THE INFLUENCE OF SLANG ON MODERN ENGLISH CONVERSATIONAL LANGUAGE

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Abstract: Slang is one of the most dynamic and influential elements of contemporary spoken English. As a distinct stratum of informal vocabulary, slang reflects social changes, cultural trends, aspects of group identity, and new patterns of communication. This article examines the influence of slang on the development of modern spoken English, focusing on its linguistic characteristics, social functions, and role in the renewal of the language's lexicon. Particular attention is paid to the processes by which slang terms are formed, disseminated, and established within various spheres of communication. The study explores the impact of youth culture, social networks, and digital platforms on the emergence of new slang expressions, shifts in their meanings, and the expansion of the contexts in which they are used.

Keywords: english language, slang, spoken language, sociolinguistics, informal vocabulary, language change, youth language, digital communication, lexical innovation, semantic development, communicative identity.

Аннотация: Сленг является одним из наиболее динамичных и влиятельных элементов современного английского разговорного языка. Как особый пласт неформальной лексики, сленг отражает социальные изменения, культурные тенденции, особенности групповой идентичности и новые модели коммуникации. В данной статье мы рассматриваем влияние сленга на развитие современного английского разговорного языка с позиции его лингвистических характеристик, социальных функций и роли в обновлении словарного состава языка. Особое внимание уделяется процессам формирования, распространения и закрепления сленговых единиц в различных сферах коммуникации. Исследуется влияние молодёжной культуры, социальных сетей и цифровых платформ на появление новых сленговых выражений, изменение их значений и расширение сфер употребления.

Ключевые слова: английский язык, сленг, разговорная речь, социолингвистика, неформальная лексика, языковые изменения, молодёжный язык, цифровая коммуникация, лексические инновации, семантическое развитие, коммуникативная идентичность.

Introduction. Amid the rapid development of global communication, the English language continues to hold a leading position as a medium for international interaction, cultural exchange, and the transmission of information. Modern English is a dynamic system, constantly evolving under the influence of social processes, technological progress, and shifting patterns of communication. One of the most notable manifestations of this linguistic dynamism is the active development of colloquial vocabulary—specifically slang—which significantly shapes contemporary spoken English. Slang constitutes a distinct layer of informal language used by specific social groups to express identity, emotional attitudes, and a sense of belonging to a particular communicative community. Unlike the standard literary norm, slang terms are characterized by a high degree of variability, expressiveness, and dependence on social context. They may emerge within youth subcultures, professional circles, or digital spaces, gradually finding their way into broader usage. According to M. Adams, slang should not be viewed merely as a "non-standard" or peripheral form of language; rather, it serves as a vital expression of linguistic creativity and reflects the social processes unfolding within a speech community [1].

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The study of slang is particularly relevant today, as modern forms of communication have significantly accelerated the emergence and spread of new linguistic units. Social networks, internet platforms, video-hosting sites, and digital communities have become the primary environments where new slang terms are forged. Words and expressions such as *lit* (excellent, impressive), *ghosting* (ending communication without explanation), *flex* (showing off success or status), and *vibe* (atmosphere, mood)—among others—illustrate how slang reflects contemporary cultural trends and shifts in the behavior of language users. From a sociolinguistic perspective, slang serves not only to convey information but also plays a significant role in the formation of social identity. The use of specific expressions allows speakers to demonstrate their belonging to a particular age, cultural, or social group. As M. Adams notes, slang is frequently used to establish connections among group members, foster a sense of community, and distinguish between "insiders" and "outsiders" during communication [2].

The study of slang is of particular importance within modern lexicography, as many slang expressions become a source for expanding the general lexicon of the English language. The history of English shows that certain elements—initially perceived as informal or non-standard—have, over time, entered broader linguistic usage. Thus, slang acts as a mechanism for linguistic renewal, contributing to the emergence of new meanings, abbreviated forms, metaphorical shifts, and semantic changes. Contemporary research highlights that the boundary between standard language and slang is fluid. Certain expressions, which originated within specific social groups, gradually gain widespread currency through mass media and digital communication. Studies on global English slang indicate that modern slang forms can transcend local communities and become part of international English-language communication [3].

Furthermore, slang plays a key role in the emotional organization of spoken discourse. Unlike neutral vocabulary, slang units often possess a vivid expressive quality, enabling speakers to convey their attitude toward an object, intensify the emotional impact of an utterance, or establish an informal communicative atmosphere. For instance, the use of expressions such as "awesome," "cool," "no way," or "chill" not only conveys information but also expresses the speaker's emotional reaction. Thus, the study of slang allows us to view the modern English language not as a static system, but as a constantly evolving mechanism that reflects social changes, cultural processes, and new forms of human interaction.

Main part. Slang is one of the most fluid and ever-changing components of the English lexicon. Unlike neutral or formal vocabulary, slang terms emerge primarily within informal communication and reflect the behaviors, values, and interests of specific social groups. A key feature of slang is its ability to respond rapidly to shifts in social life by generating new ways to express thoughts and emotions.

In contemporary linguistics, slang is viewed not merely as a collection of informal words and phrases, but as a distinct linguistic phenomenon with specific structural, semantic, and functional characteristics. According to J. Green, slang serves as an important reflection of the social history of a language, as each generation develops its own linguistic forms to express group identity, cultural traits, and new social realities [4].

The primary characteristics of English slang include:

- informality — it is used predominantly in everyday, conversational speech;
- expressiveness — it conveys the speaker’s emotional assessment and subjective attitude;
- variability — new expressions emerge quickly, while outdated ones just as quickly fall out of use;
- social grounding — it is linked to specific age, professional, or cultural groups;
- semantic flexibility — it has the capacity to acquire new meanings depending on the context.

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Thus, slang functions as a dynamic mechanism of linguistic evolution, enabling the English language to adapt to new communicative environments.

The development of modern English slang is shaped by various social and cultural factors. An analysis of linguistic data reveals that the primary sources of new slang terms are youth culture, digital communication, mass culture, and professional communities.

One of the most significant factors is the proliferation of social media and internet-based communication. The digital environment has substantially accelerated the creation and dissemination of new expressions. Users of social platforms actively create abbreviations, new word meanings, and hybrid forms, which quickly make their way into everyday speech.

For example:

• ghosting — the sudden cessation of communication without explanation;
• flex — the display of success, wealth, or advantages;
• vibe — a specific atmosphere or emotional feeling;
• lit — something very interesting or impressive;
• salty — a person who is irritated or resentful.

These examples demonstrate that digital communication serves not only as a medium for the spread of slang but also as a space for its creation.

Another significant source is youth culture. Young speakers use slang as a means of constructing their own identity and expressing independence from previous generations. As C. Eble notes, student and youth slang functions as a form of social bonding, allowing group members to develop a shared linguistic code [5].

Slang serves a wide range of functions in contemporary spoken English. Its use is linked not only to the transmission of information but also to the organization of social relationships between participants in communication. The primary functions of slang are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Primary functions of slang in contemporary spoken English

Function	Functional content	Examples
Identification	Indicates a person’s affiliation with a specific social group	bro, fam, squad
Expressive	Conveys the speaker’s emotions, evaluations, and attitudes	awesome, crazy, sick
Communicative	Makes speech sound more natural and informal	what’s up?, no worries
Play and creative	Creates new forms of expression through language play	YOLO, slay, vibe
Economic	Allows for the concise and rapid transmission of information	DM, ASAP, info

An analysis of the table shows that slang plays a significantly broader role than merely serving as a collection of "informal words." It functions as a tool for social communication, helping speakers establish contact, express emotional attitudes, and shape group identity.

Conclusions and recommendations. The conducted research has demonstrated that slang represents an important and dynamic component of modern English conversational language. The analysis confirms that slang should not be considered merely as an informal deviation from standard vocabulary or as a temporary linguistic phenomenon. Instead, it functions as a natural element of language development that reflects social transformations, cultural changes, technological progress, and the evolving needs of communication. The study has shown that slang performs a variety of significant linguistic and social functions. Firstly, it serves as a tool for expressing social identity and group belonging. Through the use of specific slang expressions, speakers demonstrate their connection with particular age groups, professional communities, cultural movements, or online communities. Secondly,

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slang increases the emotional expressiveness of communication by allowing speakers to convey personal attitudes, evaluations, humor, and emotional reactions in a concise and effective way.

An important conclusion of the research is that slang contributes significantly to the enrichment of the English lexical system. Many expressions that were originally considered non-standard have gradually become accepted elements of general vocabulary. This process demonstrates that the boundary between slang and standard language is flexible and constantly changing. Therefore, slang should be studied as one of the mechanisms through which languages adapt to new social realities.

Based on the results of the research, the following recommendations can be proposed:

1. Educational programs should include selected examples of contemporary slang alongside standard vocabulary to help learners understand authentic spoken English.
2. Students should develop their knowledge of slang through exposure to authentic materials such as films, podcasts, social networks, and everyday conversations
3. Future studies should focus on the influence of artificial intelligence, online communities, and global digital communication on the formation of new slang varieties.

In conclusion, modern English slang represents a powerful indicator of linguistic creativity and social change. Its influence on conversational language demonstrates that vocabulary development is closely connected with human interaction, cultural transformation, and technological innovation. A comprehensive understanding of slang allows researchers, educators, translators, and language learners to better understand the mechanisms of contemporary English communication and the continuous evolution of the language system.

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