**LECTURE TRANSCRIPT – (Chapter 9: Lecture)**

OK. We’re going to look very closely at slang today, and in particular, slang in English in the United States. So, first we’ll look at the meaning of slang, and then we’ll look at, to, a number of the reasons why people use slang. And then I want to talk a bit about how this slang is created, so how slang is made. In fact, most slang in any language is created by young people.

So, the first thing is: What is slang? So, slang is the term for new and informal words and phrases. And these words and phrases tend to come from different groups within society. Let me say that again for you: Slang is new and informalwords or phrases which tend to come from certain groups in a society.

Let me move on to describe slang for you. Now, in general, we use slang to say something new or to say something old in an unusual way. So a quick example is, well, when people say, “I’m pumped up,” or “I’m psyched.” Both of these expressions someone might say to mean, “I’m really excited.”

Now, slang, as you probably know, can either be playful and funny. You know, it’s something you can use with friends. But, on the other hand, it can sometimes be impolite and offensive**.** So, it can have many different effects.

All right. So, let’s move on to why people want to use slang. Well, there are a number of reasons. One important reason people use slang is that slang makes people feel connected,to, or part of, a peer group. So, for instance, let’s say there’s a group of friends who spend a lot of time together. Maybe they go to the same school. They use more slang with each other because it makes them feel connected. It’s like they have their own language. So, in essence, when they use their slang together, they’re showing their group identity—like wearing the same jackets. They’re showing that they belong to the same group. Also, and, and this is a key point, people use slang to show that they’re friendly and can be casual with each other. This is especially common in the workplace. Now, some people use slang to make their speech more colorful, or to make a certain kind of impression on other people.

So, these are a few reasons why slang is used. Now, let’s move on to discuss how slang is created. What I want to look at is how people create new slang expressions and often change the spoken language.

OK. Now, slang is created in a variety of different and interesting ways. One way slang is created is by taking an old word and giving it a new meaning like the slang word *wired.* *Wired.* So, let’s look at how this works. You know the word *wire*—like the wire in an electrical cord. To be wired is an adjective. It means the way you feel when you’ve had too much coffee . . .you feel too excited, and maybe even a little crazy. You feel wired. You feel full of energy. So that’s an example of a new slang word created from an old word.

OK, there’s another way that slang is made, and that’s by creating a new word, a word that didn’t exist before. And the interesting thing here is that these words usually come from subcultures, or smaller groups, from inside a culture. A really good example of creating a new word is the slang word *bling-bling.* This is a slang word that means “shiny jewellery.” It’s a noun. Most people first heard *bling-bling* in a hip-hop song some years ago, and suddenly, many young people began using this expression in their regular conversations. So, for example, someone might say, “Look at that bling-bling she’s wearing.”

So, we’ve talked about creating slang by using old words in new ways, by creating new words, and now let’s look at a third way that slang enters the language. The third way slang is made is by borrowing a word from another language, or by borrowing from another culture. This is what I’m interested in. Slang in the United States incorporates hundreds of words from languages of the people who have come to live here, like German people, Italian, Chinese . . . just to name a few.

OK, now it’s important to note that not everyone who speaks English speaks the same slang. There are a few factors that create differences in slang. So right now, let’s take a look at a couple of these factors.

The first important factor is region, meaning, “the part of the country where a person is from.” For instance, you might hear a person from the southern states say, “Hey y’all,” which means “Hello everybody,” but a person from California might say, “What’s up, guys?” So, different regions, different slang. That’s the bottom line there.

OK, here’s another factor: it’s people’s occupation . . . jobs. Jobs can have different slang, too. A great deal of job-specific slang is also relevant to others, so eventually it becomes popular in regular society; in other words, it eventually becomes general slang.

Are there any questions? Excellent. OK. Well, so far I’ve only talked about slang in a positive way, but believe it or not, slang can sometimes be controversial. That’s right, not everyone has a positive opinion about slang. For instance, some people think that if people use too much slang, eventually it might destroy the English language. Let me illustrate this. Remember I said that a lot of slang is created by and used by young people? A lot of the slang in style today and used by young people is not grammatically correct. It breaks the rules of the language. Of course, young people want to break the rules of the language. They want to do things differently because this shows that they are new, a new generation. They don’t want to follow the traditions of society.

A good example of youth slang that is ungrammatical is the popular expression *my bad.* *My bad.* It’s what you say when you want to show that you are responsible for a mistake, like if you forget to bring your friend his book. But it’s not correct grammar: We should say “my mistake,” but we say “my bad.” So, what I’m saying here is a lot of slang goes against the rules of the language, and some people are concerned about this.

Some people are also concerned when slang is used in a formal situation, like when someone is giving a speech. They think that slang is too informal for a speech. They’re also concerned when slang is used for writing because, as you may know, slang is used more in speaking than in writing. And so, as you’ve probably been told by your teachers, generally slang is unacceptable in academic essays. So that’s the big part of the controversy about slang.

So, to finish up, I want to make one final point: When you’re thinking about slang, keep in mind that languages are living things. They’re changing all the time. And new slang helps the language grow and change. All right, I’m afraid we’re out of time. I’ll see you next week.