YOUTH SLANG AS A SOCIAL LANGUAGE CODE: ITS FUNCTIONS AND WAYS OF FORMATION

GÍRIA JUVENIL COMO UM CÓDIGO LINGUÍSTICO SOCIAL: FUNÇÕES E FORMAÇÃO

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Abstract. The article presents numerous functions and special features of slang, which is able to represent a variety of communicative intentions of the speakers. In addition to the desire of communicants to maintain the confidentiality of communication through slang, the latter is used as a means of language economy, as a mechanism for

creating new concepts, as a way of emotional release, etc. The factors that determine the popularity of this language substandard and ensure the constant growth of neologisms in national language corpora are presented. The relevance of this study is determined by the great interest in the ways of word formation of non-standard vocabulary and the influence of sociolinguistic factors on this process. Such mechanisms for replenishing the vocabulary of youth slang as semantic, phonological and grammatical ways of word formation, antono-masia and foreign borrowings are presented.
Keywords: slang, slang functions, abbreviations, youth subculture, word formation, lexicology, sociolinguist-tics.

Resumo. O artigo apresenta numerosas funções e particularidades do jargão, que é capaz de representar uma variedade de intenções comunicativas dos falantes. Além do desejo dos comunicadores de manter a confidencialidade da comunicação através do jargão, este último é utilizado como um meio de economia linguística, como um mecanismo para criar novos conceitos, como uma forma de liberação emocional, etc. São apresentados os fatores que determinam a popularidade desse subpadrão linguístico e asseguram o crescimento constante de neologismos nos corpus linguísticos nacionais. A relevância deste estudo é determinada pelo grande interesse nas formas de formação de palavras do vocabulário não padrão e a influência dos fatores sociolinguísticos nesse processo. São apresentados tais mecanismos para repor o vocabulário do jargão juvenil como as formas semânticas, fonológicas e gramaticais de formação de palavras, a antonomásia e os empréstimos estrangeiros.

Palavras-chave: funções da gíria; subcultura juvenil; formação de palavras; lexicologia; sociolinguística.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the modern communicative space, slang serves as a universal codifier of colloquial speech of different social groups. In linguistics, it is accepted to single out youth, commercial, theatrical, parliamentary, military and other types of slang. In cognitive linguistics slang is associated primarily with youth vocabulary and is characterized by informality, shortened forms, extravagance, novelty, rapid adaptation in the language, high popularity and other parameters.

Nowadays, one can come across the definition of slang, which has lost its relevance, as a special secret vocabulary used by thieves or beggars, as jargon associated with a certain profession or activity (Pongsapan, 2022;). In fact, slang-speaking beggars, thieves and itinerant gypsies lived in England almost five centuries ago, when slang was part of Kant. In 1788, after the publication of a dictionary of English vulgarisms, slang as the dictionary mark became officially recognized. In modern dictionaries, there is a tendency to replace the mark slang with informal or colloquial due to the ambiguity and vagueness of the term. Slang entered the Russian language in 1960-70 along with the spread of the hippie subculture. But the greatest flow of youth slang poured in the 1990s in connection with the fall of the "Iron Curtain" and today it serves as one of the markers of the "seismic" language gap between the older and younger generations.

The trend of such a gap between the literary and colloquial corpus of the language and slang is also observed in English-speaking countries. For example, polls conducted last year by The Guardian newspaper showed that the adjective fleek (good-looking) was the most obscure slang term in the list of such units presented to English parents, since 43% of parents did not know the meaning of this word. Among the incomprehensible words, the abbreviation bae - before any-one else (faster than all) (40% of parents did not understand this abbreviation) and the word fomo - fear of missing out (fear of missing something) were also given.

Today, slang is understood quite broadly as a special peripheral layer of vocabulary that lies outside the limits of literary speech and dialects of the national language. It includes metaphors, phraseological units, less often words in the direct meanings, relating both to an open group of commonly understood emotionally expressive vocabulary and phraseology of non-literary speech, and to more closed groups (Pesina, et al., 2021a). We claim that slang should comprise social jargon (including a large layer of semi-coded fashionable youth vocabulary, which will be discussed at large below), but slang does not include professionalisms, professional jargon, or the cant of the underworld. In this interpretation, slang can be considered as a subsystem of the national language, since it is able to perform all its main functions.

2. METHODS

Slang, being the most vague concept and heterogeneous in composition, was classified by us depending on the selected function according to different lexicosematic groups. This made it possible to determine the specific speech domains where the use of slang would be the most frequent, popular and justified.

The study of slang was done on the basis of introspection as an intuitive reproduction of the scenarios of the transmitter and recipient of this speech substrate. Semantic analysis is carried out on the basis of intuitive reproduction of the speech mental activity of the intended users of slang. In the course of the study, methods of comparative and lingo culturological analysis were also used.

In addition, the identified lexical composition of slang was structurally typologized, based on the typical ways of its formation, including semantic, phonological, grammatical and other ways of word formation.

3. HYPOTHESIS

There is an opinion that slang is nothing but “a deviation from the established norm at the level of the vocabulary of the language” (Amilia et al., 2022). However, no matter how we criticize this sublanguage, considering it either trash or spoiling the language, it continues to perform a number of important specific functions. Our study of slang functions leads to the idea that slang is not merely a filler for the existing conceptual vacuum or the need for semiotic code and public protest. We are convinced that the users of youth slang function within a certain subculture that has its own patterns, including the user language preferences and the rules of their speech behavior.

Based on the multiple most important functions of slang we have identified in the article (more than 10 functions), we believe that slang is a social language code constantly deciphered by society. Slang has its own unique coloring, unusual for other layers of the language. This is not a mere throwing of foreign or strange vocabulary into the language in order to encode communication, but often the formation of new concepts that require close attention from cognitive linguists.

Slang, along with a subsystem of terms, satisfies the main request for new concepts and notions. The demand for new slang terms depends on the needs of native speakers and mainly concerns the creation of colorful emotionally colored words to express expression (humor, irony, various negative manifestations, etc.). Another constantly growing layer of the language

concerns various kinds of abbreviations and truncations were created in order to save space and time, in particular, in social networks. It is the younger generation that has “linguistic fearlessness”. In-creased neuroplasticity of the brain at a young age leads to the rapid formation and consolidation of new neural circuits [Pesina et al, 2021a].

4. RESULTS

Slang used by young people can be classified as borrowed from other languages and authentic. In the Russian-speaking young community, such nouns as cheater, olds, hype, toxic, crash, cringe, prank, etc., verbs: biting (provoke), voicing, to lounge, to ruffle, to cheat, to check, to check in, to chill, to shame, etc., interjection auf etc. are currently functioning. They are vivid examples of borrowed slang. The nouns жиза (zhiza – life situation, a situation that the speaker has personally encountered), ватник (vatnik – negatively colored nickname of persons who support the modern political regime in Russia), винтилово (vintilovo – hard detention, arrest), вписка (vpiska – sleepover party), the verbs: морозиться (morozit'sya – evade the topic or question), запилить (zapilit' – to do, develop, organize, or produce something out of the ordinary), замахаться (zamakhat'sya – get tired of doing something), орать (orat' – laugh out loud), attrib-utes упоротый (uporotyy – behaving inappropriately, like a drug addict), подментованный (podmentovannyy – acting under the control or on behalf of the militia, police), etc. serve as ex-amples of authentic youth slang.

Further, we will dwell upon the most important functions that slang has been performing for several centuries. Thus, slang ideally suits as a means of cognitive effort minimizing and language economy in communication. For example, a slangs pranking is understood as a deception in order to monitor the reaction of the addressee (telephone pranks, creating fake accounts in order to prank young people, knowing who their crashes are).

The function of language economy is performed by various kinds of abbreviations. The latter often contribute to the reduction of vocabulary to the status of slang. For example, the abbreviations pic / photo, tele, mike, dif, miz, collab (collaboration), comp, Inet, etc., related to the spo-ken language today, were slangisms in the recent past.

A high degree of in formativeness and compression of the message contribute to the acceleration of the communication process. Here are a few examples from a huge list of abbreviations and truncations accepted in social networks: HAND (haveaniceday), LOL (laughingoutloud), ILY (Iloveyou), ZZZ (sleeping), RB (berightback), BTW (bytheway), EOM (endofmessage), MK (letmeknow), etc.

Here are the abbreviations typical for the specific networks, for example, for YouTube: Mukbang – a YouTuber eating something on camera on live TV, Hypebeast – someone who buys branded clothes to impress an audience, Haul – a YouTuber shows what he has acquired, Challenge – a challenge to do something unusual, Gang – a gang of several YouTubers and etc.

Here are the abbreviations that first appeared on the Instagram network: Foodporn – a hashtag for photos with beautiful food, WCW (woman crush Wednesday) – photos of girls you like, MCM (man crush Monday) – the day when you need to post a photo of your beloved man, F4F (follow for follow) – subscription for subscription, OOTD (out fit of the day) – outfit of the day, etc.

Here are abbreviations in which a letter or number means a word: 2 (to/too), 4 (for), B (be), C (see), R (are), Y (why), 2moro (tomorrow), 2nte (tonight), F2F (face to face) and so on.

There is an opinion that slang is used by those who are creative, original and who have a need for unique ways of expressing themselves. And, indeed, people with creative potential are not afraid to experiment with language, so another important function of slang is to create bold language associations, including unexpected nominations and new heuristic discoveries and insights. Slang serves as a tool for self-affirmation and self-esteem among peers. It helps to hide an individual's insecurities in handling language behind a mask of "high-ranking" words. It follows that slang can be a marker of personal growth and development of an individual. This is due to the desire of young people to catch up with the new and unusual due to the openness and inquisitive-ness of the young mind.

Often, slang is perceived as a protest against existing speech attitudes and conventions, disagreement with the containment of the value pluralism of subcultures. By means of slang, young people express their socio-political position: ватник (vatnik – quilted jacket in Rus.) means a nickname of a citizen who uncritically perceives information, passively spending time watching TV. On the other hand, slang acts as a tool of euphemisms, softening statements, giving them allegorism, without causing communicative discomfort, for example, being called a cheater in Russia is less offensive than a gossiper or a liar.

The use of slang compensates for the lack of concepts by offering other ways of expressing thoughts with the capacity of language forms (to ruffle – laughing not viciously, voicing – record a voice message, orat' – laugh out loud, etc.). Often slangisms nominate objects exaggeratedly (krinzh – the awkwardness of the situation and the shame caused by it) and witty (toxic – the de-stroyer of faith in oneself and in others), bread-basket (a stomach). In situations requiring mental and emotional release, literary or everyday language often fails.

Slang affects the most important aspects of the life of young people, so its functioning is justified. Arising, slangisms are quickly perceived as authentic, however, their lifespan is usually not long: like metaphors, they eventually move from the category of the living to the group of the hackneyed or dead (Sarbunan, 2020; Mensah, 2021).

One of the most important function of slang is traditionally classed as the desire of communicants to maintain the confidentiality and secrecy of communication. It includes the secrecy of transmitted information, the desire to be understood only by members of their age or social group. This is expressed in the transmission of the signal "I am the true member of this group / company", where speech coding occurs within the framework of the dichotomy "friend or alien". In this connection it is good to remind the fact that in the wars of the past, language has always been the most important strategic weapon.

Among the negative functions of slang, we note the sometimes aggressive communicative impact on addressees or oneself, caused by a violation of the mental comfort zone, the emotional instability of its users, which conveys the whole range of negative emotions. On the other hand, the speech act of using pejorative vocabulary can be interpreted as a kind of emotional-speech discharge that contributes to the restoration of mental strength and balance (of course, if this is not an act of direct insult).

An important source of replenishment of slang is the active introduction of computer technologies, in particular, computer games. Their users create author's nominations for the realities

of computer reality, which have uniqueness, brevity and semantic capacity. This is necessary for the speed of communication and overcoming the language barrier in cooperation in the conditions of international game communication. The peculiarities of the vocabulary of the computer sub-standard language are manifested in lexical and stylistic heterogeneity of the language. It is manifested in terminology belonging both to the literary language and to slang.

Thus, in the computer game GTA, the social environment of the urbanized universe plays an important role, which leaves an imprint on the emotional coloring of the language spoken by the characters. In the context of this video game, where street slang is transferred from live streets to the virtual game world, we can mention such prevailing word-forming phenomena as affixation, compounding and abbreviation.

The dominant form of existence of computer programming slang is the oral form, which makes certain adjustments to the level of its stability, allowing you to quickly fix any changes that occur in it. Slang acts as a literary language antagonist. It is a lexical subsystem of a special kind, the properties of which are manifested in the structure within individual groups of software developers (cf. programmer jargon, used by the Russian programmers: solve a bug, get a task, participate in a rally / one-to-one, lay out code - review (write code), etc.). There is a subtle difference between slang and professionalisms, jargon and terms. On the other hand, computer slang is actively used in the speech of young people and borrowed into the conversational language.

Slang vocabulary is often borrowed from English into Russian with a modified meaning as so-called “false friends” of the translator. For example, a Russian slangism botanik is most likely originated as a borrowing from the English to batten (to learn at the expense of others by copy-ing), and not from the word a botany. The association with the name of discipline could appear in Russian later. We can also mention the vague borderline between slang and vulgarisms. Thus, the English BS (“bullshit”) in Russian sounds harsher, and the well-known frequency analogue of the English bloody in Russian is much more vulgar than English.

As for the lexico-semantic word-building arsenal, we are faced with such inevitable processes of obtaining a connotative-stylistic words color as metaphorization and metonymization – a phenomena that are quite common for slang. Among the most productive mechanisms for replen-ishing the lexical corpus of youth slang, word formation and word composition should be indicat-ed. Here are the most productive ways of slangisms forming:

- onomatopoeia or sound imitation: clackers – false teeth, to glug – get drunk, ticker – watch, ding-dong – fight, hushhush – secret politics, coconuts – cocaine.
- lexical ways of word formation, which include a secondary nomination (metaphor): old fogey / biddy – old woman, bad – cool, Merry-go-round – deceiver, box – TV, sharp – smart, eyes – female breasts, sugar, grass – drugs, heroin, pickled – drunk, jungle juice – moonshine; cases of metonymy: Law – police, Job – crime, Naked – no money, Rolling – rich, etc. Lexical methods of words formation include the formation of phraseological units: Make-a bomb – get rich, to do a flit – to quit one's flat or lodgings at night without paying the rent or board, Get smb wet – to kill smb. The word formation with the zoologism a dog is interesting, as they actually convey antonymous meanings: be the top dog – to be the best at some activity, to go to the dogs – to lower one’s social status.

The vague borderline between slang and just informal colloquial speech should be mentioned. It should be noted that slang terms tend to move up the functional styles:

- to fib / to tell porkies (to lie), to kip /snooze (to have a nap), a cushy number (easy job), a witter (someone who talks a load of not interesting crap), rot – nonsense, to grab – to cause (a person) to react, groove – something very enjoyable, hang up – a psychological or emotional problem, etc.
- Compound nouns formed by addition of two nouns: boneshaker – a rattletrap, a cakehole – a mouth, a dirtbag – a loser, a gatemouth – talker, headlights – big female breasts, a hellhole – a mess, hayseed – redneck, jockstrap – jock, a lowrider – a young man driving a car with lowered suspension, a lunch-box – a simpleton, a moon-ass – someone who is in love, a mouthpiece – lawyer, a deadhead – a fool, a limpdick – impotent, a numbskull – dumbass, a wethead – beginner, a scumbug – bastard, a blabbermouth – a talker, a milksop – coward.
- In youth American slang, there are complex verbs formed by compounding of two nouns: to window-shop – to look at windows, a noun and a verb: to force-feed, to lollygag – to laze around; adjective and verb: to blackwash – to slander, to sweet-talk – to persuade; compound adjectives formed by adding a noun and an adjective: sorry-ass – useless.
- Metathesis as a rearrangement of sounds or syllables occurs when a commonly used word of a literary language undergoes changes in slang (back-slang): dabnam instead of bad man, doog instead of good, eno instead of one, on instead of no, reeb instead of beer, wen instead of new, yob instead of bow, Uoy nac ees reh screckin ginwosh instead of you can see herknickers showing;
- changes in the root of the word (central slang): ilkem instead of milk, utchker in-stead of catch;
- rhyming slang: apples and pears instead of stairs, artful dodger instead of lodger, bread and honey instead of money, Cain and Abel instead of table, cat and mouse instead of house, flea and louse instead of house, joy of my life instead wife, north and south instead of mouth, porkpies instead of lies, pot and pan instead of old man, read and write instead of fight, tin plate instead of mate, trouble and strife instead of wife, uncle Fred instead of bread.
- For slang nouns, affixation is the most characteristic word formation: upstairs – brains (prefixation);
- suffixation: dropout – the one who quit doing something, knockout – handsome, nosh-up – a feast, pile-up – an accident, to piss-up – to booze, fiver – a five-dollar bill, lifer – a criminal sentenced to life imprisonment, baddie – a villain;
- prefixation + suffixation: up-and downer – a fight;
- attaching a preposition or particle to a noun or verb: buncha – a group of people, kinda, sorta – like, outta – out of, righto – yes, to-do – a quarrel, weirdo – an eccentric.
- To a lesser extent than for Russian, English slang is characterized by borrowings. Here are a number of slang borrowings from Spanish, Gypsy and Russian, for example, a chokey – a prison, conner – food, a cosh – a club, a cull – a policeman, cushy – work,

position, dookin, dookering – fortune telling, prediction, a kurve – a whore, lour – money, a pochemuchka – a per-son who constantly asks questions, a puta – a prostitute, a putz – a blockhead, a schlong – a penis, a zhlob – rude, stupid, illiterate, uncultured, primitive, insolent person (Budiasa et al., 2021).

As you can see, the emergence of new forms of word formation in slang is based on a variety of traditional word formation mechanisms. As for the semantics of the given examples, the main vocabulary of slang is a bearer of negative connotations. On the other hand, slang is characterized by a grotesque emphasis on the ridiculous or funny side of objects or phenomena. Often-times the slengisms represent the more expressive equivalents of already existing lexical units belonging to other layers of the vocabulary (Shalkov et al., 2021).

5. CONCLUSION

Thus, slang, as the most important vanguard sublanguage, radically update the modern language in a fairly short period of time. It actively forms new concepts and modifies the existing frequency lexemes (Roth-Gordon, 2020; Solonchak & Pesina 2015). The creators and users of slangisms function within a certain subculture that has its own laws. Slangisms become a unified means of manifestation of emotionality and expressiveness through the verbalization of the speaker's emotional state – characteristics that correspond to the individual needs of verbal self-expression, regardless of the user's age characteristics.

Slang has a high degree of compression of the speech acts and its high informative level, which allows the communicative process to proceed faster both when interacting between members of the same social group and different social groups. Under the influence of the sociolinguis-tic features and factors of such a substandard language as slang, the literary and colloquial language tends to adopt slengisms as part of the information technology.

As a linguistic phenomenon, slang is based on the creation of numerous concepts, the violation of generally accepted language canons, which hides the uncertainty of the individual in handling the language and manifests itself in a systematic violation of language norms. The processes of globalization, technological progress, Internet communication, and the media, play a significant role in the formation of this substandard layer of the vocabulary. Thus, slangisms manifest the changing values and linguistic orientations of modern society, so their study is of particular interest to cognitive linguists.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Russian Science Foundation, сокращенное наименование – RSF. Ссылка на информацию о проекте: https://rscf.ru/en/project/22-18-20022/.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors confirm that the data do not contain any conflict of interests.

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