unit (the command center of a computer).

A Moderately High and Informal level of diction is the preferred level of speaking and communicating at a university or at college.

Middle simply refers to everyday talk.

Low simply refers to localized use of language, such as using slang, illiteracies, or talking just below your current situation.

Slang is an informal use of language which is not generally accessible to everyone. Usually, slang relates to the particular language of a culture/subculture

EX: (Surf Subculture Slang)

Stoked

Charged Up

Ripped

Gettin' Air

Vert (short for Vertical)

Wipeout

Swell

Lip

Gnarly

Poser

Regionalisms are uses of language which are incorrect but which continue to be used in particular areas.

EX:

Ain't

A lot

Ya Betcha

What ya (verb)

Dem (as in Them)

Acrost

Yonder

Got

Get

You best (verb)

Example of Jamaican Regionalisms

Aback a time, Mon. Mi bredda a clap down a cocohead dat had a badderation. We asked "A wa a duin', mon?" ... cause, dam on cum here widda smug and bad wuds. He some foreinah, mon.

Translation: A few days ago, my friend had to hit some guy who started a fight with him. My friend and I asked the guy, "What are you doing?" The guy had used some insulting language to start the fight. He was not from Jamaica.

Example of Legal Jargon ("Legal Talk")

The judge issued a bench warrant to arraign a fugitive after the recent deposition of the witness and plaintiff, a minor. The defendant's previous representation suffered disbarment so the defendant fled after paying his bond, not knowing he was scheduled for a hearing.

Translation: The judge had to send police to find a criminal after a victim talked to police. He was a child. The criminal had a lawyer. However, the lawyer had problems and did not tell the criminal that he could not be his lawyer any more. Because there was no communication between the criminal and his lawyer, he paid a fee to get out of jail and left town. He did not know that he had to meet before the judge, so the judge sent the police to find him.

DICTION AND HIERARCHIES

Interestingly enough these "registers" differentiate and form hierarchies; that is, they reaffirm the idea of "class" and other forms of discrimination. The use of higher registers remains an intrinsic tradition of the academy, something to delineate the educated from the uneducated.

DICTION-BASED ORNAMENTATION

Now, there are word forms and play, which do not apply to any of the registers mentioned previously. They are:

EXAGGERATION

Exaggeration is the use of language to make people, places, or things seem much larger or much more important than they really are.

EX:

"I understand that he is just a Chihuahua. But, your dog's teeth were so sharp that he nearly ate my foot off. "

AFFECTATION

Affectation is the deliberate use of language to elicit a solely negative, intimidated, or surprised response.

EX:

He is one stupid SOB!

VERSUS

He is one inconsiderate person.

EUPHEMISMS

Euphemisms are expressions which are deliberately formed to be inoffensive to others.

COMMON EUPHEMISMS

Used Car = Pre-Owned Car

Old people = Senior Citizens

Teenager = Young Adult

Die = Pass On

To Pee = Urinate

To Crap = Defecate

To Have Sex = To Consummate