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# The Use of Argot in The Dramas of Haldun Taner

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**Abstract:** Haldun Taner is one of the most prominent figures in Turkish dramaturgy, known for his unique linguistic style and rich narrative techniques. This article focuses on the use of argo in Taner's plays, analyzing its artistic and dramatic functions. Argo, a form of language specific to certain social groups, is often used in informal speech and serves as a powerful tool in drama to enhance realism. Haldun Taner frequently employs argo in his works to provide deeper insights into the social backgrounds, characteristics, and personalities of his characters.

The article examines how Taner integrates argo into his plays and its role in shaping social critique and artistic expression. Through an analysis of selected works, the study explores how the playwright uses character speech patterns to reflect social stratification and to add authenticity to his dialogues. Additionally, the research investigates how Taner employs argo to depict the linguistic landscape of his era, creating a more dynamic stage language while individualizing his characters. The study also evaluates the artistic impact of argo in dramatic texts and its influence on theatrical performance.

**Keywords:** Haldun Taner, dramaturgy, argo, theatrical language, linguistic style, social stratification, character development, realistic depiction, stage speech, social critique.

**Introduction:** Haldun Taner is a writer with a unique style in Turkish literature and drama. His works stand out for their realism, satire, and social criticism. In his plays, he deeply portrays human psychology, social stratification, and societal changes, revealing the characters' social status and personality through their language and speech. Notably, in Taner's dramaturgy,

slang holds an important place as a literary and dramatic device.

Slang, as an informal form of language, serves to bring characters closer to real life, enhance their realism, and strengthen the connection with the audience. By using slang, Taner accurately reflects the social environment, highlights the individuality of his characters, and employs it as a means of social criticism and satire.

This article presents an analytical approach to the literary functions of slang in Haldun Taner's works, its impact on stage, and its role in character development. Through this, the writer's linguistic mastery and his methods of achieving social realism in theatre are explored.

### **Distinctive Features of Haldun Taner's Dramaturgy**

#### **Genre and Stylistic Analysis of Taner's Works.**

Haldun Taner developed a unique dramatic style by synthesizing various literary genres in his creative work. Through humor and satire, he highlights issues such as social inequality, bureaucracy, moral dilemmas, and the contradictions of modernization. By blending elements of comedy, tragicomedy, and epic theatre—particularly under the influence of Bertolt Brecht—Taner uses techniques that encourage the audience to think critically.

His plays often approach historical events and societal problems with a unique sense of irony. His approach to dramatic genres is closely tied to social criticism, and he enhances realism through the use of slang. This stylistic approach is especially evident in 'Keşanlı Ali Destanı' (The Epic of Keşanlı Ali), where colloquial speech and slang are employed in a distinctive manner. In this play, Taner's method becomes particularly apparent. By combining traditional Turkish storytelling, Karagöz and Hacivat performances, and modern theatrical techniques, he developed a new and dynamic theatrical language.

#### **The Role of Language and Style in His Dramatic Works.**

Language and style play a crucial role in Haldun Taner's dramaturgy. His plays employ a simple, colloquial, and lifelike language enriched with deep meaning and irony. He constructs his characters' dialogues to align with their social status and personality, which makes the stage characters more realistic and impactful. Taner makes extensive use of spoken language, folk sayings, idioms, and especially slang, which is particularly noticeable in the speech of lower-class characters. In his works, language serves as a dramatic force that helps uncover conflicts between characters. These features are especially prominent in 'Keşanlı Ali Destanı', where language transforms into a powerful

artistic tool in the theatre.

**The Use of Slang in Haldun Taner's Works.** Haldun Taner effectively uses the expressive potential of language, particularly slang, to depict characters from different social strata. In his dramas, slang is not merely an informal speech form but an essential artistic device that reflects social stratification and highlights the characters' socio-cultural environment.

**Reasons for the Use of Slang in Taner's Dramas.** The use of slang in Haldun Taner's plays is not coincidental but serves specific dramatic and artistic purposes. He uses slang to naturalize characters' speech and bring them closer to real life. Slang enhances stage realism and serves as a tool for satire and social critique. Taner presents issues such as injustice and bureaucracy with irony. Drawing inspiration from traditional folk theatre forms like Karagöz, Hacivat, meddah storytelling, and orta oyunu (traditional Turkish improvised folk theatre), he incorporates spoken language and slang as integral components of his dramatic style.

**The Role of Argo in Character Creation.** One of the most important functions of argo is to reveal the individuality of characters and to define their social position. Haldun Taner's characters are often introduced to the audience through their manner of speech, and the use of argo in this process helps to uncover their personalities more deeply. Taner uses argo to create natural and lively dialogues.

In Haldun Taner's works, argo expressions are predominantly used in the speech of common people. On the one hand, this reflects the characters' social background and living conditions; on the other hand, it ensures that they speak in a way that is closer to real-life language. In particular, the main character of the play 'Keşanlı Ali Destanı', Ali, speaks in the vernacular, and his speech includes many argo expressions and wordplays. This reflects his life experience, adaptability to the social environment, and his unique attitude toward reality.

Especially in the fifth act of the play, the storyline where Ali ends up in prison is depicted, and this situation causes a significant increase in the use of argo in his speech. For example, words like 'angut' (fool, idiot), 'ulan' (an informal address to young men), and 'herif' (scoundrel) are not only argo but also carry derogatory and emotional connotations. These expressions reflect the character's experience in a harsh social environment, his emotional states, and personal transformation.

In general, Taner effectively uses argo expressions as a tool to portray the psychological state and social portrait of characters representing real social strata.

**The Function of Argo in Enhancing Social Context and Dramatic Impact.** In Haldun Taner's dramaturgy, the use of argo serves not only to reveal the individuality of characters but also to enhance the overall dramatic effect. Specifically, in his plays, argo functions as a powerful linguistic tool that reflects social stratification, the inner emotions of the characters, and the dynamics of their relationships.

In particular, in 'Keşanlı Ali Destanı', argo expressions play a key role in distinguishing the speech styles of characters from different social classes. While the representatives of the lower class frequently use argo in their speech, the upper-class characters tend to use more literary and formal language. This contrast is skillfully used by Taner as an artistic method to express social stratification.

Furthermore, argo allows for a precise depiction of characters' psychological states, levels of dissatisfaction, and emotional intensity. For instance, the character Zulayho uses expressions such as "gavlince" (vile, disgusting) in the line: 'Polisi mahkemeyi gandıramadın da şimdi beni mi gandıracan, gavlince...' (You couldn't fool the police or the court, and now you think you can fool me, you disgusting thing...) and 'veledi zina' (bastard – a severe insult) in: 'Nerde bana vuran veledi zina diye aranmışım.'

(Where is the bastard who threatened me?)

These expressions vividly convey her anger, contempt, and hostility toward Ali. They create dramatic intensity and add sharpness to her accusatory tone. Similarly, the argo expressions used in Ali's speech reflect his attitude toward social realities, his inner struggles, and emotional conflicts. For example, the use of "veledi zina" as a strong insult illustrates his personal rage and emotional turmoil.

In general, through the use of colloquial language, Taner reflects not only social differences but also emotional and dramatic situations on stage in a deep and realistic manner. This makes his dramaturgical approach more socially profound and impactful.

**Impact on the Audience and Reception.** The use of slang makes theatrical performances more lively and realistic. This contributes to enhancing the impact of the theatre. How slang is received by the audience depends on the artistic and social function of the theatre. In Haldun Taner's plays, the use of slang not only makes the audience laugh but also encourages them to reflect on deep social issues.

For instance, in the play 'Keşanlı Ali Destanı', slang is not merely a means to express social differences or reveal a character's traits, but also serves as a stylistic element that creates strong dramatic impact.

Particularly, powerful expressions used in spoken language astonish the audience and allow for a deeper understanding of the character's psychological state. For example, the phrase 'İkrar ediyorum anasını sattığımı dedim.' (I confess, damn it!) is a strong curse that expresses the character's rage and inner torment. Expressions like 'anasını sattığım' are common in Turkish languages and are used in specific dramatic contexts to evoke strong emotional reactions in the audience.

In addition, the phrase 'Mapustakiler beni sarakaya aldılar.' ('The inmates made fun of me') contains the expression 'sarakaya almak', which carries significant semantic weight in understanding the social relations and internal hierarchy among the prisoners around Ali. Such slang elements not only create a realistic atmosphere but also serve to intensify the audience's emotional connection to the events on stage.

Thus, Haldun Taner effectively uses slang expressions to enhance dramatic power and stage realism. This approach increases the artistic value of the play and encourages the audience to think about social issues.

### **The Connection Between Slang and the Realistic Theatre Style**

In Haldun Taner's dramaturgy, the realist style plays a leading role. One of the main features of this style is the truthful portrayal of life on stage, in which the naturalness of language plays an important role.

### **Sociological Realism and Slang**

Slang, as an important tool of realism, is used to reflect the social structure of society. In the play 'Keşanlı Ali Destanı', the differences between social classes are clearly shown through language. In the fifth act of the play, especially in the prison setting, slang words and expressions are used frequently. For example, the expression 'sırtını okşamak' (to show respect) signifies recognition and honor within the prison hierarchy: 'Ertesi gün bir de baktım ben geçerken bü tün o azılı mahpuslar açılıp bana yol veriyor, sıftınıyor, sırtımı okşuyorlar.' (The next day, I saw that as I walked, those fierce inmates were parting to make way for me, showing me respect and gently patting my back). Similarly, the expression 'kamanço etmek' (to hand over leadership) reflects social changes within the prison: 'Meydancı Yedi Bela Sakıp, sen aramızda iken haddime mi diye meydancılığı bana kamanço ediyor.' (I used to be the chief here, but now that you're among us, who am I to claim that title!—he handed over the leadership to me.).

These slang elements contribute to the play's realism, vividly portraying the social structure within the prison environment. In Haldun Taner's theatre, slang is not merely an informal form of language, but an inseparable

part of theatrical expression. It serves as one of the core principles of realistic theatre—a powerful tool for stage vitality, dramatic force, and social analysis. The use of slang on stage enhances the authenticity and naturalness of the characters, helps establish a closer connection with the audience, and acts as a strong artistic device to reveal social stratification and societal issues. The example of Haldun Taner's dramaturgy once again confirms that slang is not just a linguistic element in theatre but an integral part of the entire stage expression.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, in Haldun Taner's dramaturgy, slang is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but an integral part of theatrical aesthetics. This study has examined the expressive possibilities of slang on stage, as well as its dramatic and social significance. By using slang in his satirical and humorous works, Taner strengthened the traditions of realistic theatre, highlighted social issues, and achieved a direct connection with the audience. In the future, further exploration of slang and theatrical language, comparing Taner's dramaturgy with that of other playwrights, and analyzing his influence on contemporary theatre will remain important academic directions.

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