Ozyorsk Secondary School

Research project

**British slang**

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**Introduction**

This work is dedicated to the researching of such controversial and problematic phenomenon as slang, its characteristics and lexical features. British slang can be compared with secret code, which is understandable only for UK citizens. Slang usually cannot be found in foreign language textbooks because its often describes the standard language. The main element of communication is speech.Perception ofhumanby society,his credibilityin public andprofessional activitydepends fromcommunication.Slang is an integral part of the language and speech, therefore, it is one of the main and most problematic aspects of lexicology.

The main object of this researching is British slang.

Lexical features of British slang and its using in real life are taken for the research subjects.

The main purpose of this research is to describe lexical features and to reveal the specifics of using slangs in everyday life of people in the UK.

Goals:

1) to explain the available definition of “Slang”;

2) to explore the nature of slang and its characteristics;

3) to reveal the specifics of the functioning of the research units in the presented material.

The main sources of this research are posts in the social networks of the UK citizens and internet sources.

Practical importance of this work lies in the fact that its results can be used as a phrasebook for people who's going to travel or live in the UK.

**1. Slang**

Slang is usually associated with a particular group and plays a role in constructing our identities. While slang outlines social space, attitudes about slang partly construct group identity and identify individuals as members of groups. Therefore, using the slang of a particular group will associate an individual with that group.

Slang is often taken from social media as a sign of social awareness and shared knowledge of popular culture. This particular branch of slang has become more prevalent since the early 2000s as a result of the rise in popularity of social networking services, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. This has created new vocabularies associated with each new social media venue, such as the use of the term “friending” on Facebook, which is a verbification of “friend” used to describe the process of adding a new person to one's list of friends on the website.

In its earliest attested use (1756) the word slang referred to the vocabulary of "low or disreputable" people. By the early nineteenth century, it was no longer exclusively associated with disreputable people, but continued to be applied to language use below the level of standard educated speech. The origin of the word is uncertain. A Scandinavian origin has been proposed (compare, for example, Norwegian slengenavn, which means "nickname"), but is discounted by the Oxford English Dictionary based on "date and early associations".

**1.1 What does “slang” mean?**

On the site “urbandictionary.com”[[1]](#footnote-1) I found some meanings of the word “slang”:

1. Slang-the only reason urbandictionary.com exists.

2. Slang-the ever-evolving bastardization of the written and spoken language as a result of social and cultural idolization of uneducated, unintelligible celebrities.

3. Slang-the continual and ever-changing use and definition of words in informal conversation, often using references as a means of comparison or showing likeness. Some modern slang has endured over the decades since its inception (i.e. cool) and some will only last a few years before being rendered obsolete or outdated (i.e. bling bling). Slang can be born from any number of situations or ideas (the word slang itself has come to represent selling, especially of illegal drugs), and can be blunt or riddled with metaphor, and often quite profound.

4. Slang-the act of selling illegal narcotics.

5. Slang-unofficial language (words or grammar) or interpretation of language, usually because the language is too recent or not used widespread enough to be assimilated officially. Slang exists in pretty much every language, and is part of the natural evolution of a language.

**2. Using of slang in various spheres of life**

As already mentioned, slang is the most movable layer colloquial English speech.

Slang can include different words:

1. Words related to the thieves' slang.

2. Various professionalism.

3. Many spoken words (colloquialisms).

4. Slang sometimes called random formations that have arisen as a result of literary associations and significance of which is due to their semantic connections with the original concept.

5. Figurative words and expressions.

6. Contextual meaning of words, arising from the application of certain stylistic devices.

7. Words formed as a result of the conversion.

8. Abbreviations.

Also there was an attempt of semantic classification. It should be noted that the fission into classes is quite conditional and does not encompass the entire amount of slangs, but at the same time it helps to synchronize findings:

* units marked by ethnic discrimination: a dinge (black person), yellow (asian person), woptown (street where live principally italian), wop (used as a disparaging term for a person of Italian birth or descent);
* prison lexicon: in the caboose (in the jail), copper or bobby (policeman), heist guys (robbers), sneezer (jail), tank (detoxification center), rapper (witness), grift (scam);
* lexicon which indicates drugs and alcohol: hooch (alcohol), to be dizzy drunk on all fours (to be very drunk), get off the pipe (to stop using drugs);
* slangs which relate to the characterization of the person: slob (a slovenly, unattractive, and lazy person), to get a square deal (to strike a bargain), hoofer (dancer), runt (shorty), to clam (to be silent), artsy (mannered);
* slangs, which are not included at the groups above: pen (jail), grub (food), to brace somebody (to expose somebody), world-beater (genius), stay kind (all the best).

Most slang units have a negative value, a lot of slangs have positive value, and very small percentage of words have a neutral value. Thus, it can be conclude that the main feature of slang is its additional emotional and estimated meaning.

**2.1 Slang in everyday life** **of young people in Britain**

As well as in every country, in Britain most people who use slang is youth. In the Internet I found an interesting article about slang, its name «Top 100 Most Beautiful British Slang Words and Phrases - Guide to English Slang», here are some interesting words from this list and their meanings:

1. Lost the Plot – Gone Crazy
2. Chuffed – Proud
3. Bee’s Knees – Awesome
4. Wonky – Not right
5. Tad – Little bit
6. Loo – Toilet
7. Bob’s Your Uncle – There you go!
8. Bog Roll – Toilet Paper
9. Absobloodylutely – YES!
10. Made Redundant – Fired from a job
11. Uni – College/University
12. I’m Off to Bedfordshire – Going to bed
13. Her Majesty’s Pleasure – To be in prison
14. Horses for Courses – Won’t work for someone else
15. Blighty – Britain

As we can see, many of these phrases in a simple translation have a completely different meaning. Moreover, people from other countries, even English speaking, such as America and Australia, can’t understand the meaning of these words. However, in the UK, these phrases are widely distributed, and used in everyday life.

**3. Translation features**

The two main features of slang are its emotional coloring and metaphorical meanings. In translating, I was faced with a lack of direct equivalent of the original slangs in Russian language so I always had a problems of choice between these two features. For example:

«-You'll never pay me, cause you're deadbeat! »

Word “deadbeat” means “a lazy or socially undesirable person”. In our case, to highlight the emotional state of the speaker, his excitement, we use the translation more emotionally-colored than the author uses in the original spoken “deadbeat”. “Too many monkey business going on in this affair. - Mama Ji whispered.- You better watch out whom you deal with.”

The same situation with a turnover of slang “monkey business” (mischievous, suspect, dishonest, or meddlesome behaviour or acts), which usually translate as “scam, swindle”. As a translation we chose emotionally-colored word that only indirectly transfers the value of turnover.

Also does not should always maintain emotional slang.

“Не is really a far-out guy that is why they don't understand him.”

At this example, the author uses an adjective “far-out” (а slang adjective for "cool" or "neat"). Based on the context, our task in the translation is to show its uniqueness, and at the same time, it’s not necessary to emphasize the degree of exclusivity. Therefore, as the translation on Russian we’ll choose the expression “not like the others”.

Also as translation of slang units can be used Russian proverbs and turns of phrase that accurately convey meaning. Here’s allowed the loss of expressiveness and strongly pronounced emotional coloration in such case.

**Conclusion**

So we’ve seen such a meaning as «slang», its importance, features and using in everyday life. It’s necessary to mark, that the features of phenomenon of slang is that the slang, being indivisible part of the languageс, develops it and evolves with it, and, therefore, it will be the actual problem of lexicology as long as the language will exist.  
 In the functional aspect, the hallmarks of slang as a phenomenon can be conventionally call instability. Some researchers see progressive phenomenon in slang in the development and improvement of the language.

In addition, slang sometimes can be called a random formations that arose as a result of literary associations and their significance is due to their semantic connections with the original concept. Also attributed figurative speech and expression can be here.

Semantic classification includes units marked with ethnic discrimination, prison vocabulary, vocabulary indicating the drugs and alcohol, slang, relating to the characteristics of the person and slang, not included in the above groups. Basically it is exclamations or estimating replicas and statements.

While translating, we can be faced with a lack of direct equivalent of the original in Russian slang, therefore, constantly arises the problem of choosing between these two features.

Direct search equivalents can be used as the variants of translation, translation using proverbs and phraseological units, stable combinations and etc.

I believe that many of the tasks of this work had been implemented.

**Sources**

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9. <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>

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11.<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban_Dictionary>

12.<https://ru.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=slang>

1. urbandictionary.com is a crowdsourced online dictionary of slang words and phrases that was founded in 1999 as a parody of Dictionary.com by then-college freshman Aaron Peckham. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)