

Youth Slang: Influence On Speech Culture

Isaeva Zera Tairovna

Lecturer at Fergana State University,
Alijonova Irodakhon Bakhtiyor kizi
Student, Faculty of Philology,
Fergana State University.
Irodahonalijonova119@gmail.com.
Fergana, Uzbekistan.

Annotation. The article analyzes the phenomenon of youth slang as a significant sociolinguistic phenomenon that profoundly influences the culture of contemporary society's speech. It examines the primary functions of slang expressions, their origins, and the ways they spread and become established in language. Special attention is given to the dual role of slang: on one hand, it serves as a means of self-expression and innovation, while on the other, it can have a destructive impact on speech culture. The paper also addresses the issues of slang's interaction with literary norms and its role in the era of digital communication.

Key words. Youth slang, speech culture, Russian language, neologisms, internet communication, Anglicisms.

For centuries, the Russian language has demonstrated flexibility and the ability to adapt to changes in society. One of the most dynamic layers of the language is youth slang, which acts as a mirror of cultural and social transformations. In recent decades, slang has "acquired particular relevance due to the globalization and digitalization of communication." [1,35] Research into youth slang allows us to identify trends in the development of the Russian language and understand the specifics of the linguistic worldview of the younger generation.

Youth slang is a collection of non-standard lexical units used by young people in informal settings. Unlike the jargon of professional or social groups, youth slang is characterized by wide variability and rapid change. It can include both completely new words and reinterpreted units of general literary language. "Slang serves as a means of expression, identification, and social differentiation." [2,15]

The phenomenon of slang is not new to the Russian language. "As early as the 19th century, researchers were recording student and high school jargon." [2,15] During the Soviet era, prison camp and criminal jargon actively developed, some of which later penetrated into youth speech. In the post-Soviet period, the English language and popular culture exerted a significant influence, leading to the emergence of a large number of Anglicisms in Russian youth slang: "like," "follow," "hate." Today, youth slang is shaped primarily by the internet, video games, film, and music.

Slang serves a number of important functions in linguistic practice:

1. Expressive – helps vividly express emotions and evaluations;
2. Identification – serves as a marker of belonging to a particular community;
3. Playful – allows for the creation of linguistic jokes, puns, and creative expressions;
4. Protective – limits the access of "outsiders" to understanding the speech code. Thus, slang is not only a means of communication but also a tool for social self-organization.

Youth slang contributes to the development of language. It stimulates the emergence of new words and expressions that may eventually become standard. Examples: words like "nerd," "party," and "joke," once considered slang, have become commonplace. "Slang encourages creative thinking about language, develops a sense of humor, and fosters the ability to experiment with language in young people." [3,78].

However, the uncontrolled use of slang can have negative consequences. Excessive use of jargon in speech reduces the level of speech culture and creates barriers in formal and academic communication. Furthermore, an infatuation with slang can limit young people's vocabulary and hinder the development of literate writing.

With the advent of the internet and social media, slang has spread rapidly and globally. New words emerge in online communities and instantly become part of everyday speech. Examples include: "кринж", "рашить", "имба", "лол", and "афк". "The influence of Anglicisms has become particularly noticeable: youth language is filled with borrowed words, sometimes displacing their Russian equivalents" [4,33]. This process reflects globalization trends and the integration of the younger generation into the global information space.

The future of youth slang is linked to the further digitalization of society. "We can predict a growing influence of Anglicisms, as well as the emergence of hybrid words combining elements of Russian and English" [5,60]. At the same time, it is important to maintain a balance between innovation and the norms of literary language. An effective solution could be the development of linguistic culture through education, developing in young people the ability to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate uses of slang.

Examples of popular slang words

Word/expression	Meaning
Кринж	An awkward or embarrassing situation, a feeling of shame about what is happening
Имба	Something very strong, outstanding, almost unfair advantage
Афк	From English. AFK (away from keyboard) — be absent, be offline
Лол	Laughter, funny (from English. LOL — laugh out loud)
Хайп	Excitement, popularity around a phenomenon or event
Токсик	A person who behaves aggressively and negatively
Рофл	A joke, a prank, a funny situation
Шипперить	Wanting characters/people to be together (from the English relationship)
Флексить	To show off, to demonstrate style, success or skill
Зашквар	Something shameful, unacceptable.

Youth slang is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, reflecting contemporary social and cultural changes. It plays an important role in youth self-identification and enriching the language, but it also poses risks to speech culture. The challenge for society and education is to help young people use slang expressions correctly while preserving the richness and expressiveness of the Russian literary language.

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