

Vernacular

Definition of Vernacular

Vernacular is a literary [genre](#) that uses daily-used language in writing and speaking. It is different from written works, as they normally follow the formal variety of language. The word “vernacular” refers to writing or speaking of the public. We find the origin of vernacular literature during the Middle Ages, in various countries of Europe. In fact, Latin was the language of historical documents and religion, and ordinary people would not even speak it in Medieval Europe, like that of the Sanskrit language in India. However, the writers of vernacular language, such as Dante, Geoffrey Chaucer and Mark Twain. Dante Alighieri, diverged from this tendency by writing in the language of ordinary people.

Vernacular vs. Dialect

Vernacular is the use of ordinary, everyday, and plain language in speaking or writing, such as corn is a common name of a plant, and its scientific name is “maize,” or “zea mays.” [Dialect](#) is related to a particular region, geographical area, a particular social class, or an occupational group. Also, it uses a distinguished pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. For instance, people in Shanghai have a different pronunciation or dialect than those in Yunnan.

Examples of Vernacular in Literature

Example #1: *The Canterbury Tales* (By Geoffrey Chaucer)

“Whan that Aprille, with hise shoures soote,
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote

And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;"

In these opening lines, Chaucer has used words from the Middle English, which is a very different language. The poet has employed a vernacular [style](#) in the words such as "whan," "Aprille," "soote," "droghthe," "roote," "veyne," "licour," and "flour."

Example #2: *A Clockwork Orange* (By Anthony Burgess)

Anthony Burgess uses vernacular language in his novel, *A Clockwork Orange*. Although Burgess has made the base of his novel with English, he used vernacular words from Russian, Arabic, Gypsy, and English. He formed a different language style of its own that managed to portray the state of mind of the [character](#) Alex, as well as cruelty of the world around him in which he lived.

Burgess uses words such as "eggiweg," which means "eggs" in English, describes the childlike nature of Alex, who often exhibits it. Another word is, "moloko," which means "milk blended with drugs," which shows a dark side of Alex, characterized by demonic and criminal overtones. Other terms include "baboochka," which means "old woman," and "Bog," which means "God."

Example #3: *Boxy an Star* (By Daren King)

"We me an Star are waitin for Boxy his head. Waitin standin in the fone box in the station of Wolfer Humpton holdin the letter what we have tapped in the number from. Tappin the number what Boxy had typed on the letter. Tappin it in on the fone pad. Tappin it makin Boxy come on the screen of the fone makin on the screen of the fone his head."

This novel is a perfect example of using futuristic vernacular. Its language is hypnotic and disturbing, unrefined and vernacular, yet effective and proper. Here the author's words are expressing brevity, directness, childlike

Example #4: *Trainspotting* (By Irvine Welsh)

“Suppose that ah ken aw the pros and cons, know that ah’m gaunnae huv a short life...but still want tae use smack? They won’t let ye dae it. They won’t let ye dae it, because it’s seen as a sign ay thir ain failure. The fact that ye jist simply choose tae reject whut they huv tae offer. Choose us. Choose life. Choose mortgage payments; choose washing machines; choose cars; choose sitting oan a couch watching mind-numbing and spirit-crushing game shows...”

It takes time to know the [rhythm](#) of this book, as it is rich with Scottish vernacular, and [slang](#) words, which make its tone lilting.

Function of Vernacular

The use of vernacular is everywhere – in schools, university courses, at home, offices, in law terms, medicine, and the media. In fact, language is a starting point for any literary work, and if it is ineffective, then readers cannot get anything from the work. Vernacular is one of the literary techniques that can strike a chord with the majority of the people, makes a strong connection with them because it is closer to their everyday conversation. Also, the dialogues and phrases often reinforce the [setting](#) of a [narrative](#), and add depth by creating a sense of [realism](#), allowing readers to relate their real lives with a literary piece.