

СЛЕНГ В ПРЕПОДАВАНИИ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

SLANG IN ENGLISH TEACHING

Аннотация. В статье дается обоснование причин обучения сленгу на факультативных занятиях по английскому языку на кафедре иностранных языков ОНАС им. А.С. Попова. В статье приводятся примеры из мини-словаря по сленгу, который в настоящее время составляется на кафедре.

Summary. The grounds for slang teaching in the course of Optional English organized by the Chair of Foreign Languages (ONAT) are explained. The examples from A Slang Mini-Dictionary, which is being compiled at the Chair, are presented.

As far as the modern English language has become saturated with the slang the comprehension of slang by English learners has appeared to be of vital necessity. There is no doubt that mastering of slang gives great opportunities for oral and written communication in contemporary language environment.

For future reasoning it would be useful to clarify the nature of slang. In linguistics, where definitions are often imprecise and leaky, the definition of slang is especially notorious. Not to be lost among the various definitions existing at present, let's focus our attention on "The Merriam-Webster Dictionary" definition of slang as the most universal and complete one: "Slang is an informal nonstandard vocabulary composed typically of coinages, arbitrarily changed words, and extravagant figures of speech."¹

Slang is a universal human trait and as old as the race itself. The first investigation of English slang can be traced back to 1785 when a distinguished British antiquarian Francis Grose published "A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue". Since then F. Grose has been considered the founder of general slang lexicography.

Slang is a very elusive element in human communication. It enters the language from a wide variety of sources, often from closely-knit communities such as the armed forces, university students, gamblers, etc. Sometimes the new slang, like the old one, drops out of use, quickly or gradually. When it remains, it may remain as slang, temporarily or for centuries, or it may develop into something else at varying speed. The normal development is for a slang expression to become accepted into that large body of more "educated" but still informal English known as colloquialism, and thence into the full status of Standard English. Sometimes it is extremely difficult to determine the exact status of a word or expression, because language is alive and changing, and slang is one of its most volatile components.

As it has already been mentioned slang usually emerges from the special languages of subcultures or "undercultures". The groups studied most persistently has been the criminal underworld itself. Other undercultures contributing heavily are those of hoboes, of gypsies, of soldiers and sailors, of the police, of narcotics users, of gamblers, of cowboys, of all sorts of students, of show-business workers, of jazz musicians, of athletes and their fans, of railroad and other transportation workers, and of immigrants or ethnic population with their subcultures.

But by the 1990s some of these traditional grounds for slang have lost their productivity and other subcultures have emerged to replace them. "For example, general adoption of terms from hoboes, from railroad workers, from gypsies, and from cowboys has very nearly ceased. ... Criminals and police (cops and robbers) still make their often identical contributions, and gamblers continue to give us zesty coinages. Teenagers and students can still be counted on for innovation and effrontery. Show-business workers ... are still a fertile source of slang. But several centers of gravity have shifted greatly during the past fifty or so years".²

R.L. Chapman, an American slang investigator, insists that terms from "the drug scene" have multiplied astronomically in recent times. As for the ethnic influence, the black population influences American slang more intensively than any other ethnic group in history. Extremely productive source of slang is connected directly with immense development of computer science and technology.

In recent times a very impressive tendency in contemporary American slang replenishing has been noticed by many slang researchers. A great variety of slang expressions is coming from so-called "University wits". R.L. Chapman calls their source of slang "the Washington – Los Angeles – Houston – Wall Street – Madison Avenue link". "University wits" are bright, expressive, sophisticated people who give the society

¹ The Merriam-Webster Dictionary. – New York: G.L.C. Merriam Co., 1984, p.647.

² Robert L.Chapman. Dictionary of American Slang. – New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1998, p.XI.

“the slang of the brass, of the execs, of middle management, of dwellers, of bureaucracies, of yuppies, and of the talk shows and the “people” sort of columns and magazines”³

As far as the Chair of Foreign Languages of Odessa National A.S. Popov Academy of Telecommunications has organized the Optional Training Course for the students modern slang teaching would be very useful. At present “A Slang Mini-Dictionary” is being created by the Chair. Slang expressions are taken from modern American and British slang dictionaries and compiled as different topics (29 in number) of everyday situations.

Here, there given some examples of the entries.

I. Exclamations

1. Без разницы – Same difference.
2. О, черт! – Dammit!
3. Чудненько! – Fab!
4. Скройся с глаз! – Bag your face!
5. Ну и жизнь! – Not a chance!
6. Легко и просто! – No sweat!
7. Отвяжись! – Lay off me!

II. Meeting

1. Как живешь? – How’s life treating you?
2. Где ты пропадал? – Where’ve you been keeping yourself?

III. Saying good bye.

1. Всего доброго! – Lots of luck!
2. Свидимся как-нибудь! – See you later, alligator!
3. Пора разбежаться. – Time to split.
4. Шевели ногами. – Shake a leg.

IV. Giving advice.

1. Эй, полегче! – Hold your horses!
2. Прекрати дурачить меня! – Cut fooling me!
3. Я тебя вышвырну отсюда! – I’ll kick you out!
4. Приди в себя! – Get real!
5. Не будь такой тряпкой! Борись! – Don’t be such a doormat. Fight!
6. Брось валять дурака! – Stop fooling around!
7. Хватит слоняться без дела! – Stop spacing around!

V. Currency. Money.

1. Это стоит уйму денег. – That costs a bundle.
2. А у них водятся шальные деньги. – They’ve got some easy money.
3. Я совсем пустой. Нет ни цента. – I’m cleaned out. Not a penny left.
4. Он помешан на бабках. – He’s money-happy.
5. У меня опять туго с деньгами. – I’m on a low budget again.

VI. Shopping.

1. Это стоит уйму денег. – It costs megabucks.
2. Где находится винно-водочный магазин? – Where is the happy shop?
3. Да, цена крутая! – The price is really steep!

³ Robert L. Chapman. Dictionary of American Slang. – New York: , 1998, p.XII.

4. Они тебя нагрели на ... баксов. – They shorted you for ... bucks.
5. У-у, какая вкуснятина! – Wow, that's scrumptious!

VII. Interrelation

1. Я стараюсь уважать чужое мнение. – I try to be tolerant.
2. Я не собираюсь ходить на задних лапах. – I'm not going to kiss up to anybody.
3. Мы расстались. – We split.
4. Постарайся ее уболтать. – Try to dialog her.
5. Хватит меня пилить! – Stop nagging me!
6. Не доставай меня! – Stop needling me!
7. Это я-то спятил? Кто бы говорил! – Me a loco? Look who is talking!
8. Я его не перевариваю. – I can't stomach him.
9. Не будь таким болваном! – Don't be such a turkey.
10. Ты – мне, я – тебе. – That's a two-way street.
11. Ты ненадежный друг. – You are a fair-weather friend.
12. Она не в моем вкусе. – She is not my cup of tea.

Литература

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3. *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary.* – N.Y.: Ct.&C. Merriam Co, 1984.
4. *Русско-американский сленговый разговорник.* – К.: Изд. УСА, 1999.