

# Week 5 Glossary - Language

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## **Convergence**

I went to high school at Victoria Park CI. This school just bordered the region of Scarborough, but was bustling with students who lived and grew up in the Scarborough area. Consequently, I was surrounded by "Scarborough mans," otherwise known as "Scarberians."

Scarborough is well known for its slang, which is so unique that the language they speak there could sometimes be considered its own dialect. To fit into the community, I had to converge, or adapt my speech style, from "regular" English to "Scarborough speak."

Characterized by slang such as "mandem," "dunnoe," "ahlie," "styll," and many more words, a day wouldn't pass where I wouldn't change my style of speech ironically around classmates, or when I was forced to interact with sketchy kids on the block.

There was this one winter day when I was walking back from the Tim's after lunch, when three guys wearing baggy clothes approached me. They looked about the same age as me, but had tatoos, piercings, and were sharing a cigarette or blunt (I couldn't quite tell which). One of them asked where I was from. The last thing I wanted was to come off as an outsider, so I coolly replied "Scarborough, fam. Waguan?" Didn't get any trouble from them.

Translated to English, I essentially replied I grew up from Scarborough, addressing the group in a relatively friendly manner, using "fam," an abbreviation of "family." "Waguan" is a greeting used in Jamaican dialects, which is equivalent to "What's going on?" or "What's up?"

It all seems rather silly when I break down slang like this.

## **'It' statement**

I realize that I use 'It' statements when talking about a negative subject, possibly as a subconscious means of distancing myself from the negativity. This past summer I worked as a software development/research intern at Sunnybrook Hospital. Since I was developing software, the success I celebrated was met with equal (if not more) failure and struggle leading up to it.

When there were bugs in my code, I would complain to my co-workers, using 'It' instead of 'I.'

"It's not working," I'd say, instead of "I can't get it to work." By using "It," it sounds like there's something wrong with the code. If I were to use "I," it would sound like there was something wrong with me, which is undesirable.

Similarly, my exclamations continued with "It" when GPU drivers failed, little online support could be found, and algorithms were difficult to understand.

However, I was sure to use "I" when describing my success. "I finally got it to work!"

## 'But' statement

Your application was extremely qualified, but due to placement limitations, we were unable to offer you a spot in our program.

Every one of my university application rejects began with words to that effect. MIT, Princeton, UC Berkeley, Carnegie Mellon; all four either outright rejected me or did so after a waitlist process. Reading every letter was the same - excitement when reading the first half of the sentence, then disappointment in the remaining half. The but statement characterized my rejection letters, and always gave me a tiny emotional rollercoaster as I read them.

Although the second half of but statements may often cancel the effect of the first half, this isn't always the case.

"Your invitation to apply to Google from Jason has expired.  
We understand you may not be ready to apply, but we hope you reconsider."

First of all, I find this odd because Google referrals are "sticky" and don't actually expire internally, though I digress. In the second line, it is being acknowledged that I may not be ready to apply. However, Google's recruitment team hopes I will reconsider. This does not cancel the fact that they still understand that I may not be ready at the moment, even though "*but*" is used in the sentence. This is beginning to sound like propositional logic. My math assignments must be getting to my head.