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Term Paper

Word-building power of youth slang in contemporary English:  
A lexicological perspective

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## INTRODUCTION

**The relevance of the research.** Slang and youth slang in particular is the field of knowledge and social and language construct which has long been regarded as one of the language aspects of great interest not only for linguists but also for common language users. Being an ever-changing part of the vocabulary of any language, it is in the field of vision of not only English-speaking people, but of all those, who refer themselves to a certain community, with its geographical, ideological and language peculiarities. With the extremely fast pace of social development of recent years, technological progress, simplification of life and other milestones moving today's generation, the language as one of those absorbing and reflecting these changes, transforms indeed. It was, it is, and it will always be a vivid representation of all social processes circulating around in a specific time period (from a synchronic perspective). Slang is a part of it, as it is most likely to catch up with new concepts entering language and being used in everyday communication by every human. So, the topic which is going to be dwelled upon is crucial both for students of linguistic universities and their studies under the given topic, researches, and every person trying to stay up-to-date in terms of language he/she speaks.

**Aim.** This very study aims at revealing all slang peculiarities, what it reflects and how it can influence other vocabulary layers of the language, as well as has its word-building potential discovered as one of the objectives of the research. Also, to summarize and set the basic concepts and ideas regarding slang from lexicological and sociological perspectives.

The **tasks** are as follows:

- to state what the notion of slang represents
- underline the difference between slang, cant and jargon
- present its classification and enumerate its types

- dwell upon its sources, use and functions in the modern English language
- discover the reason why youth resorts to its usage
- point out word-building potential of this type of vocabulary unit
- study a scope of modern English music as one of the sphere of influence of slang

As the **material** for the research will serve a number of songs of modern American and European pop singers which greatly reflect the usage of slangisms and their word-forming properties.

**Object** of the research is the study of slang as one of the language vocabulary layers from the lexicological perspective, its morphological properties and word-formation potential.

**Subject** of the research is represented by slang units as one of the sources of enriching the vocabulary of the English language.

The **methods** for the investigation are both empirical and theoretical: analysis and study of literature, generalization, and classification of types of word formation of slang units; method of abstraction and description of the understudied language material.

Talking about **theoretical value**, the work represents a concise and informative holistic approach to the collection, generalization and structuring of the existing material related to the study of another little-known aspect of abbreviations as a correlative abbreviation.

From the **practical** point of view, this course paper may serve as a crucial tool for lexicological or sociological studies of students of linguistic or pedagogical faculties, as it deals with word-building power of slang in the one hand and with social factors driving its creation and use as a subject of sociolinguistics.

## CHAPTER I

### WHAT IS SLANG: GENERAL CONCEPTS

#### 1.1. Place of slang in the English word-stock. The problem of definition.

Language as any other system of signs has its own structure. It is a living and ever-changing organism, a structural system which is hierarchically layered and forms a whole. Namely, there are 5 distinguished layers of the language: phonological, morphological, syntactical, and super syntactical (text). The one this work will be concerned with is the syntactic language level which has the word as one of its minimal units. Due to Howard Jackson, if we take some English dictionary, all the words in it are, as it were, in one bag; all of a type; just as they are printed in an alphabetical list between the covers of a single book (Jackson & Amvela, 2007, p.127). However, be it so, it would contradict the principle of the language as a structure, so a great number of different attempts were made for these words not to be a continuous chaotic entity.

There exist numerous classifications of the English vocabulary, one of which is stylistic classification. The overall English word stock due to the sphere of its usage can be divided into neutral, literary, and colloquial. The latter being the subject of the investigation of linguists all over the world because of its ambiguity, vividness and heterogeneity is the core of this paper investigation respectively. Neutral words are those that, wherever used, at the lesson, on TV, in the novel or by a child, will be understood by all without any difficulty. In contrast, literary words, deprived of any coloring or dialectal character, are the universals of the vocabulary that are used in formal discourse, in literary communication. Finally, the colloquial layer represents the part of the English vocabulary that is restricted to some social group, language community or sphere of usage. Among this layer common colloquial and special colloquial vocabulary should be distinguished. Together with jargonisms, professionalisms, dialectal words and vulgar words, slang also represents the latter layer. The division between these classes is

somewhat vague, firstly due to the fact that language is a living and changing system with a number of justified examples of its lexical units passing from one register into another one (e.g. *job*). This way a great number of literary words one day can enter the neutral vocabulary layer as well as a low colloquial word are able to become a neutral vocabulary unit.

*Slang* is the part of the vocabulary and language in general that is easily subject to changes as the language is enriched with new concepts. Its origin is not yet discovered, but it is most likely to be correlated with the 'verb to sling - to utter, which confirms the existence of such a combination as sling words, according to Partridge's hypothesis (Partridge, 1970a).

Numerous attempts were made to give its most appropriate and fundamental definition. Arnold V. I. states that slang words are identified and distinguished by contrasting them to standard literary vocabulary. They are expressive, mostly ironic words serving to create fresh names for some things that are frequent topics of discourse. (Арнольд, 1973, p. 249). With the manner peculiar to this type of vocabulary, Greenough and Kittredge, ironically define the concept as a peculiar kind of vagabond language, always hanging on the outskirts of legitimate speech, but continually straying or forcing its way into the most respectable company. (Greenough & Kittredge, 1902)

Solovieva T. A. believes that there is still no clear definition of the concept of slang and gives her own interpretation of this term; she writes that slang is the most mobile layer of colloquial speech of the English language, which includes words and expressions either borrowed from other lexical groups of the English language or from other languages, or created according to word-formation models that exist in the English language, and are used in more specific meanings due to the emotional coloration (Соловьева, 1961, p.123).

Interesting to know, that Eric Partridge, the most well-known investigator of slang underlines that a century or two ago, when first investigations in the area

were made, the attitude towards slang differed significantly and it was mostly referred to as low, vulgar, unauthorized language of uneducated, usually criminal layer of society (Partridge, 1970b). Another English scholar John Hotten agrees on the idea that the concept of slang used to be coarser and differs from emotively colored language of what it is known today (Hotten, 1860). Slang has evolved - from the perception of vulgarity and low language - to an integral part of the cultural code of English speakers.

So, having analyzed a number of definitions and approaches to identifying slang, we may jump into conclusion that *slang* constitutes the part of highly colloquial vocabulary that is below the standard language. It refers to informal language that is typically used in casual settings, among particular groups of people, and may not be easily understood by those outside of the group. Slang can include new words or phrases, as well as alternative meanings for existing words that are used in unconventional ways. Slang often reflects the cultural and social trends of a particular group, and can be influenced by a variety of factors, such as popular culture, regional dialects, and technology.

### **1.2 Motivation. Reasons for use.**

As far as slang has been defined as a highly colloquial layer of vocabulary it possesses its peculiar features and motivation. No concept in the language appears without any need of a human for expression, thus each new word entering the language has its reason for appearing in the language, then staying or being forgotten.

When the society experiences new social, political, religious, technological changes, inventions, and concepts, not existing before, the need to name them, this is how the majority of new words are created. They are not always made up from scratch but can also be borrowed from any other language. The same can be applied to slang. People of a certain generation and youth, being the most vulnerable and open for changes, seek new words for naming the upcoming events.

This is the first reason for the slang being created.

**- Globalization and digitalization as the main generator of slang:**

The emergence and spread of slang can be attributed to globalization and digitalization. As people from different parts of the world interact and communicate with each other more frequently, new words and phrases enter their vocabulary. The Internet and social media have also contributed to the growth of slang, as users often use abbreviations, acronyms, and neologisms to communicate more efficiently and express themselves more creatively.

With a great tendency of simplification in today's modern society which is much more dependent on social media and need for brief and laconic expression, slang words come in handy as give the possibility to describe the emotions, feelings, ideas in short.

Slang words are highly expressive and emotive, so let a person describe the emotions without long big speeches, while being able to use a single term, capable of highlighting all that spectrum of emotions. A vivid example may be a word «*peachy*» that may stand for the whole bunch of adjectives describing a nice, attractive, kind, beautiful person:

- She is such a *peachy* girl!

- She is so *beautiful, nice, clever, and attractive!*

**- Slang as a humorous reaction to some processes in society, satire, mockery:**

Slang can be seen as a reflection of social processes, with new slang terms emerging as a response to changes in society, culture, and technology. Slang can also be used to express humor, satire, and mockery towards certain aspects of society, serving the prism through which modern generation conceptualizes and perceives the world around. By using slang youth can create a sense of belonging or group identity, as well as challenge mainstream norms and values. New



generation resorts to slang to subvert authority, express rebellion, or make fun of people or situations.

### **- Slang as a means of self-expression**

Slang is a great way of distinguishing oneself from others or «fathers», meaning older generation, so the best way for not being understood is to endow the well-known concepts with some fresh meaning, understandable to some restricted group of people (Береговская, 1996).

This is because slang terms are typically used by certain social groups or subcultures, or simply said by those recognized as familiar, someone «in the know», meaning «в курсе справи». By using them, individuals can identify themselves as belonging to that group or subculture and seeing others who are «not in the gang» as outcasts.

Slang, being used to show your belonging to some social class, makes it possible for the notion to constitute one of the spheres of investigation not only of lexicology but also sociolinguistics.

Other facets of slang motivation were enumerated by Eric Partridge (Partridge, 1970c):

- Slang is used for fun or playfulness, both by the young at heart and the elderly.
- Slang can be used to demonstrate wit, humor, or self-display.
- to be picturesque, vivid and noticeable both positive and negative, and not be boring.
- to avoid clichés and be concise, often driven by impatience with existing terms.
- to give abstract or idealistic ideas a shade of solidity, concreteness, or down-to-earthness, as well as make distant concepts more immediate and relevant.

- to reduce the seriousness or solemnity of conversation or composition.
- to show your belonging to some community, school, profession, social class, simply said, to be recognized as someone familiar, someone «in the know».

### **Conclusions to chapter 1**

Although slang is a notion that has not been yet defined due to its controversial nature it can be named as a subset of the colloquial vocabulary, a highly informal and expressive language that reflects the cultural and social trends of a particular group. It is influenced by a variety of factors such as popular culture, regional dialects, and technology. Moreover, the emergence of new social, political, religious, and technological changes creates a need to name them, resulting in the creation of new words, some of which may become part of the slang vocabulary. Slang has evolved from being perceived as a low and vulgar language to an integral part of the cultural code of English speakers.

Slang is very popular among the modern young generation, as it serves as a means of self – expression, which by reinforcing the meanings of the existing words, adds humor, irony, ease to the perception of the word around. Slang can also be called the product of globalization and digitalization, as it reflects the newest processes in society, serves as a means for naming new phenomena and for fast communication on the Internet.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2.1 Classification: general slang vs. special slang

Both foreign and soviet linguists tend to differentiate between commonly used and well-known slang words, as a part of lexicon of a person of any social class, and special slang words, circulating around restricted social, professional groups. Judging by this, the works of Partridge, Viluman and other scholars present classification of slang. It is generally divided into general and special slang.

Starting from general slang, it can be characterized by the following features:

- low stability: even though slang is generally considered to be the most adoptable, this way unstable language layer, as it reacts to some new phenomenon and vanishes as quickly as this phenomenon ceases to be the one of people's interest, general slang enters the lexicon of people of all social classes: traders, teachers, office workers, and even informal communication of government officials, both adults and youth.
- high expressiveness: general slang words are characterized by emotiveness, they serve as the synonyms to already existing language units, which meaning has been broadened and to which some connotational component (usually metaphor) has been «implanted». These units do not create any new notions, but give freshness and more expression to notion words, which seem to be boring or lacking colorfulness for the communication act to be fulfilled.
- Non – conspiracy: general slang words do not aim at hiding the communication and do not serve for conspiracy as cant or rhyming slang.

Special slang (youth slang being distinguished as its part by some of the criteria) is the field of much more controversial approaches for its investigation, classification, and origin.

If a learner of the English language starts dealing with slang (which is a crucial part for quick assimilation with modern English youth culture), and he or she looks up its meaning, it will not result in clear understanding of the term, as the abundance of the definitions in the dictionaries makes it difficult to put the lines between what is slang, jargon, cant and vulgar words. Let's take the example from the New Oxford English Dictionary entry on the term «slang»:

1. the special vocabulary used by any set of persons of low or disreputable character; language of low and vulgar type.
2. the cant or jargon of a certain class or period.
3. the language of highly colloquial type considered as below the level of standard educated speech and consisting either of new words or of current words employed in some special sense.

As we may see, the notion of slang also suggests jargon words, secret vocabulary of the underworld and even vulgar language. Viluman suggests treating all these subtypes of special colloquial language, such as jargon and cant as a part of the *special slang* (Вилюман, 1955). In lexicology «cant» is treated as a secret language aiming for conspiracy and secrecy of underworld classes such as beggars, thieves, gangsters and some other social groups such as street vendors and tramps. Khomiakov believes this is the main differentiating feature between general and special slang. Quite close to cant in its essence of the so-called code, is rhyming *slang* (Cockney), which might perhaps be called rhyming cant, as it is specially coded and hardly perceived to those not initiated (Хомяков, 1971). Cockney rhyming slang is based on the similarity of the newly formed unit and what it stands for, as *in boat race – face, apples and pears – upstairs, bees and honey (money) and others*.

One more secret code belonging to secret languages, typically of London merchants is called *Back slang* or cant. It consists of using the word backwards. There are some examples: *dlog – gold, enif – fine, klat – talk, nam – a man, reeb – beer* (23).

*Medial cant* or slang presupposes the change of the syllable order, sometimes with the addition of some extra sounds for better conspiracy: *beauty—eautybe; check—eekcher; sweet—eetswe*;

All in all, the striking difference between general slang and cant as a part of the special slang is that the latter is used in terms of making the speech unintelligible to a person outside the circle and semantically it mainly concerns the criminal world.

Talking about *jargon*, though it may be sometimes understood by some restricted communities which are mainly professional groups, it doesn't imply any conspiracy purposes and is such only due to unawareness of a person not belonging to the profession. For instance, a person without any background in medical studies will not understand that NPO is used by hospital personnel to say that a patient should not take anything by mouth. It is an example of professional jargon. There also exists one more variation: group (community) jargon, which unites people with the same interests, ideas, or worldviews: film lovers, musicians, pupils, teenagers, youth.

## **2.2 The place of youth slang among other kinds of colloquial registers**

Since young people act as a social stratum and despite their desire to be independent and live in their ideal universe, isolated from the outside world, interaction with this world takes place in one way or another, therefore, young people, like any other person, necessarily has to change their social role depending on the circumstances. What does it mean to change your social role? It is to switch from one model of behavior to another (that means the change of the way we speak as well) which is required by the social situation, the norms of which regulate our behavior, manners, and speech, among others.

Therefore, it is impossible to say that youth slang is a purely conspiratorial language that is not understood by other social groups, a large part of their lexicon is also general slang - old words endowed with a new, reinterpreted meaning, which is used by their teachers, parents, acquaintances of a different age category, and which are necessary to understanding each other and successful basic everyday

communication outside the narrow circle of teenagers. Moreover, young people, supposedly being students, which means their everyday language comprises professional jargon words as well. Academic discourse as well as medical or any other is rich in vocabulary common for restrained communities.

### **2.3 Types of formation. Lexicological aspect: word-building power.**

Youth slang is of high interest to linguists not only because of its expressiveness, but also due to its formation. There are a number of morphological, phonological and semantic ways according to which the youth slang contributes to the lexicon of the English language.

It is said that for a slang unit to be created, the language mainly accumulates already existing patterns of word formation, typical of the English language and encountered in the creation of vocabulary units of any other layer, be it literary or neutral. The number of ways for the formation of slangisms restricted to this class only is not numerous and is going to be investigated in the paper.

#### **a. semantic change**

First, we may speak about semantic change in the meaning of the words which results in the appearance of a new slang unit. The word with a new meaning is generated by using such stylistic devices as **metaphor and metonymy**. This way, the phonetic, or morphological side remains unchanged, whereas the semantics shifts. A metaphor is the transfer of a name from one object to another by similarity. Similarity of objects when metaphORIZING should be understood as broadly as possible.

Here are the examples taken from the NTC's Dictionary of American Slang and Colloquial Expressions (Spears, 2000):

*"Snake in the grass"* - originally referred to a literal snake hiding in tall grass, but it evolved to mean a deceitful or treacherous person.

*"Butterflies in your stomach"* – used to describe the feeling of nervousness or excitement before a performance or event, but now is used to describe any feeling of nervousness or anxiety.

"*Bite the bullet*" - signified biting down on a bullet during surgery as a form of pain relief, as a slang unit means facing a difficult or unpleasant situation head-on.

"*Grind*" - the act of crushing something into small pieces, meaning of the slang word - working hard or putting in a lot of effort.

"*Throw in the towel*" - referred to a boxer's trainer throwing a towel into the ring to stop a fight, is used in the meaning of giving up or admitting defeat.

"*Roll with the punches*" - a boxing technique of moving with a punch to lessen its impact, another meaning - adapting to difficult situations.

"*Screwed*" - being fastened or secured with a screw, slang dictionary gives the definition of being in a bad situation or having something go wrong.

"*Get the ball rolling*" - to start a game of some sort, connotational meaning - starting or initiating any kind of project or activity.

"*Lone wolf*" - This term comes from the idea of a wolf that is not part of a pack, and instead lives and hunts alone. "Lone wolf" has come to mean a person who prefers to be alone or who does not actively seek out social interactions.

"*Rat*" - a rat as a sneaky and deceitful animal that will do anything to survive, including betraying others. "Rat" has come to mean a person who betrays or informs on others, especially to authorities in the world of slang.

These are so-called ironical doublets for words deprived of such a level of expressiveness.

Example in use: «Frankly, we're not going to hire someone with that huge of a salary gap. It isn't the problem of employers if you have lived beyond your means. Everyone is tight these days. Don't go asking for a large salary and tons of perks. You might well have to *bite the bullet* and take much less to get off the unemployment rolls» (11).

The shift based on **metonymy** or its type called **antonomasia** is a type of metonymy that is based on the usage of proper name as a collective concept, embracing some characteristics that are used to name any other object or person,

partially or totally sharing come traits with the traits of a prominent person. The most striking example is using the name of Prince Harry`s wife Meghan Markle. As it is known, the British royal family didn`t approve of Meghan, who complained had suffered from psychological pressure while being in Britain. As a result, the prince and his wife decided to leave the country and unpleasant conditions they both stuck in. Since that time Urban Dictionary and others enriched its stock with one more verb «*to Meghan Markle*», denoting the action of getting out of the place or situation which seems to suppress you or to leave a person after having gained some benefit.

Example: She did a *Meghan Markle* on her friends as soon as she became famous (22).

### **b. morphological means of slang formation**

This type of formation of youth slang is considered to be the most productive and frequent. Among highly productive means of word – formation are affixation, word composition, blending and, for sure, abbreviation.

Affixation, being most frequently used for slang formation and word formation of the English language in general concerns mainly suffixation and less frequently prefixation.

Among the most productive **derivational suffixes** are:

- *er* (denoting the doer of the action). As in *boomer* (a laborer who moves from one economic boom to another), *booster* (a shoplifter), *bouncer* (a strong man hired to eject unruly people from a bar or similar place), *four-flusher* (a cheater).

- *age* (used mainly to show the domain): *buckage* meaning money, which comes from the slang buck – a dollar; *doobage* - *one* more word denoting drugs.



- *ish* - (used to indicate something that is somewhat or almost like something else, as in the slang terms "airish" (cool weather) or "kookish." (strange), pimpish (too extravagant), swish (too much fancy)

- *ster* - this suffix is used similarly to "-er," but is often used in a more derogatory or mocking way, as in the slang terms "gangster", "hipster", attitude-adjuster (nightstick of the police officer), brain-twister (puzzle), brewster (beer drinker)

- *y* - this suffix can be added to a word to indicate that it is small or cute, or to indicate a person or thing that has a certain quality or characteristic, as in the slang terms "huggy" or "funky." (strange, extraordinary), groovy (pleasant), dorky (awkward).

**Prefixation** manifests itself in such affixes as:

- *our*: outlandish (bizarre)

- *over*: overdue (should have taken place long ago), overdose.

- *un*: unearthly (terrible), ungodly (unthinkable), uncool (dull)

- *no*: no-brainer (some issue not requiring much thinking), no-brow (stupid person), no-good (a worthless person) and others.

One more type of the formation of slang units is word composition. The essence of this process lies upon the combination of two or more stems, functioning as single units into one word, acquiring new meaning. It results in the formation of a compound word. Here belong different parts of speech, including nouns, adjectives, and verbs.

**Compound words** can be written both together and with the hyphen:

*airhead* (a stupid or foolish person); *bloodsucker* (a person who preys on others); *brain - drain* (the loss of talented or skilled individuals to other places or fields);

*deadbeat* (a lazy or irresponsible person who doesn't pay their debts); *jackpot* (a highly desirable or valuable thing or situation); *kickback* (a bribe or illegal payment for services rendered), *kid-vid* (TV broadcasts for children); *ladyfinger* (a cigarette filled with marijuana).

Close to compound words are **blends**, where the stems of two or more words are modified to a certain extent, but its immediate constituents remain clear. Here are some examples: *boosiasms* (coming from bosom and enthusiasm, meaning breasts), *hangry* (hungry+angry), *chillax* (chill + relax), *fantabulous* (fantastic + fabulous) and others.

**Reduplication** (duplication of the root morpheme or the syllable) entered the youth lexicon with great intensity, as it sometimes creates comical effect and is based on some associations. E. g. *poo(h)-poo(h)* /'pu'pu/ (put sb down), *blah-blah* /'bla'bla/ (senseless talks).

### c. web slang

Today's youth, which belongs to generation Z, is very likely to use social media as a tool for everyday communication, learning and interaction with the world by the large. Fast pace of life, high mobility and desire for economy of high valuable resources now as time has led to undue usage of abbreviations among youth under the name «web slang». Web slang aims at delivering the message quickly, laconically, with the least amount of time spent. Web shortenings have transformed into a separate culture, where everyone has the right for self-realization.

Web youth slang can structurally be divided into different types:

- *acronyms* (the initial letters of the constituents are all together pronounced as a single word according to the rules of pronunciation of the English language): *AFAIK* /ə'feik/ (as far as I know), *LOL* /lol/ - Laugh Out Loud, *ROFL* /rofl/

(Rolling On the Floor Laughing), *IMO* /'aiməʊ/ – (In My Opinion), *IMHO* /'imhəʊ/ – (In My Humble Opinion)

- *initials or initialisms* (are pronounced as individual letters):

BCNU /'bi 'si 'ən 'ju/ (Be seeing you), BYO(B) /,bi: wai əʊ 'bi:/ ( bring your own (booze or bottle), *LMAO* – (Laughing My Ass Off), *BRB* – (Be Right Back), *AFK* – (Away From Keyboard), *IMO* – (In My Opinion), *IMHO* – (In My Humble Opinion), *BTW* – (By The Way), *IDK* – I (Don't Know), *SMH* – (Shaking My Head).

- *partial abbreviation* is the combination of a shortened part (usually a letter, or a number resembling the morpheme phonetically) and full morpheme: 2-night, 4ever, X-mas.

- *clipping* (loss of some part of the word). The most common way of formation of such slang words is apocope, the number of such vocabulary units is the most frequent among all other variants of clipping. Apocope is the way of shortening when the end of the word is dropped, thus resulting in a new slang unit, most of which enter the neutral lexicon we all are used to.

*Ad* — advertisement, *cam* — camera, *delish* — delicious, *emo* — emotional, *fave* — favorite, *journ* — journal, *net* — internet, *pic* — picture, *prof* — profile, *selfie* — self-portrait photograph, *vacay* — vacation.

American linguist John McWhorter in his speech at the TED conference named “Txtng is killing language” gives the idea of writing as a fingered speech, meaning that the modern generation can write the way it talks. But, as many people think it promotes the decline of all writing norms, which are violated by modern youth while texting. What he calls is a miracle, a new set of normal, happening in web communication. He gives the example of the slang abbreviation LOL, which originally stands for “Laughing Out Loud”. The time has passed and what we originally treat as LOL is no longer restricted to being amused, it is rather the

marker of empathy or pragmatic particle. That what we use just to fill in the speech as “well” or “so” has not become LOL (15).

#### **d. phonetic resemblance**

Sometimes some slangisms appear on the basis of phonetic resemblance of some sounds of nature, machines or animal sounds – the process called onomatopoeia. Interesting to know, most of such words, circulating in slang and found in the dictionary are the way to say the verb «vomit», which may be treated as a euphemism of some sort. E. g. to buick (to vomit), call earl (to vomit), to woof (both vomit and boast), vroom (sound the engine).

#### **e. foreign borrowing**

English, as any other language in the world, represents some part of the global network of all languages, which are tightly connected and influence one another. Mainly because of this fact English consists of 70% of the borrowed words and only 30% are native. A great number of slangisms, which form the lexicon of youth, are words from other foreign languages to add a colorful and expressive dimension to language. Whether the borrowed word acquires positive or negative connotation depends on the user. The majority of words of this type come from Spanish and French:

*"Chutzpah"* - a Yiddish word meaning audacity or nerve, commonly used in English to describe someone who is brazen or bold.

*"Schmooze"* - a Yiddish word meaning to chat or converse in a friendly and charming way, often used in English to describe networking or socializing.

*"Hasta la vista"* - a Spanish phrase meaning "see you later" popularized by Arnold Schwarzenegger's character in the movie "Terminator 2".

*"Ciao"* - an Italian word meaning both hello and goodbye, commonly used in English to say goodbye.

*"Aloha"* - a Hawaiian word meaning both hello and goodbye, often used in English to greet or say farewell.

*"Bon appétit"* - a French phrase meaning enjoy your meal, commonly used in English to wish someone a good meal.

*"Macho"* – a Spanish word, widely used to signify a strong and handsome man

## **Conclusions to chapter 2**

Slang is of a heterogeneous structure, as it comprises both general and specific vocabulary. So, forming general and specific slang. General slang can be defined as the vocabulary layer, representing highly expressive names for the object already existing in the language which are characteristic of the language of the user regardless of its social class, age and status. On the contrary, special slang deals with the second facet of what we consider to be the slang: it refers to the language of restricted professional groups (jargon) and underworld (cant, rhyming slang, back slang, medial slang): drug addicts, beggars and others, which aims at hiding the message from the authorities and those out of the group. Slang is considered to employ the same means for its formation as any other vocabulary layer, as it uses the patterns already existing in the language. The ways of its formation are phonetic, morphological, and semantic. The most productive among them are affixation, shift of meaning based on metonymy, and abbreviation.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3.1 The use of slang in real-life situation

As part of this study, a 25-year-old native of California named Francisco agreed to demonstrate (without prior agreement) the real language used by young people in one of the underdeveloped areas of America. The focus of this study is to present how slang works in the speech of individuals of the underdeveloped areas of America. The native speaker was asked to describe some situation that happened to him when being in the campus. The only condition was not to restrict himself from using non-colloquial language, but the one he is used to and typically would resort to in communication with the mates in the campus.

This is what he tells us:

*“I want to tell you about the time I was almost jumped by some niggas during my first university semester. Back then, I only had classes on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday but the trade-off was that I had to be there all day. So one day, I was craving pizza and I decided to eat off-campus but, because I had no car, I had to walk there. After downing my lunch, I headed back to campus but not before I noticed five shady-looking niggas walking on the other side of the street and I know full well that you can’t sleep on ‘em and you gotta ready at all times, no cap. Just as I expected, they all jay-walked towards me and my dumbass knew full well that it’s because my iPod headphones were in full sight because my young-ass always liked to flex the Apple headphones like everyone else. They were trying to be all slick and shit asking me if I knew when the university closes (whatever the fuck that means). Then they asked me for the time and when I told them that I had no watch or phone, they suggested I look at my iPod. Now I know damn well that they’re looking for an easy target, they’re trying me, so I made some shit up about it being an iPod nano with no screen while keeping my confidence up. I was not about to let them catch me sleeping on ‘em. If they wanted smoke, I was ready to give it to them; I’m no bitch, I hand out L’s and take W’s.*”

*Maybe they noticed too so they just said, « 'aight, coo' » and peaced-out with their broke-no-iPod-having asses. »*

The passage contains a significant amount of slang and colloquial language that is commonly used in African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and other varieties of urban slang. Here are some examples:

"niggas" - a derogatory term for African Americans

Be jumped by sb – to be physically attacked by someone (нападати)

"trade-off" - a situation where there are advantages and disadvantages to a decision or action (компромис)

"craving" - a strong desire or hunger for something

"off-campus" - outside the boundaries of the university or college campus

*shady-looking – used to describe a person or a thing that does not seem to be reliable and be involved in some illegal deals*

*sleep on sb/sth – not to notice or deliberately ignore*

"jay-walked" - to cross the street illegally or in a reckless manner

"dumbass" - an insult or put-down, suggesting that the person is foolish or ignorant

"no cap" - an expression meaning "no lie" or "seriously"

"slick and shit" - behaving in a sneaky way, showing all your insolence

"flex" - showing off or flaunting something

"trying me" - attempting to intimidate or provoke the speaker

"give smoke" - to start a confrontation or fight

"no bitch" - not weak or cowardly

"hand out L's" – to defeat sb in a fight

"take W's" - to achieve a win or victory

peace out – to leave without starting a fight

Overall, the use of slang in this passage creates a sense of authenticity and connection to urban youth culture, while also conveying the speaker's confidence and street smarts. However, it is important to note that some of the language used may be considered offensive or inappropriate in certain contexts or audiences.

### **3.2 Modern American songs as the sphere of influence of youth lexicon**

For better understanding of youth slang it is not always necessary to fully embark into the natural surrounding a great deal of how the slang operates can be demonstrated by modern American music, as it greatly demonstrates all the morphological, phonetic and other peculiarities of the subject matter. Songs of such modern pop and rock singers as Kanye West, Nicki Minaj, Cardi B, Migos and others can serve as a good example of slang in real use and is going to be analyzed here.

The first song that comprises a great number of non-conventional units is “Bad and Boujee” by Migos. The song features a significant amount of slang, much of which is derived from African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and hip-hop culture.

Starting from the very title, as from the first glance it may be perceived as having only one slang word, but the thing is that both words here belong to colloquial vocabulary, which becomes clear after deepening into the context.



*Bad* as a slang word refers to a really cute, hot, sexy, very fine or good-looking person. (16) Here it is used to refer to girls: *My bit\*\* is bad and boujee* (14a). "Boujee" is a shortened version of "bourgeoisie," which is used to describe the upper class.

*You know young rich niggas/You know so we never really had no old money/We got a whole lot of new money though, hah* (14b).

*Nigga* – a slang word meaning a friend. One more peculiar feature that catches the listener's attention is undue usage of incorrect grammatical structures, such as double negation (*we never really had no old money*, it is also a characteristic feature of the language of the youth.

*Smokin' on cookie in the hotbox/Fuckin' on your bitch she a thot, thot, thot/Cookin' up dope in the crockpot (pot)/We came from nothin' to somethin' nigga*

In this very couplet there is the reduction of the final consonant -g- which is usually replaced by apostrophe in writing.

*Cookie* refers here to a cigarette, obviously filled with marijuana, as *hotbox* refers exactly to smoking this drug. One more slang word for this is *dope*.

"*Cookin' up dope in the crockpot*": "*Cookin' up dope*" is a slang term that refers to making or selling drugs, while "*crockpot*" is a slang term for a slow cooker. Together, the phrase is used metaphorically to describe the process of making money.

*And you know we winnin' (winnin')/Yeah, we is not losin'/Try play your song, it ain't move me (what?)/Saw your girl once now she choose me, yeah*

This part of the song is also a striking example of how the grammar rules are violated. There is no agreement between the subject and the predicate, what is

more, the auxiliary verb “ain’t” that replaces “doesn’t” is used to simplify the language and make it more colloquial. Overall, the slang used in “Bad and Boujee” reflects the hip hop culture of the Migos and their African American background, as well as their focus on wealth, luxury, and material success. The use of slang also adds to the overall rhythm and flow of the song, creating a distinctive style and sound that is characteristic of the hip hop genre.

It is very typical for American youth to adopt vocabulary of other professional registers, which is sometimes referred to as internal borrowing. A plenty of words denoting drugs entered youth slang from the secret language of drug addicts and are in common use among poorly educated young people.

The next song to analyze is “Get Em High” by Kanye West. Urban Dictionary explains the slang phrase *be high* as: to use drugs to alter your state of mind. Most commonly used in reference to smoking marijuana. (21). The similarity here is based on the metaphor, as the mood of the intoxicated person by marijuana is usually elevated.

*All the girls pass the weed to your motherfucking man (get 'em high) (12)*  
One more slang word for marijuana is *weed*.

*I can't believe this nigga use my name for pickin' up dimes.*  
In his song Kanye West calls girls “dimes”. This slang word is typical for America, it is used to refer to a very attractive girl, whose beauty can be scaled 10 out of 10. So, it is also usually referred to as a “perfect ten”- a perfect girl to all parameters (19).

American rap has a very influential power on the modern generation now. One reason for its influence is the lyrical content of rap music, which often addresses social and political issues such as racism, poverty, and police brutality. Many rap artists use their music as a platform to raise awareness and speak out against injustice, inspiring listeners to act.

However, many rap pieces are not that symbolic and are just created for fun without any moral behind the words. American rapper Cardi B is known for her provocative, sensual lyrics. The song called "I Like It (Feat. Bad Bunny & J Balvin)" is full of interesting vocabulary.

*Yeah, baby, I like it like that/You gotta believe me when I tell you (13).*

*Wanna* is a very typical slang construction meaning «want to» and is used practically in every song of the singer.

*They call me Cardi Bardi, banging body (17)*

Cardi describes her body as *banging*, meaning very attractive.

*I like stuntin', I like shinin' (Yeah)*

She also says she likes stunting which means she is a very boastful person and loves when people linger on her. To stun means to show off.

*Drop the top and blow the brains, woo*

There are 2 very similar phrases to drop the top (20) and blow the brains (18) which are metaphorical, meaning to fold down the roof of the car making it as in the cabriolet.

The song is full of g-dropping at the end of the words (signin', stuntin', shinin'), there are cases of clipping (apocope), as is stoop for stupid, and vowel reduction as in 'bout (about).

### **Conclusions to chapter 3**

Having analyzed slang in different environments and based on the recorded speech of a native speaker there comes the conclusion that slang forms a major part of the lexicon of youth in their everyday communication, as it satisfies the desire for expression, self-realization, delivering of thoughts and feelings in a more emphatic way. Slang makes the speech of a person emotive, lively vivid and sometimes ironic with some hints of mockery. Speaking by the terms of stylistics, it foregrounds the speech, making it more prominent and fresher.

One more sphere of influence of youth slang is modern pop and rock culture, which introduces the world new concepts never heard of before. The sphere of

influence of slang extends beyond its conventional usage among friends and informal groups. In fact, one major sphere of influence is pop culture, which has the power to spread new words and phrases to a wider audience. From music to movies, television shows to social media, pop culture creates a space where slang can be shared and adopted by millions of people worldwide. Slang words and phrases from pop culture can quickly become part of everyday language, shaping the way we communicate and interact with each other. As such, pop culture serves as a significant sphere of influence for the adoption and spread of slang in contemporary society.

## GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The research has shown that the slang is associated with the communication of people of different age and professional groups. It can be generally divided into general and specific slang, each serving for specific communicative aims. It has been discovered that specific slang comprises such subgroups as jargon (the language of professional groups), cant (secret language of the underworld), rhyming slang and others.

As it was found, slang as a linguistic notion is formed due to social, economic, and technical advances, which require it to be named. As a language phenomenon it is the most likely to undergo changes and is considered the most unstable layer of vocabulary. Among peculiar features of slang are low stability, high expressiveness, emotional coloring and ability to enter colloquial vocabulary.

Its word-building power is represented by such morphological processes as affixation, abbreviation, reduplication, compounding, semantic means as metaphor and metonymy as well as phonological means as onomatopoeia.

Slang serves young people for some purposes, such as the ability to express feelings and describe the world around vividly, as a comical reaction to some serious issues, a means of forming closed communities and restricting themselves from the sphere of influence of older generation.

The study of slang may be of particular interest to professional translators, teachers, people interested in the English language. It is a complex and multifaceted field that requires careful examination of its semantic, lexicological, and social aspects. As the use of slang continues to evolve and adapt, it is important for linguists and language learners to keep up with its changes and understand its significance in contemporary society.

## RÉSUMÉ

This paper explores the concept of slang and its significance in modern society. The first chapter established the place of slang in the English word-stock and the challenges associated with defining it. It also examined the motivations and reasons behind its use. The second chapter delved into the semantic and lexicological aspects of youth slang, distinguishing it from general slang and examining its place among other colloquial registers. It also explored the types of formations used in youth slang and its word-building power. The third and final chapter looked at the use of youth slang in real-life situations and the influence of modern American songs and pop culture regarding slang.

This work aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of youth slang, focusing on its semantic and lexicological aspects, as well as its place in the English language word-stock. Through the examination of different types of slang and their formation, it became clear that slang is ambiguous due to its structure and origin, as it not only comprises highly expressive words, but also comprises the language of particular social and professional groups. Numerous ways of its formation were discovered and it gave the understanding that slang employs standard word-building patterns together with those, peculiar only to slang, such as back slang and medial slang.

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate the importance of understanding slang as a unique and significant part of language. Slang is not simply a deviation from standard language, but rather a reflection of the cultural and social factors that shape language use. Moreover, youth slang is a powerful tool for expressing identity, establishing social status, and creating bonds within peer groups. The study also highlighted the role of music in the propagation and popularization of youth slang, as it has become a significant sphere of influence for the lexicon.

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