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Lexical and semantic peculiarities of English slang

In any branch each period of time determines the most relevant research areas and highlights certain problems. New forms of social relations to some extent affect the youth – the most promising social layer of society which language competence and verbal behavior determines the direction of development of other social language subsystems. The youth's slang as the language of everyday communication is a kind of indicator of young people's level of development, interests, tastes and needs. Slang was the main reason for the development of prescriptive language in an attempt to slow down the rate of change in both spoken and written language.

In general all linguists agree that slang is a nonstandard vocabulary composed of words or senses characterized primarily by connotations of extreme informality and usually by a currency not limited to a particular region. It is composed typically of coinages or arbitrarily changed words, clipped or shortened forms, extravagant, forced, or facetious figures of speech, or verbal novelties. Slang words are identified and distinguished by contrasting them to standard literary vocabulary. They are expressive, mostly ironical words serving to create fresh names for some things that are frequent topics of discourse [1: 249].

Slang words cannot be distinguished from other words by sound or meaning. In fact, most slang words are homonyms of standard words, spelled and pronounced just like their standard counterparts, as for example slang words for *money* such as beans, brass, dibs, dough, oof, wards; the slang synonyms for word *head* are attic, brain-pan, hat peg, nut, upper storey; *intoxicated* may be expressed with the help of following: drunk-boozy, cock-eyed, high, soaked, tight. These words, of course, are alike in their

ordinary standard use and in their slang use. Each word sounds just as appealing or unappealing, dull or colorful in its standard as in its slang use. Also, the meanings of beans and money, head and attic, pot and marijuana are the same, so it cannot be said that the connotations of slang words are any more colorful or racy than the meanings of standard words [2: 22].

Slang fills a necessary niche in all languages, occupying a middle ground between the standard and informal words accepted by the general public and the special words and expressions known only to comparatively small social subgroups. It can serve as a bridge or a barrier, either helping both old and new words that have been used as “insiders” terms by a specific group of people to enter the language of the general public or, on the other hand, preventing them from doing so.

Because most people are individuals who desire uniqueness, it stands to reason that slang has been in existence for as long as language has been in existence. Even so, the question of why slang develops within a language has been hotly debated. Most agree that the question is still unanswered, or perhaps it has many answers. Regardless, there is no doubt that we can better explain slang existence by analyzing how and why it exists.

Although not everything is acceptable in slang, it decorates the English language with its liveliness, flexibility and unexpected wit. For many centuries of its existence slang succeeded: many words came “from the bottom”, penetrated into and fixed in the literary English.

Knowledge of slang will help to master the language and to understand native speakers better.

Literature

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