

Title: Don't Crimp My Game: A Phonological, Lexical, Syntactic, and Discourse Assessment of Linguistic Diversity in the United States.

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A descriptive linguistic approach suggests that the United States has been a petri dish for innovation in the English language. Across the continent, many words take on different meanings and sounds as each sub-culture adopts them as their own. In response to this, prescriptive linguists suggest that these modified words distort what should be a standardized language. Labels such as "dialect", "jargon", and "slang" are used to describe these linguistic variations.

If a young boy says "I ain't got no homework today." His mother might respond, "Don't use slang! Don't they teach you better than that in school?" He then replies, "Ah! Mah! Don't crimp my game! I'm just doin me!"

Is the boy in the passage above using slang, speaking dialect, talking hip-hop, or using a combination? To answer this I first define each form of expression. *Slang* is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "language of a highly, colloquial type, considered as below the level of standard educated speech, and consisting either of new words or of current words employed in some special sense." *Dialect* is, "a manner of speech peculiar to, or characteristic of, a particular person or class." *Jargon* is, "any mode of speech abounding in unfamiliar terms, or peculiar to a particular set of persons."

Based on these definitions, I will then analyze the phonological, lexical, syntactic, and discourse characteristics of the boy's phrases and classify them with the most compatible criteria. I will conclude by raising a discussion of prescriptive vs. descriptive approach to linguistic as to which should be the hegemony for communication in the United States.