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SLANG VERSUS “PROPER ENGLISH” IN THE MODERN WORLD

Formal language is often used in official public notices, business situations, and polite conversations with strangers. Formal language has stricter grammar rules and often uses more difficult vocabulary. It is more commonly used in writing than in speech. It follows the conventions of proper language and it uses language forms that often grammatically and lexically considered appropriate or agreed upon by most educated users of the language. Informal language has less strict grammar rules and often has shortened sentences. It often violates the conventions of proper language. When people speak in their own language using slang, it broadens the English language by adding more words. Language isn't stable, and a language such as English is a collection and collaboration of the words of many other languages such as Latin and Greek, as well as the romance languages of Europe. As civilizations grow, change, and expand, so do the words in the language. Slang is also constantly changing. New words are added all the time and people stop using older words. This can make it difficult for a learner to understand the language.

Not all slang expressions disappear out of the language after they've served their purpose. In fact, the expression can become so absorbed into the English language that it's no longer just slang word or expression, but a mainstream expression. We have many examples as cool, hang out, swag, etc.

Slang is often used as a way to appear friendly to someone or to show that you belong with a certain group of people or that you understand popular culture. It shows that you are part of the “in crowd” and that the language you share is part of your code language.

The sociolinguist Michael Halliday (Thorne, 2014: vi) commented that all the socializing environments in which individuals develop their identities, the circle groups is the most difficult to get into. However, it is from the peer group, whether consisting of skateboarders, school kids or soldiers that slang typically emerges.

Key words: Proper English, informal language, slang, slang lexeme.

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СЛЕНГ НА ПЕРЕВАГУ «PROPER ENGLISH» У СУЧАСНОМУ СВІТІ

Офіційна мова часто використовується в публічних повідомленнях, ділових ситуаціях та ввічливих розмовах із незнайомцями. Вона має більш жорсткі правила граматики й часто використовує складнішу лексику, а також частіше використовується в письмовій формі, ніж у мовленні. Офіційна мова дотримується конвенцій стандартної мови й використовує мовні форми, які часто граматично та лексично вважаються доцільними або погоджуються більшістю освічених користувачів мови. Неформальна мова має менш суворі граматичні правила й часто – скорочені речення. Вона часто порушує умовності офіційної мови. Мова не є стійкою, а така мова, як англійська, – це сукупність та об'єднання слів багатьох інших мов. Як ростуть, змінюються й розширюються

цивілізації, так само і слова в мові. Сленг також постійно змінюється. Нові слова постійно доповнюють лексикон, і люди перестають використовувати старі слова. Це може утруднити розуміння мови.

Не всі сленгові вислови зникають з мови після того, як вони виконали своє призначення. Насправді вислів може настільки поглинутись англійською мовою, що це вже не просто сленгове слово чи вираз, а повноцінна частина повсякденної мови.

Сленг часто використовується як спосіб проявити доброзичливість до когось або показати, що ви належите до певної групи людей або що ви розумієте популярну культуру. Це показує, що ви є частиною «в натовпі» і що мова, якою ви спілкуєтесь, є частиною кодової мови.

Сленг завжди був частиною нашої повсякденної мови. Він знаходить своє місце в усному спілкуванні по всьому світу. Сленг – це область лексики в постійному стані розвитку та змін, котрий складається з яскравих і барвистих слів і фраз, які характеризують різні соціальні та професійні групи, особливо коли ці терміни використовуються для спілкування всередині групи. Сленг забезпечує й посилює соціальну тотожність, але він також використовується в суспільстві загалом, щоб досягти атмосфери неформальної та дружньої ситуації.

Ключові слова: стандартна англійська, неформальна мова, сленг, сленгова лексема.

Formulation of the problem. Carl Sandburg once said “Slang is language which takes off its coat, spits on its hands and goes to work.” Standard English is often referred to as “the proper language”. However, that Proper English is not “a language” in any meaningful sense of this term. Proper English is less than a language but one of the varieties of English. Proper English is considered to be the most important variety of English, in all sorts of ways: it is the variety of English normally used in writing, especially printing; it is the variety associated with the education system in all the English-speaking countries of the world, and not only, because in Ukraine at schools Standard British English is taught. Moreover, the variety spoken by those who are often referred to as “intelligent people”. But most native speakers of English in the world are native speakers of some nonstandard variety of the language. Proper English deals with the pronunciation too. In Britain there’s a high status and widely described accent known as Received Pronunciation (RP), that it is not associated with any geographical area, being instead a purely social accent associated with speakers in all parts of the country, or at least in England, from upper-class and upper-middle-class backgrounds (Lerer S., 2008: 65–68).

There is considerable confusion concerning the relationship between Proper English and the vocabulary associated with formal varieties of the English language. Styles are varieties of language which can be ranged on a continuum ranging from very formal to very informal. Formal styles are employed in social situations which are formal, and informal styles are employed in social situations which are informal. Speakers are able to influence and change the degree of formality of a social situation by manipulation of stylistic choice. All the languages of the world would appear to demonstrate some degree of stylistic differentiation in this sense, reflecting the wide range of social relationships and social situations found, to a greater or lesser extent, in all human societies. In many

areas of the world, switching from informal to formal situations also involves switching from one language to another. Sociolinguists agreed that Proper English is a dialect. It is simply one variety of English among many. It is a sub-variety of English. Sub-varieties of languages are usually referred to as dialects, and languages are often described as consisting of dialects (Barber C., 1993: 223–228).

Standard English is however of course an unusual dialect in a number of ways. It is for example by far the most important dialect in the English-speaking world from a social, intellectual and cultural point of view; and it does not have an associated accent.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Tony Thorne is a British author, linguist and lexicographer specializing in slang and cultural history. In this article his masterwork *Dictionary of Contemporary Slang* is used as the greatest reference. This work remains based on the examples of authentic speech rather than purely upon written or broadcast sources. We have also studied the work of Professor Paul Kerswill, who works in sociolinguistics, specifically language variation and change. *History of the English Language* by Seth Lerer is outstanding source to get deep into the language roots.

It may sound ridiculous but analyzing slang and modern expressions the best source to find updated information is by following the bloggers sites, where authentic slang lexemes can be found.

The scientific novelty is caused by the necessity of learning the ways of formation and developing of the slang in the English language. The society swiftly changes, and with it the language standards are changed too. Slang will always tend to stay in the language as long as there is a demand for something new and unique, we do not refer to the vulgarisms or obscene expressions. The only question is left to ask is, if Proper English will always stay stable or soon it will shift its notions of proper language.

The aim of the research is the slang, as part of the today’s speech in the modern world and how it is

being affected by it. We set the task to differentiate the notion of the Proper English apart from Slang.

Main material presentation. Slang is language deliberately selected for its striking informality and is consciously used in preference to ‘proper’ speech. It usually originates in small social groups. For these groups, it is a private code that embodies their particular values and behaviour and reinforces their exclusivity. Slang expressions may escape the originating group and become more widely used, and although slang draws much of its effect from its novelty, some terms (booze, dosh, cool) may stay in the language for decades, while even supposedly shortlived youth slang, for example peng, choong or hench, remains in circulation for years rather than months (Thorne, 2014: 7).

Slang has also been referred to, most recently by the eminent US linguist Michael Adams, as ‘the people’s poetry’. In emphasizing its democratic credentials he’s right, but although it does make use of poetry’s rhetorical tricks (and more devices besides), poetry is allusive while slang is anything but, depending for its power on either complete, shared understanding (by insiders) or complete bafflement (on the part of outsiders).

Slang is also by definition used particularly to talk about transgressive behaviour and about activities which speakers either want to keep secret or for which there may not be an adequate vocabulary in standard language. Slang is not only used for communication purposes – to exchange data – but for social purposes to reinforce relationships: solidarity, belonging, membership of an in-group, and to exclude outsiders. This means that sometimes it is used in different ways from normal language – words and phrases may be repeated, chanted, used ungrammatically or used like slogans, for example. This can seem alien and suggest – wrongly – that the language is crude, impoverished or deficient. So nonstandard language such as slang or youth-identified vernacular is certainly part of a repertoire of performance, a pattern of behaviour which can include rebelliousness, anti-social attitudes, educational failure and even violence, crime and prejudice. It also plays an important part, though, in bonding, belonging, play and pleasure, and in constructing and negotiating individual and group identities (Thorne, 2014: 7).

Many people find it much easier to use correct Grammar when they are writing. This may be because students are taught Grammar through writing, or it could be a result of written words giving the writer a chance to change their mind.

When people speak, they cannot change their mind mid-sentence without appearing to be a crazy person.

Therefore, “proper” English is not often used in speech. When writing, though, people are expected to meet such standards.

In addition, British English may be considered more proper than American English. While proper English may seem like an impossible goal, it only seems so because of how rarely it is used. By simply taking a couple of seconds to think before speaking, anyone can avoid saying something they regret (Grammarty, 2015).

The 1920s were a particularly rich decade for slang in the United States. Many expressions are still in use today. For instance, *a wet blanket* is a person who is no fun or who ruins the good times of others. Other expressions, though not commonly used, may at least sound familiar. *It’s the bee’s knees*, for example, means it’s the best. In the 1920s, to *take someone for a ride* meant to lure them into your car and drive off with the intent to murder! But the modern-day meaning of the idiom is less nefarious than the previous definition. It means to dupe someone, usually with a clever lie. The unfortunate majority of 1920s slang disappeared completely.

Yet a certain sociological idea of slang underlies the consideration of metropolitan life and popular speech. General slang is mostly words and phrases that have escaped from the myriad subcultures of society and found favor in wider usage.⁴ Slang emerges from the plural structure of society and, in subsequent usage, helps in small ways to maintain as well as to modify social diversity, usually toward more diversity. Slang is a necessary and inevitable cultural product of diverse, complex, and highly interdependent modern society. Slang grew where diverse peoples met at the cultural crossroads of the ancient market city; it flourished in the more diverse and occupationally interdependent medieval city. For the same but now infinitely more complex reasons, slang is part of the life of modern cities, or more correctly today, of modern society in general (Irving, 1995: 19).

Much of modern slang evolves from social media. Some expressions explode into existence, spread rapidly, and die out just as fast. The over use of the expression *YOLO* (You Only Live Once) earned widespread ignorance just months after its initial popularity. Following the historical trend, other expressions evolve to encompass wider or different meanings. *Ride*, which used to mean car, now includes anything that gets a person from point A to point B, whether it’s a bike, motorcycle, or even a pair of designer shoes. Still other terms may survive far into the future.

Since its appearance the English language went through a big metamorphosis. New words have

appeared while some went lost. Words have changed in meaning. The grammatical endings of words have been modified, and many such endings went out of use. There have been turns in word-order. Pronunciation modulated drastically. All together these transformations made the English language develop during the centuries.

From the Cockney rhyming calls of London's East End traders to teen speak, slang has always been part of Britain's rich and diverse language. But young people are increasingly unable to distinguish when it's appropriate to use it, say some linguists. Their language is becoming saturated by slang, leaving them ill-equipped to communicate in the wider world.

Paul Kerswill, professor of sociolinguistics at Lancaster University, is studying street language in London. He says an entirely new dialect is emerging. A long time ago slang was about work. Market workers, carpenters, public houses, farmers had their own slang. Now slang comes from people bringing new words from other languages. *Zoo* came from France, *pyjamas* from India, *shampoo* comes from Urdu. *Television* is part Latin, part Greek, yet we think of it as one word. The English language no longer simply belongs to the English, it's multicultural (Thorne, 2009)

Slang is also a natural human tendency, says Mr. Thorne. "All groups – it doesn't matter whether they are soldiers, policeman, criminals or whatever – always generate to some extent their own language. It's not just to communicate information, it's in order to include people into your group and exclude people out of your group". Slang has not become more prevalent, simply more public, he says (Thorne, 2009).

Talking about slang also reinforces a sense of appropriacy, much in the same way as political correctness has made people more sensitive to how language can hurt and discriminate, says Mr. Thorne.

The media has moved over the last two decades from excluding slang to incorporating, debating and also celebrating it: in Britain newspapers regularly carry serious or spoof updates on the language of the moment, while youth language has featured in TV dramas such as *Skins* and *The Inbetweeners*, triggering debates about authenticity. (Thorne, 2014: 9).

In the previous article the work of Stephen Kelman was analyzed with its novelty of *Pigeon English* in the literature. Nowadays, slang has become an integral part of the social sphere and one of the main and most problematic objects of the lexicological investigation. Slang arises in the multiple structures of society and in the future helps to preserve and modify social diversity. It is a necessary and inevitable result of the development of the language of modern society.

It evolves where people of different origins meet at the cultural "crossroads". Such example was depicted in the novel with famous slang expressions, such as *asweh*, *donkey hours*, *dey touch*, *adjei*, *bogah* (Kelman, 2011).

Also in 2010 one Jean Gross, described as a "communications czar" who advises the Government on children's speech, was widely reported as claiming that teenagers were becoming unemployable because they had a vocabulary of just 800 words. The reality is that typical teenagers actually develop a vocabulary of around 40,000 words by the time they reach 16, but one linguist mentioned by Ms Gross had found that many choose to limit themselves to a much smaller range in regular conversation, and on a daily basis could use as few as 800. It goes without saying, too, that the abbreviated codes used on phones and computers, just like those once employed for telegrams, air traffic control or CB-radio, deliberately and unproblematically use only a very limited vocabulary (Thorne, 2014: 9).

Conclusions. Education is essential so people understand how different social groups speak, and how their language relates to ethnicity or social class. You can very quickly slip into the perception that there is good language and bad language, and then make the false link between bad language and bad people. And all of us should learn how important it is to spot when slang is inappropriate. Whether we like it or not, the way we talk affects the way people see us and this can have very serious consequences.

The general "flattening out" of a hierarchical society and the relaxation of linguistic prejudices mean that slang may be seen not as something inherently substandard, but as an option among many available linguistic styles. At the same time there must always be a set of words and phrases which is beyond the reach of most speakers, that is always "deviant", "transgressive" and opaque. (Thorne, 2014: 8). This slang must renew itself, not just in implied contrast with "standard" language, but with earlier versions of itself. So novel and exotic slang words will continue to sprout, to metamorphose, to wither and disappear or else to spread and fertilise the common ground of language. This process may now be more visible and familiar, the crossover into wider informal use may happen much faster nowadays (given the complicity of the media), and the shock value of the terms themselves may be lessened (the invention and use of slang does risk becoming locked into familiarity and cliché, like the tired, repetitive gestures of rock, rap, conceptual art and fashion), but the process is very unlikely ever to stop.

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