

The Antilanguage of drug users

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Within every Society, alternative societies exist known as "antisocieties" or "subcultures". The nature of the language depends on the nature of the groups and their relation to dominant culture. From among the various types of subcultures such as that of commercial sex workers, gypsies, prisoners, I hope to analyze the language used by drug users. These are optional social realities with different value systems as opposed to the value system of the dominant society. They are societies set up in opposition to established norms. Antisocieties have developed language of their own called "antilanguage" - a language that helps to create and maintain an alternative social reality or a subculture.

An antilanguage either defensively maintains a particular social reality or offensively resists or protests against the dominant culture. Its main function is either to communicate or to miscommunication. In doing so, such a language markedly deviates from the "standard" use of language/ a particular language. My research question is "do drug users speak a different language? Is it intelligible to those who speak the "standard"? By using language of drug users as a case study, I hope to look at how this antilanguage is formed, how "standards" are enforced in language usage, and how they are flouted in order to create another form of a standard.

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