

AN ANALYSIS OF JARGON EMPLOYED BY THE WAITERS AT TAMARIND RESTAURANT

Ni Km Nidyantari Laksmi Risadi¹

¹(English Education Department, University of Education Ganesha, Singaraja,
Indonesia, km.nidyantari@student.undiksha.ac.id)

ABSTRACT

This research aimed at identifying and describing the linguistic forms, meanings, and functions of jargon used by waitstaff in restaurants. Conducted through a qualitative approach, the study explored waiter jargons in both spoken and written formats. The participants were waitstaff from a high-end restaurant. Data collection methods included observation, documentation, and interviews. The findings revealed that the jargon appeared as abbreviations, phrases, and specific terms. The meanings were discerned by examining their technical contexts. Moreover, the study uncovered two main functions of the jargon: (1) providing a specialized language to enhance communication efficiency, and (2) fostering group solidarity. The conclusion drawn from this study is that jargon serves as a means for the community to express their collective identity and maintain their unique linguistic practices.

Keywords: Waiter, Jargon, Tamarind Restaurant

INTRODUCTION

Communication is an indispensable part of human interaction, with language serving as the primary medium (Kurniawan, 2024). Language, a verbal tool, facilitates communication (De Saussure & Rocci, 2016). A key attribute of language is its social nature, indicating a strong connection with society. The study of the relationship between language and society is known as sociolinguistics. According to Wardhaugh and Fuller in Budiarsa (2021), sociolinguistics plays a crucial role in examining how language and society influence each other. It explores the social functions of language, noting that different societies may have distinct languages or dialects, referred to as language varieties. These variations can result from factors such as social status, age, gender, occupation, or environment. In the restaurant industry, communication is paramount, and waitstaff often use specialized language or jargon. Majed (2024) define jargon as a specific language used in particular contexts, such as professions or groups, where speakers share a common specialized vocabulary, word usage habits, and expression forms. In restaurants, waiters use jargon to efficiently communicate orders, special requests, and other operational details, thus ensuring smooth service. Examples of job-specific jargon include terms used in the military, aviation, hospitality, medical fields, and more (Lathifah, 2023). By using jargon, waitstaff can strengthen their professional identity and improve their efficiency and solidarity within the team.

The restaurant industry is one of the fields that extensively uses jargon for communication. Within a restaurant organization, various roles and departments are responsible for serving guests based on their expertise. Among these roles, waiters play a crucial part. According to Pratten (2003), Arduser and brown (2005), waiters are key personnel in a restaurant, ensuring guest satisfaction by maintaining up-to-date

records on guest preferences and service needs. They are responsible for welcoming guests, taking orders, handling complaints, and coordinating with the kitchen and other staff. To perform their duties effectively, waiters use specific jargon to communicate ideas and intentions swiftly. For instance, in a restaurant, they might use terms like "86 *the fish special*" to indicate that the fish special is no longer available. Lexically, "86" means to eliminate or get rid of something, but in restaurant jargon, it signifies that an item is out of stock. Another example is "*fire table 3*," which means to start preparing the dishes for table 3 immediately. Here, "fire" is used in a specialized sense, different from its usual meaning related to combustion (Juddin, 2017). Additionally, abbreviations such as "VIP" (Very Important Person) or "POS" (Point of Sale) are commonly used by waiters. These terms help streamline communication and ensure that staff understand each other quickly and efficiently. However, people without a background in restaurant jargon might find it challenging to grasp the messages when interacting with waitstaff using these specialized terms. Overall, the use of jargon in the restaurant industry facilitates efficient communication and enhances the operational flow, contributing to a better dining experience for guests.

In the dynamic environment of the restaurant industry, effective communication is paramount for seamless operations and customer satisfaction. One facet of this communication is the specialized language, or jargon, used by waiters. The restaurant industry is characterized by its unique linguistic practices, often referred to as jargon, which streamline communication among staff members (Al-Mutwali, 2024). By analyzing the types and functions of these jargons, the research aims to offer insights into how specialized vocabulary enhances operational efficiency and fosters a cohesive working environment. Rooted in sociolinguistic theory, the study posits that language functions not only as a communication tool but also as an indicator of social identity and professional expertise. By decoding the specific jargon used by waitstaff, this research aims to illuminate the linguistic mechanisms that underpin effective communication in restaurant settings, thereby contributing to the broader field of applied linguistics (Mayuuf & Abbass, 2023). Jargon, in the context of occupational linguistics, serves as a tool for enhancing efficiency, fostering a sense of community among staff, and establishing an identity within the workplace. By examining the unique lexicon used by the wait staff at Tamarind, this study seeks to uncover how these linguistic practices contribute to the restaurant's operational dynamics and social interactions (Vogel & Marousek, 2015).

Drawing on sociolinguistic theories and methodologies, this research investigates the forms, functions, and implications of waiter jargon. Through participant observation, interviews, and analysis of recorded interactions, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how language facilitates the everyday functions of the restaurant. The findings aim to contribute to broader discussions on occupational language use and its impact on professional communication and social cohesion within service industries. Furthermore, the study incorporates pragmatic perspectives to understand how context influences the interpretation and usage of jargon (Mayuuf & Abbass, 2023). This approach is critical in exploring how waiters use specialized language to navigate the dynamic interactions of a busy restaurant environment, manage customer relationships, and coordinate with kitchen staff. While previous studies have documented the prevalence of jargon in various service sectors, including the food and beverage industry, there remains a significant gap in the detailed analysis of the jargon specific to waiters. This study aims to bridge this gap

by focusing on the jargon used in the restaurant, applying theoretical frameworks from sociolinguistics and pragmatics to assess the observed language patterns.

Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, this research utilizes participant observation, conversation recording, and documentary techniques to gather comprehensive data. The analysis is grounded in established theories of word formation and language use, such as those articulated by Yule and Hornby in Yudha and Seken (2016), to systematically identify and categorize the jargon used by waitstaff at Tamarind Restaurant. The findings from this study are anticipated to contribute significantly to the linguistic research domain and provide practical insights for enhancing communication and training within the restaurant industry. The implications of this research are particularly relevant for developing training programs that equip waitstaff with the necessary linguistic tools for efficient and effective service delivery. The primary objectives of this research are (1) to identify and categorize the specific jargon used by waiters at Tamarind Restaurant, (2) to analyze the functions and purposes of this jargon in the context of restaurant operations.

METHODS

This qualitative research study focused on the jargon used by waitstaff at Tamarind Restaurant. The subjects were the restaurant's waitstaff, and the primary object of study was the specific jargon they employed. To accurately gather the necessary data, the researchers utilized several tools. The first tool was a recorder, used to capture conversations among staff, interviews, and their communication, specifically those containing jargon used by the waitstaff. The second tool was a camera, which documented written forms of jargon. The third tool was an interview guide, aiding in structured interviews with the waitstaff. Three data collection techniques were employed: observation, documentation, and interviews. These methods were used to gather authentic data from the subjects, focusing on the jargon used by the waitstaff. The process involved several steps:

1. Observation: Non-participant observation was conducted to gather data on the linguistic forms, meanings, and functions of the jargon. This technique did not require the observer to participate actively.
2. Documentation: The researcher collected valuable records of past events, including written texts, pictures, and other relevant documents, to support the reliability of the research. This included capturing images of the jargon used.
3. Interviews: Conducted as meetings between the researcher and waitstaff to exchange information and ideas, the interviews aimed to understand the meanings and functions of the jargon used.

During data collection, several steps were followed:

1. Preliminary Observation: To ensure the availability of necessary data.
2. Further Observation: To identify subjects, focusing on native speakers proficient in English and restaurant jargon.
3. Recording Conversations: Capturing the language used by the waitstaff in various settings.
4. Transcribing Conversations: Converting audio recordings into written text to avoid misinformation.

5. Analyzing Conversations: Examining the structure, types of jargon, mechanisms, and rules in the conversations.
6. Interviews: To gain deeper insights into the jargon phenomenon, aiding in a better understanding and interpretation during data analysis.
7. Capturing Documents: Complementary data from the restaurant's files to support the primary data.

Data analysis followed an interactive qualitative method, involving:

1. Data Collection: Observing, recording, and documenting the informants' jargon.
2. Data Reduction: Transcribing audio data into written form, then specifying, simplifying, transforming, and grouping the data.
3. Data Display: Presenting selected and grouped data based on phoneme classifications in tables.
4. Drawing Conclusions: Making research conclusions based on the displayed data.

This comprehensive methodology ensured a thorough analysis of the jargon used by waitstaff at Tamarind Restaurant.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Jargon is a specific way of using language tailored to particular contexts, such as situational, occupational, and topical settings. According to Yule (2006), jargon is characterized by its technical vocabulary, which is associated with specific areas of work or interest.

Jargon represents a specialized variety marked by a distinct set of vocabulary (technical terms) linked to a profession, occupation, or defined social group, often used in particular situations with specific roles and statuses. Examples include toasts at weddings, sports broadcasts, or talking to a baby (Lathifah, 2023). Based on Wedhanti and Budasi (2021) jargon develops when individuals engaged in regular communication adopt similar vocabularies, intonation patterns, and syntactic and phonological features. This specialized vocabulary for recurrent objects and events, as well as formulaic sequences, facilitates quick communication, establishes a sense of support, and influences dialect formation.

Jargon is a language variety defined by its use in social situations, such as scientific, religious, or formal English contexts. It is widely used in linguistics to refer to language varieties based on use. Jargon is crucial for strengthening connections among group members, as noted by Crystal in Yudha et al. (2016).

Jargon arises when individuals with the same professional or recreational interests use a specialized vocabulary within their group. Using jargon does not necessarily indicate expertise; rather, it shows a person's way of expressing specialized terms. Jargon helps group members strengthen their relationships and facilitates understanding of their conversations.

Halligan in Lathifah (2023) described four types of jargon: acronyms, abbreviations, words, and phrases. Here are the descriptions of these types of jargon.

Abbreviation

Abbreviation, Kartika et al., (2020) defines an abbreviation as taking initial letters that do not form well-formed syllables, such as USA, pronounced /yu es ai/ instead of /yusa/. Fromkin et al. in Lathifah (2023) state abbreviations simplify words by using one or more syllables of the original word, like "phone" for "telephone." The data of abbreviation can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Abbreviation at Tamarind Restaurant

No	Jargon Words	The Standard Form
1	86	Eighty-Six
2	FOH	Front of House (areas where customers are served)
3	BOH	Back of House (kitchen and storage areas).
4	POS	Point of Sale (system used for managing transactions).
5	RA	Run All (bring all dishes for a table at once)
6	AO	All out (all dishes for a table are ready).
7	VIP	Very Important Person (special guest requiring extra attention)
8	SM	Small portion
9	LG	Large portion
10	FR EG	Fried Egg
11	FF	French Fries

Word

Leech in Yudha & Seken, (2018) describes a word not just as the smallest unit occurring independently but also as influenced by syntax in sentences. Ali & Satti, (2021) outlined four aspects of words: phonological information (sound and sequence), semantic information (meaning), morphological information (related words like plurals), and syntactic information (usage in larger compositions). The examples of word at Tamarind Restaurant can be seen in table 2.

Table 2. Word used by Waitstaff at Tamarind Restaurant

No	Jargon Words	Word Categories
1	Campers	Noun
2	Fire	Verb
3	Expo	Noun
4	Refire	Verb
5	Deuce	Noun
6	Entree	Noun
7	Comps	Noun
8	Section	Noun
9	Upsell	Verb
10	Walk-in	Noun

Phrase

Leech in Lathifah, (2023) stated that jargon phrases consist of multiple words, forming expressions commonly understood within a specific group. The examples of phrase in Tamarind Restaurant can be seen in table 3.

Table 3. Phrase Used by Waitstaff at Tamarind Restaurant

No	Jargon Words	The Standard Form
1	On the Fly	Prep. Phrase
2	In the Weeds	Prep. Phrase
3	Two-top/Four-top	Noun Phrase
4	Check Back	Noun Phrase
5	Mise en Place	Noun Phrase
6	Amuse-Bouche	Noun Phrase
7	Drop Check	Noun Phrase
8	Soft Drink	Noun Phrase
9	Guest Count	Noun Phrase
10	Table Turn	Noun Phrase

Discussion

Allan and Burrige in Yudha & Seken, (2018) outline two main functions of jargon. Firstly, it provides technical language for specialized communication, making interactions more effective by using terms with specific meanings. Secondly, it fosters in-group solidarity, creating a harmonious communication environment among group members. The function of Abbreviation used in Tamarind Restaurant can be seen in table 4.

Table 4. The Function of Abbreviation at Tamarind Restaurant

No	Jargon Words	The Standard Form	Function	
			Giving special language for efficient work	Encouraging in-group solidarity
1	86	Eighty-Six	√	
2	FOH	Front of House	√	
3	BOH	Back of House	√	
4	POS	Point of Sale	√	
5	RA	Run All	√	
6	AO	All out	√	
7	VIP	Very Important Person	√	
8	SM	Small portion	√	
9	LG	Large portion	√	
10	FR EG	Fried Egg	√	
11	FF	French Fries	√	

Table 5. The Function of Word at Tamarind Restaurant

No	Jargon Words	Word Categories	Function	
			Giving special language for efficient work	Encouraging in-group solidarity
1	Campers	Noun		√

2	Fire	Verb	√	
3	Expo	Noun		√
4	Refire	Verb	√	
5	Deuce	Noun		√
6	Entree	Noun		√
7	Comps	Noun		√
8	Section	Noun		√
9	Upsell	Verb	√	
10	Walk-in	Noun		√

Table 6. The Function of Phrase at Tamarind Restaurant

No	Jargon Words	The Standard Form	Function	
			Giving special language for efficient work	Encouraging in-group solidarity
1	On the Fly	Prep. Phrase		√
2	In the Weeds	Prep. Phrase		√
3	Two-top/Four-top	Noun Phrase	√	
4	Check Back	Noun Phrase	√	
5	Mise en Place	Noun Phrase		√
6	Amuse-Bouche	Noun Phrase		√
7	Drop Check	Noun Phrase	√	
8	Soft Drink	Noun Phrase	√	
9	Guest Count	Noun Phrase	√	
10	Table Turn	Noun Phrase	√	

Jargon's meaning can differ from its literal sense, making it challenging for outsiders to comprehend. Identifying jargon meanings involves examining technical rather than lexical meanings, using sources like hotel field guides and interviews with workers. The meaning of Abbreviation used in Tamarind Restaurant can be seen in table 7.

Table 7. The Meaning of Abbreviation at Tamarind Restaurant

No	Jargon Words	The Standard Form	Meaning
1	86	Eighty-Six	Out of stock or order
2	FOH	Front of House	areas where customers are served
3	BOH	Back of House	kitchen and storage areas
4	POS	Point of Sale	system used for managing transactions
5	RA	Run All	bring all dishes for a table at once
6	AO	All out	all dishes for a table are ready
7	VIP	Very Important Person	special guest requiring extra attention
8	SM	Small portion	Giving the guest small portion of meal ordered
9	LG	Large portion	Giving the guest large portion of meal ordered
10	FR EG	Fried Egg	Add fried egg on guest's main dish
11	FF	French Fries	Add French fries on guest's meal

Table 8. The Meaning of Words at Tamarind Restaurant

No	Jargon Words	Word Categories	Meaning
1	Campers	Noun	Guests who linger at the table after finishing their meal.
2	Fire	Verb	Start cooking a dish.

3	Expo	Noun	The person who ensures that all orders are correctly plated and ready to be served.
4	Refire	Verb	Remaking a dish that was incorrect or unsatisfactory.
5	Deuce	Noun	A table for two people.
6	Entree	Noun	The main course of a meal.
7	Comps	Noun	Complimentary items given to guests.
8	Section	Noun	The specific area or tables a waiter is responsible for.
9	Upsell	Verb	To encourage customers to purchase more expensive items or add-ons.
10	Walk-in	Noun	Customers who arrive without a reservation

Table 10. The Meaning of Phrase at Nusa Dua Beach Hotel and Spa

No	Jargon Words	The Standard Form	Meaning
1	On the Fly	Prep. Phrase	An urgent request; needs to be prepared quickly.
2	In the Weeds	Prep. Phrase	Overwhelmed or very busy.
3	Two-top/Four-top	Noun Phrase	Table for two people/four people.
4	Check Back	Noun Phrase	Follow up with a table to ensure everything is satisfactory.
5	Mise en Place	Noun Phrase	Everything in its place (preparation and organization of work area and ingredients).
6	Amuse-Bouche	Noun Phrase	A small complimentary appetizer.
7	Drop Check	Noun Phrase	Deliver the bill to the table.
8	Soft Drink	Noun Phrase	Non-alcoholic beverage, such as soda
9	Guest Count	Noun Phrase	The number of customers in the restaurant at a given time.
10	Table Turn	Noun Phrase	The process of clearing a table and preparing it for the next set of customers.

This study differs from previous research because it collected data at Tamarind Restaurant. The previous research by Paramita (2022) was conducted in Lovina, whereas the current study took place in Nusa Dua, Bali, and utilized Yule's theory of word formation in jargon. Consequently, this study generally supported previous research related to jargon as well as Yule's theory on the word formation process. This study is also related to the research by Awatara (2020), as it collected data from waiter at a restaurant. This study analyzed the linguistic forms used among the waitstaff at Tamarind Restaurant. Similar to the current study, it analyzed the word formation of jargon in the restaurant. However, the previous study was conducted at a standard restaurant not a luxury one, whereas the current study was conducted at luxury restaurant, resulting in different research locations and outcomes. The previous research found 42 instances of jargon, while the current study identified 31 jargons in the tamarind Restaurant, with abbreviations being the most commonly used jargon due to their simplicity and brevity. Based on the previous study and the results of this research, it can be concluded that all jargons in the waitstaff are actively used at Tamarind Restaurant.

CONCLUSION

Jargon refers to a specialized vocabulary associated with professions, occupations, or distinct social groups. Individuals engaged in recurring

communication scenarios often develop similar vocabularies, intonation patterns, and specific syntax and phonology characteristics. Jargon strengthens relationships among group members and aids in mutual understanding. At Tamarind Restaurant, particularly in the waitstaff, employees use jargon to facilitate cooperative communication. Types of jargon found there include abbreviations such as 86 meaning out of stocks and VIP meaning special guests requiring extra attention. Words such as fire meaning start cooking a dish or deuce meaning a table for two people, and phrases such as on the fly meaning an urgent request; needs to be prepared quickly. and mise en place meaning Everything in its place (preparation and organization of work area and ingredients).

Jargon serves two primary functions. Firstly, it provides a technical or specialist language for efficient communication, exemplified by terms like eighty-six, run all, all out, very important person. Secondly, it fosters in-group solidarity, using terms such as campers, on the fly, in the weeds, and *mise en place*. Beginners may not fully grasp the meanings of jargon, as it often conveys specific concepts not immediately apparent. To understand jargon, one must investigate its technical meanings rather than its lexical ones.

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