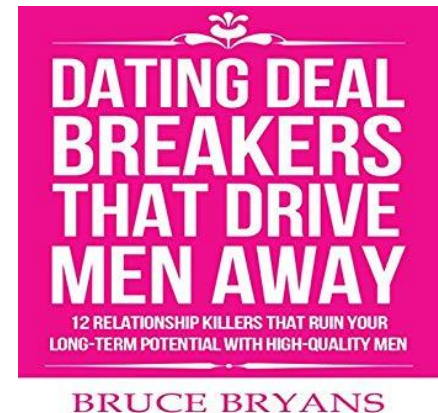


Words that migrate: business, IT, new age slang... in conversational English



Business Guru



**Creating a
Personal
Sputnik
Moment**



Language and Culture

“Culture is intrinsic to language. Language relates common experiences and backgrounds, and these histories, in turn, create words specific to our culture. Have you ever been in a group of people talking about a shared experience, and something is said that make no sense to you, while everyone else laughs? This inside joke makes you feel excluded and shows how the shared experience of culture affects meaning. Understanding the words without understanding the culture may not be enough for comprehension”*.

**Elisha Madison, How Language Reflects Culture and Affects Meaning*

Language and Culture

- Culture is what makes a group of people unique. Our experiences within our various cultures shape how we behave with humanity at large and within our groups, changing how we speak.
- Example: teenagers speak in acronyms, initials, and emojis in social media
- Example: professional speech in an office includes **jargon** unique to an industry or company culture.

Jargon and slang

- **Jargon:** the language used by a group of people to describe things that other people do not know about (doctor, lawyers, managers etc.)
- **Slang:** an extremely informal kind of language (much more informal than jargon), usually only spoken. Usually belongs to a group of people who use it to show that they belong to that group and others do not (African American slang, Australian slang etc.).

Professional jargon : sports

- a **bunny hop** (mountain biking)
"Can you bunny hop?"



- a **curve ball** (baseball)
- a **Hail Mary** pass/touchdown
(American football)
*"It was one of the most memorable
Hail Mary's in NFL history!"*



Sports jargon that 'migrated' into conversational English

- **Chip in (gambling) - help by donating money or time**
“The staff members chipped in 10 dollars each to buy Jody a birthday gift”
- **Get a second wind (sailing) – have a burst of energy after getting tired** *“I was exhausted after 3 km of running but I got a second wind after I passed the beach”*
- **Big shot/hot shot (hunting) – an important or very successful person** “All the hot shots from Silicon Valley were invited to meet the president”

Sports jargon that ‘migrated’ into conversational English

- **Call the shots (billiards)** - **make the decisions** *“While our boss is on vacation, Bob will call the shots.*
- **Saved by the bell (boxing)** - **to be saved from misfortune or unpleasantness by a timely interruption**
- **The ball is in your court (football)** – **it’s your decision or responsibility to do something now**
- *“Do you think I should accept the job offer? - Don’ t ask me. The ball is in your court now.*
- **To touch base (baseball).** *Let’s touch base next week*
- **A lot at stake (gambling).** *This is a huge decision to make. There’s a lot at stake*

Jargon and slang that affect conversational English today

- Business jargon
- IT and technology
- New age philosophy
- Legal English
- Environmental terms etc.

Expressions from business jargon and slang that are now conversational

- **a deal-breaker.** *If a guy smokes, it's a deal-breaker for me*
- **non-negotiable.** *A bad kisser is non-negotiable*
- **to invest into sth.** *I invested a lot in this relationship!*
- **an asset.** *Beauty is my important asset*
- **to manage sth.** *I didn't manage my relationship very well*
- **partner.** *Let me introduce my partner (= boyfriend/girlfriend/spouse)*
- **To pitch/ a pitch.** *That was a powerful pitch! I'm convinced!*

Expressions from business jargon and slang that are now conversational

- **the bottom line.** *She's just like everyone else in this city, looking after the bottom line.*
- **to buy sth** *I totally bought it! / I don't buy it*
- **I'm sold** = managed to convince me
- **What's the deal (here)?** = what's going on
- **feel undervalued** (e.g. in a relationship, at work). *It's like can I really be expected to do my best work when I am constantly feeling undervalued at the company that I started?*

Sex and the City: “In relationships, what are the deal breakers?”

*“Later that night, I couldn’t help but wonder, when the hell did dating become so **dump-friendly***? What happened to the time when a bad kiss or a cigarette or even a ridiculous dream was part of a person’s **portfolio**? In today’s volatile **dating market**, is it wise to liquidate certain stocks, the first sign they might not **perform** as well as expected? Or are there certain things one should try and **negotiate**? In relationships, what are the “**deal breakers**”?”*

**Dump-friendly – when you stop dating somebody quickly (‘dump’ /turn down a person)*

Expressions from IT jargon and slang that are now conversational

- **discuss sth offline** = talk privately later. *Let's discuss this offline*
- **reboot** = regain your energy. *Your body needs a reboot / reboot your energy / reboot your life*
- **to network** = to make useful connections. *It's crucial to network if you want to build a business*
- **To push one's buttons** = annoy someone. *Don't push my buttons!*
- **to google sth** = to look something up online (or just find information about sth or sb)
- **To hack into** (brains, feelings). *Modern-day ads hack into children's brains*

Expressions from technology that are now conversational

- **It's not rocket science** = it's not difficult to understand
- **a Sputnik moment** = when people realize that they are threatened /challenged and have to redouble their efforts to catch up
- **push the panic button** = to start to panic
- **get your wires crossed** = misunderstand each other (esp. when making arrangements)
- **a cog in the machine** = a person who does an unimportant job in a large company

‘Military’ idioms

- **A blockbuster** (a bomb that used to destroy an entire block, now a super popular movie etc.)
- **To close the ranks** =СМЫКАТЬ ряды
- **To bite the bullet** – СЖИМАТЬ зубы (go through a painful / unpleasant experience)

Expressions from New age philosophy that are now conversational

- **a guru** = a super experienced specialist: *a business **guru**, a marketing **guru***
- **karma** = getting what you give. *He had so many heart problems, I wonder if he was cruel to someone and now gets his **bad karma***
- **be positive!**= think good things
- **a mantra** (orig. a sacred word or phrase used in prayer in Buddhism and Hinduism and repeated to help concentration) = a commonly repeated word or phrase. *She repeated 'so pleased with how it's going' at intervals like a **mantra**.*
- **psychic** (orig. a person with a supernatural talent to see things others may not see) = someone who is intuitive. *Oh my god! You're **psychic**! You just read my mind!*

Homework

On your own, research some words (3-5) that have 'migrated' from professional jargon into conversational English. Present them to class: their original (professional) meaning and modern-day meaning in conversational English. Give examples of usage!