

English 2

Sequence N°: 1

Title: The use of jargon and register in communication

Objectives:

- Students will learn some concepts about **the use of jargon and register in communication**, also the difference between the two notions.

Introduction:

The way we speak or write changes depending on where we are, who we are speaking to, who speaks first, or the purpose of the text. These changes in our language relate to register and styles as jargon, slangs, etc.

1- Register

a. Definition:

The term register refers to the various ways people use language based on **who they're talking to and their situation**. We often talk about register in terms of **formality**. For example, our word choices, tone of voice, and body language will likely differ in a formal situation (e.g., a job interview) compared to informal situations (e.g., hanging out with friends).

The register we choose to use during communication (consciously or subconsciously) is determined by several different **social factors**, such as the context (where), purpose or occasion (why), and audience (who).

Now that we have a basic idea of what register means, let's look at some main types of registers and when we can expect to use them.

b. Types of Register

There are five main types of different linguistic registers. They are: **frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate.**

- **Frozen register**

The frozen register, otherwise known as the static register, is used for very old pieces of discourse, such as wedding vows, readings from the bible, and Shakespearean plays. It's called the **frozen register** because the language **hasn't changed for a long time**, and it will continue to remain the same even though that language is no longer used today.

- **Formal register**

The formal register is often associated with standardised versions of English and is used in formal situations.

Example: A formal register is most commonly used to address people in positions of authority and individuals that merit respect, such as headteachers, police officers, and people who work in the services. In writing, you would use a formal register in letters of complaint, official speeches, or essays.

- **Consultative register**

The consultative register is usually used when there is an expert-novice relationship between the two people engaging in the conversation, i.e., someone who knows a certain subject and someone who doesn't. The consultative register involves a tone of respect since the advice is being sought and given and is typically quite formal. However, the consultative register can also be informal and include things such as slang, depending on the relationship between the two people.

Example:

Examples of when the consultative register can be used are between a doctor and a patient, a teacher and a student, and between a boss and an employee.

- **Casual register**

The casual register typically refers to informal speech used between people who know each other well. The casual register often contains slang, contractions, swear words, and features of speech from local dialects. The casual register is what's usually used in everyday language.

- **Intimate register**

The [intimate register](#) refers to the [informal language](#) used when talking to close friends, family members or romantic partners. The intimate register is frequently used in private and can be used when discussing personal issues, sharing secrets, telling inside jokes, or when being flirty!

Although the term register is most commonly used to describe formality, it can also describe the general language used by groups of people who have something in common. This can include their occupation (e.g., two lawyers using legal 'jargon' in a conversation).

2- Jargon

a. Definition:

Words and terms a specific group of people uses – usually related to work – that others might find difficult to understand. i.e jargon refers to the specialized language of a professional or occupational group. While this

language is often useful or necessary for those within the group, it is usually meaningless to outsiders. Some professions have so much jargon of their own that it has its own name; for example, lawyers use *legalese*, while academics use *academese*. Jargon is also sometimes known as lingo or argot. A passage of text that is full of jargon is said to be *jargony*.

b. List of Jargon Words

Jargon can be found in a variety of fields, from law to education to engineering. Some examples of jargon include:

- **Due diligence:** A business term, "due diligence" refers to the research that should be done before making an important business decision.
- **AWOL:** Short for "absent without leave," AWOL is military jargon used to describe a person whose whereabouts are unknown.
- **Hard copy:** A common term in business, academia, and other fields, a "hard copy" is a physical printout of a document (as opposed to an electronic copy).
- **Cache:** In computing, "cache" refers to a place for short-term memory storage.
- **Dek:** A journalism term for a subheading, usually one or two sentences long, that provides a brief summary of the article that follows.
- **Stat:** This is a term, usually used in a medical context, that means "immediately." (As in, "Call the doctor, stat!")
- **Phospholipid bilayer:** This is a complex term for a layer of fat molecules surrounding a cell. A simpler term is "cell membrane."
- **Detritivore:** A detritivore is an organism that feeds on detritus or dead matter. Examples of detritivores include earthworms, sea cucumbers, and millipedes.

- **Holistic:** Another word for "comprehensive" or "complete," "holistic" is often used by educational professionals in reference to curriculum that focuses on social and emotional learning in addition to traditional lessons.
- **Magic bullet:** This is a term for a simple solution that solves a complex problem. (It is usually used derisively, as in "I don't think this plan you've come up with is a magic bullet.")
- **Best practice:** In business, a "best practice" is one that should be adopted because it has proven effectiveness.

c. Jargon vs. Slang

Jargon should not be confused with slang, which is informal, colloquial language sometimes used by a group (or groups) of people. The main difference is one of register; jargon is formal language unique to a specific discipline or field, while slang is common, informal language that is more likely to be spoken than written. A lawyer discussing an "*amicus curiae* brief" is an example of jargon. A teen talking about "making dough" is an example of slang.

