

Specifics of Youth Slang in the Journalistic Discourse of the English Language

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ABSTRACT

This work is devoted to the properties of youth slang and the slang of youth subcultures in the English language, and in this regard it is necessary to clarify what makes this study work specifically on English slang, and not on the characteristics of slang in general. It is this small degree of external influence, unlike slang in many other languages that makes up the peculiarity of English slang. It identifies those lexico-semantic features of special slang in the English language that distinguish it from other layers of vocabulary, and provides a theoretical explanation and practical illustration of these features. The factors that influence the choice of slangisms in speech are analyzed (based on a survey of native speakers).

KEYWORDS: youth slang, English slang, layers of vocabulary, practical illustration, theoretical explanation, social groups, changes in society, colloquial expressions.

In modern linguistics, there are several types of slang: youth, computer, professional, criminal, etc. Moreover, some slangisms can be included in several sociolects at once. Thus, youth and computer slang often overlap. This fact can be explained by the fact that participants of the same age group belong to several social groups, for example, gamers and schoolchildren.

The reference group of youth slang is people aged 12 to 23 (30) years. This includes schoolchildren and students. Youth slang has a number of features. Brevity, emotionally expressive coloring, and variability distinguish it. Slang is in constant motion, updated all the time. For example, the slang words laces (parents), washcloth (girl), used about thirty years ago, are not used in the speech of modern youth and are incomprehensible to them. As P.A. Gorshkov notes, "gamer slang is constantly undergoing changes and is partially updated every 7-10 years" [1, p. 4]. It can be assumed that during the same time, not only computer and gaming slang, but also youth slang is updated.

The modern world does not stand still, and language is dynamically developing along with it. All events that occur in the life of society, one way or another are reflected in speech, introducing new expressions and phrases into the vocabulary of speakers. Language and speech are two sides of the same phenomenon. At the present stage, language is considered as a powerful tool for regulating relationships between people in various spheres. Being the main means of communication, language provides information about its speakers, the culture of the country and its history, and reflects all changes in society. In this sense, the language of young people most fully reflects the high pace of life.

Youth language is a complex multicomponent structure that lives its own life. A characteristic feature of the youth language is the use of stylistically neutral and reduced vocabulary, a large number of abbreviations/abbreviations, since it is aimed at saving language resources while maintaining maximum emotional load. In the world of linguistics, youth language is often associated with the term "slang". Slang, being a part of language and, accordingly, speech, recreates the linguistic and cultural characteristics of the society that uses it.

In modern linguistics, there are different approaches to the etymology of the term "slang". According to one version, English. Slang comes from sling ("throw", "throw"). Thus, the archaic to sling one's jaw comes to mind - "to speak violent and offensive speeches." According to another version, "slang" refers to slanguage. It should be noted that the initial s is added to the noun language as a result of the disappearance of thieves; that is, initially it was about the thieves' language [3, p. 168].

J.B. Greenough and J.L. Kittridge described slang as a vagabond who "loiters in the vicinity of literary speech and constantly tries to make his way into the most refined society" [2, p. 42]. It is not known for certain when the word slang first appeared in English in oral speech. It was first recorded in written form in the 18th century. Then it meant "insult". Around 1850, the term acquired a broader meaning, implying "illegal" vernacular vocabulary. At the same moment, synonyms for the word slang arise - lingo, which is used mainly in the lower strata of society, and argot - preferred by the colored population [1].

Subsequently, the concept of "slang" merges with such concepts as "dialectism", "jargon", "vulgarism", "colloquial speech", "vernacular". Most of the words and various expressions that initially entered speech as slang are now firmly entrenched in the literary language. Unlike colloquial expressions, slang is actively used in the speech of educated people, representatives of a certain age or professional group. The most famous example is youth slang. Its appearance is associated not so much with the opposition of youth to the older generation, but with the opposition of the free (street) style of communication to the official - business one.

Youth slang is often used in school and student environments, as well as in certain reference groups. Modern youth culture is a separate, unique world that differs from adults in its expressiveness, sometimes in a rather rude and harsh form of expressing their thoughts, in a certain verbal absurdity that is characteristic only of young people. Slang plays a very important role in the lives of young people,

helping to communicate and facilitating the process of learning new foreign vocabulary.

The respondents represented a social group of middle-class and "upper-middle class" American students, aged 18-22 years (with the exception of one student aged 31), mostly white. Since the number of respondents is insufficient to confirm the representativeness of the sample and the validity of the survey results for all American middle-class students, the findings section will discuss the trends identified. The purpose of the survey was not only to obtain some conclusions, but also to test the survey methodology and find out whether it was suitable for obtaining results.

The main restrictions on the use of slang identified in this survey, representing the opinions of modern American students (in descending order): outdated expression; an expression used only by a certain social group; regionally restricted expression; individual preferences; incorrect stereotypes.

Thus, the task of illustrating the undesirability of using slangisms by students learning English as a foreign language was solved. The present study showed that even the most common and well-known slangisms often have not one, but several restrictions on use. When using slang, it is necessary to take into account various subtleties and associations that are most likely unknown to students, since they are not part of the language community, and, without taking these subtleties into account, they can get into an extremely difficult situation when using slang in speech. Therefore, the use of slang in students' speech is not recommended.

Analysis of response repetitions yielded the following results. Outside of strict dependence on the personal data of the informants (that is, their social and regional affiliation), they have, to a certain extent, a single list of slang words that are undesirable to use. The same words were mentioned as "not used" by the majority of students, regardless of gender and socio-regional affiliation.

While it is possible to identify a single list of "undesirable" slangisms, the explanations for these slangisms in many responses were completely different. For example, one informant could answer that he does not use slang because it is outdated, and another - because it refers to African-American slang. The socio-regional background of the informants can explain some differences in answers, while other differences cannot be explained. We can conclude that the perception and assessment of "undesirable to use" slangisms depend both on socio-regional affiliation and on the individual linguistic experience of the informant.

A comparison of informants' responses with dictionary information on the corresponding slangisms showed that the differences in the representation of slangisms in dictionaries and in the informants' responses are significant. If we summarize the comparison by main categories, we can see that:

1. in the "outdated" category, the answers for slang from the 1960s and 70s are approximately the same, but in the dictionary definitions it is not entirely clear whether these words are outdated now, or whether they can still be used.
2. significant differences in the "outdated" category relate to the latest slang. In particular, slangism, which spread in the 1990s, was characterized by a large number of

informants as "outdated" (the survey was conducted in 2003), and in the Internet dictionary this word appeared only in 2003 as "new" (in printed dictionaries it did not even have time to appear).

3. In the "socially limited" category, almost all the informants' answers and dictionary definitions regarding African-American slang coincide, but as for the slang of the 1960s and 1970s (hippie slang and surfer slang), the informants better remember the slang of surfers - subcultures, which still exists today, than the slang of the extinct hippie subculture, and words that can be attributed to the slang of both subcultures are classified as surfer slang.
4. In the "regional differences" category, not a single answer from the informants coincided with the dictionary definitions. Where informants indicated that, the functioning of words is limited geographically, dictionaries stated that there are no such restrictions, and conversely, when dictionaries state that the use of a word is limited to a certain region, and informants do not see any geographical restrictions. The explanation for this limitation may be the following: in the first case, we were talking about words that peaked in popularity in the 1980s, and then declined, and the use of these words became limited to certain regions. The dictionaries recorded an earlier state (which is strange, since all the dictionaries used belong to the mid-second half of the 1990s).

So, the main reasons for the discrepancy between the answers of informants and dictionary definitions are seen in the temporal aspect: sometimes dictionaries provide information that is more complete, informants show forgetfulness regarding slang that was 20-30 years old, and in other cases, dictionaries do not have time to record the variability of slang.

An important property of the self-name system is the presence of "external" and "internal" self-names. Some subcultures have two types of slangisms that express the concept of "one's own": the first type, "external", is used mainly not by the subculture itself, but by society outside it and the media. The subculture does not accept this slang, considering it a label imposed by society (which society itself most often does not realize) and uses it in a pejorative sense to refer to those of its members who profane the ideals of subcultures. "Internal" self-name is slang that a subculture uses to refer to its members, and it has a positive connotation, and does not have a contemptuous connotation, unlike the "external" self-name. Evaluative adjectives and other evaluative words also play an important role in special slang. The study showed that the most commonly used evaluative adjectives, which expressed the general idea of a positive evaluation, have additional, narrower and more specific meanings. These meanings, as well as additional meanings of self-names, describe a certain activity or style of behavior, and when analyzing the ideology of subcultures, it turns out that it is this activity or style of behavior that is approved by the subculture or is even normative for its members. Thus, even the semantic structure of slangisms can indicate the value system of subcultures.

The result of the study of the semantics of evaluative adjectives was a partial refutation of the widespread opinion among linguists that evaluative slangisms are words without a specific denotation, with extremely vague semantics,

“meaningless” words. The study showed that the semantics of these words are much more specific than a simple expression of a positive or negative assessment. The following semantic process is also characteristic of evaluative slangisms: if words are borrowed from the standard language, then the connotation of these words changes from positive to negative, and vice versa, and the words function in slang with a meaning similar to their meaning in standard English, but with a completely different emotional tone. This is especially true for words with the meaning “abnormal behavior,” which have a negative connotation in standard English, but when borrowed into slang they acquire a positive connotation. This process is an illustration of the “inverted morality” of subcultures, according to which actions that are condemned by society can often be approved by the subculture, and vice versa.

Borrowed slang also reflects the value orientation of subcultures. Subcultures often borrow slang from other subcultures, at the same time as borrowing behavior, ideology, etc., thereby pointing to their role model. Or subcultures may borrow slang from a certain register of the standard language, also showing their value orientation. For example, the subculture of black immigrants from the Caribbean islands borrowed some slangisms from the register of religious vocabulary, thereby demonstrating their claims to religiosity, which are clearly manifested in the everyday life of this subculture.

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