

British and American English and the Position of Slang in These Languages

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Abstract

The meaning of the term “slang” in English is different from other languages. The main reason for this is the migration of the English-speaking population to other continents (North America, Australia, Asia) from the beginning of the 17th century, the fact that their languages became the dominant language by suppressing local languages, and due to the use of English by representatives of other nations who migrated to these places. Therefore, English is spoken in the Australian, Indian, South African and American varieties. These varieties are also called “slangs” of the English language. Therefore, there is still no single view on the concept of “slang”. In English lexicology, slangs include the most diverse words and word combinations, from jargons to neologisms. In American English, slangs are pronounced more obvious. Especially after American Revolutionary War, English became important in the United States, and now there are those who consider it an independent language. The American English was enriched by a variety of sources and adapted to the use of people who migrated to these areas. The article compares the British and American English at different levels and determines their different points.

Keywords: jargon, literary language, orthography, normative grammar, lexicon, communication

1. Introduction

The relevance of this article is conditioned upon the necessity of tracking slang combinations that appear in speech, and facilitate the adaptation of these units in American and British English, the study of communicative language parameters in terms of functionality, the speed of penetration into literary speech and adaptation at different language levels from phonetic and grammatical to syntactic.

There is no single view on the term “slang” in modern linguistics. American and British English are currently very different. The article focuses on the problem of determining their main different aspects. The problem of slang has not been studied in Azerbaijani linguistics at all. The problem of slang has been little studied in European and American linguistics, and therefore there is still no single view on which language units to include in slang. The article discusses the works of E. Partridge (1933), S.B. Flexner (1976), J.E. Lighter (1994) and others on slang. The main aim of the article is to formulate the concept of slang, to determine the place of slang in the British and American English, to compare them and determine the main differences. In this research, it has been used methods of general scientific concept modeling, comparison, discursive analysis.

Almost 300 years ago, there was a British assortment of English. The British brought this dialect to modern lands and the populace of America, Australia, Modern Zealand, India, Asia and Africa started to talk English in each of these lands, the English dialect made strides, improved, changed, and over time, the dialect units shaped in those places unavoidably return to Britain with displaced people, merchandise, innovation, communications, are included in the dictionary of the language, are noted in dictionaries as “slang”.

Researchers focus on different aspects of the study of slang: L. Wang (2020) considers slang from the perspective of cultural conditioning, investigates the links between social groups and their cultural and linguistic needs. J.A. Sanchez Fajardo (2019) believes that intra-group identity is formed based on a sense of solidarity, U. Tursini and P.I. Fauziah (2022) focus on the main tools used in the transition from an informal language to a literary one, Zh. Sun, R. Zemel, Y. Xu (2021) develop structures for modelling and generating slang expressions depending on the communicative purpose, O.V. Tsibizova, I.I. Galankina (2021) explore the most mobile area of the language – youth slang, consider the principles of borrowing and adaptation at different language levels.

The purpose of this study was to understand the differences between the British and American versions of English slang, reflecting the linguistic needs of social groups (criminals, youth, military), to investigate the functioning of slang units in different contexts and the principles of their transition to the literary language, to consider ways to adapt the informal language to the literary one and evaluate their productivity. The object of this study was slang dictionaries of different years of release, which allowed tracing how certain expressions have changed, considering the historical context, social factors, and the communicative component.

2. Materials and Methods

The methodological framework of this paper comprised a theoretical study of aspects related to the issue of investigating slang in the modern linguistics: the adaptation of lexical units at the phonetic, grammatical, syntactic levels, the transition of informal units to the status of literary ones. The authors of this study also employed historical, comparative, and structural methods of analysis for the comparison and analysis of slang units used in American and British versions of English slang.

At the first stage of this study, linguistic articles were explored, including those of foreign researchers, where the key issues of functioning, adaptation, modelling, and word formation of slangisms were comprehended, the main trends that exist today were indicated, the most mobile layer of slang was considered, which is associated with the development of youth subcultures. Attention was focused on modern findings in terms of studying slang as a linguistic phenomenon at the junction of formal and informal cultural layers, e.g., the problem of introducing machine technologies for effective linguistic work in the future was explored.

At the second stage of this paper, the English and American lexicography was investigated on the example of slang varieties: military, sports, parliamentary, dramatic, religious, recorded in dictionaries of different stages of the development of literary speech. Using a comparative method, parallels were drawn between figurative professional words and commonly used figurative words, three varieties of British English and features of the vocabulary adaptation process in terms of the speed of assimilation in speech and activity of functioning, as well as three subdialects of American English (Northern, Central, Southern). Comparative study contributed to an in-depth investigation of phonetic features, grammatical differences, lexicological and phraseological structures, syntactic construction of sentences, and the culture of text design as a structural unit of speech, stylistic and figurative fullness of this lexical layer.

During structural analysis, the authors of this paper managed to determine conversion as the most successful derivational method for creating new slang nominations, to consider the concept of phonetic contrast and its role in linguistic sociolects and dialects, i.e., various elements of speech (lexemes, phonemes, phrasemes, grammes) were considered from the standpoint of their productivity in the development of new slang expressions. The method of historical research allowed considering the main prerequisites for the emergence of a certain variant of a language, considering the social, cultural, historical features of the development of a particular territory, analysing linguistic phenomena and the formation of national languages in a diachronic aspect.

At the final stage of this study, conclusions were formulated based on the results obtained during a comparative investigation of English and British slang, attention was focused on historical moments that are key to understanding the linguistic component in diverse slang variants (e.g., geographical conditionality, colonial processes). Recommendations were also given on how to distinguish formal vocabulary from informal, attention was focused on the stylistic content of slang nominations, three main ways to create new lexemes of such a plan were indicated, which allowed forming final conclusions regarding the productivity of slang.

3. Results

In English etymology, the term “slang” is frequently confounded with the foremost differing word and phraseological combinations in terms of stylistic meaning and scope. Subsequently, the taking after words and word combinations are given with the note “slang” in numerous dictionaries:

1. Words related to the slang “thief”. For example, “barker” – a pistol; “To dance” – hanging (from gallows); “To crush” – to run; “Idea pot” – the head. Other examples of obvious slang and phrases are lexical units such as: “Dirt” – money; “Soke” – a sip of Coca-Cola; “Doty” – crazy.
2. Words related to other jargons. For example: “big-boy” – big gun; “Knitting needle” – a sword (from military vocabulary); “To eat the ginger” – to play the best role; “Smacking” – gaining great success; “Dark” (literally: dark, gloomy) – closed (from theatrical vocabulary); “Dead hooper” – a bad dancer; “Sleeper” – a lecture course (from student vocabulary), etc.

Due to the consideration of different languages within the “slang”, they are subject to separation. Hence, in English and American lexicography the taking after sorts of “slang” are observed: military “slang”, sports “slang”, dramatic “slang”, student “slang”, parliamentary “slang” and indeed religious “slang”. Many new words and phrases utilized only in live

informal communication are also included in the “slang”.

The main quality of these words is the novelty of their use, unexpected use. These are the main features of colloquial neologisms. Due to these characteristics, such words are included in “slangs”. For example, “for good” – forever; “To have a hunch” – to feel in advance, to feel; “Show” – theater. “To get someone” – perceive, understand, “cut-throat” (a villain) and many other colloquialisms (words and expressions used only in oral speech) are provided with the note “slang” in some dictionaries. Since it is exceptionally troublesome to recognize between literary colloquial words and some words related to “slang”, in English and American dictionaries, two stylistic notes are provided in front of words: “colloquial” or “slang”. For example: “chink” – money; “Fishy” – suspicious; “Governor” – father; “Hum” (humbug) – deception, fraud, etc. Slangs are mainly distinguished by its figurativeness. Among them, on the one hand, figurative professional words: for example, “shark” (literally – shark) – an excellent student (student vocabulary); “Suicide ditch” (literally – a trench for suicide) – front (from military vocabulary); “Black coat” (literally – black dress) – a priest; on the other hand, common figurative words: for example, “rabbit heart” (literally - rabbit-hearted) – a coward, or “belly-acher” (literally – belly-acher) – a person who constantly complains about something.

In some English and American dictionaries, words formed by conversion, which are one of the most successful strategies of word origination in contemporary English, are also included in “slang”. For example, there is no “slang” note in front of the noun “agent”; there is “slang” note in front of the verb “to agent”. The word “altar” is stylistically neutral, there is no note in front of it in dictionaries; The word “to altar” – in the sense of marriage – is provided by a “slang” in one of the English dictionaries. “Ancient” is also one of such words. The noun “ancient”, derived from it by conversion - in the meaning of an old inhabitant – is provided with the note “slang”. It should be noted that modern British English is, firstly, not homogeneous, and besides, exceptionally distinctive from classical English, which existed three centuries prior. There are three sorts of British English:

- traditional English (traditionalist – the dialect of the royal family and parliament);
- the accepted standard (accepted pronunciation, RP – the dialect of the mass communication, moreover called “BBC English”);
- advanced English (progressed- the dialect of youth).

The last mentioned is the foremost active. It effectively adopts the components of other languages and societies. “Advanced English” is more undergoing to simplification of language. First of all, changes occur in lexicon (vocabulary): new events, objects appear and need to be named, and old words take on new meanings. The new lexicon (vocabulary) comes to the language of British youth from other assortments of the English language, essentially from American English. But the most variable part of language is phonetics. There are numerous phonetic contrasts, and they decide variation or dialect of the language. For example, in terms of pronunciation, the English say the store “shop” and the Americans “shap”; love sounds like “lav” in English, “liv” in Irish, and “luv” in Scots; The English pronounce the day as “dey” and the Australians as “di”.

There are three major dialects in America: northern, central, and southern. Each of them, in succession, is distributed into a few subdialects. The wealthiest and most ordinary one is the southern one, particularly the California dialect. This is often the essence, the perfect example of the American pronunciation. Usually the “chewing” of the word within the mouth, the clinking of consonants, the shortening of vowels. Hence, the word “bete” (great) gets to be “beder”. The closest dialect to classical English is the northern dialect, the dialect of the east coast strip. There are some territorial dialects in the United Kingdom: northern, central, southwestern, southeastern, Scottish, Welsh and Irish. One of these dialects – the dialect of the knowledgeable population of London and the south-east part of Britain – finally gained national standard status. It is based on “correct English” - the language of the leading private schools (Eton, Winchester, Harrow, Rugby) and universities (Oxford, Cambridge). The base of any English language taught at the Azerbaijan University of Languages and linguistic schools for foreigners is this classical, literary English.

The Irish, Australian and New Zealand variations of the English language are the closest types to the classic British English. Since of their geographical separation, these nations were not strongly affected by other languages and societies. The contrast is basically in phonetics, including melodies. It is showed up in the fluent, “neutral” articulation, the substitution of “complex” sounds with less complex ones: for example, “that”, “think”. In addition, the Irish do not hold back on the sounds between the consonants, including a neutral sound. For example, “film” sounds like “filem”. Irish English is more melodic (it comes from Celtic). Slower and smoother intonation is ordinary for Australian English.

American English is called a simplified language. This can be the foremost precise definition of its substance. Ordinary individuals traveling to America from different countries required such a basic and uncomplicated implies of communication. The sumptuous language of the English nobels was completely unsuitable for this purpose. In fact, overwhelming majority of internally displaced people couldn't speak this language. It is known that America was not only inhabited by the British and the Irish. Representatives of all countries from Europe (French, Spanish, Scandinavians,

Germans, Slavs, Italians, etc.) came to America. The modern nation required a single component that would eliminate national contrasts. Such component was adjusted English language. Of course, it had to be less difficult in composing, pronunciation, and language structure. But it unavoidably had to join components of other languages. Contrary to the British English, American English is sprier, more variable, and simpler to consider. Hence, it is likely more global within the world. This language is the language of a modern generation without a certain nationality and accommodation, brought up by mass culture.

In later periods, people who immigrated to America from England brought diversity to the language, because in their homeland the English language also underwent changes in the following centuries. From these different varieties of the English language, American English progressed and it varied from British English according to numerous features. In other languages, they contributed to the vocabulary of American English, but their impact on other issues was minor. The difference between the American and British English is simply came in sight.

In the field of orthography (spelling), these differences were mainly substantiated by Noah Webster (1758-1843). He made the following changes to American writing practice: “-er” instead of “-re” (“center”, “meter”, “theater”); “-or” instead of “-our” (“favor”, “honor”, “labor”); “check” instead of “cheque” (cheque); “connexion” instead of “connection” (connection); “jail” instead of “gaol” (jail); “story” instead of “storey” (storey) etc. In American English, the letter [r] is pronounced in almost all cases. Many words are pronounced very differently in “slang” of American English. For example: neither (British English) [naiðə] – neither (American English) [ni:ðə]

hurry (British English) [hʌri] – hurry (American English) [hɜ:ri]. As for the accent, there are not many differences. It is mainly concerning to words of French origin.

The changes in the field of normative grammar are trivial. Instead of “Present Perfect”, Americans use “Past Simple”: “I just saw him!” Instead of “I have just seen him!”, “Did you hear the news?” instead of “Have you heard the news?”. When Americans utilize collective nouns, they use the plural form of the verb more reluctantly than the English (“the audience were”, “the government have”). They often form nouns from verbs by conversion (“to author” – “author”; “to research” – “research”). They replace the suffix “shall” with “will” and simply use “have got” instead of “have” and “a have gotten” instead of “became”. The difference is more essential in the general approach to grammatical correctness: Americans try to follow grammar rules strictly, while the British are prone to ignore it. Difference in the use of prepositions: “Please write me when you get there” instead of “Please write to me when you get there”. The differences in grammar between the two languages can be observed in the following examples.

In phonetics: separate differences in the pronunciation of some sounds are less important than differences in the rhythm and melody of speech. The difference is that American discourse is less variable due to the height of the tone; In American English, the melodic form at the conclusion of the sentence varies from British English. Rhythmic contrasts in American English include holding the second accent in words with three or more syllables, and articulating unaccented syllables more clearly: compare: American English- “eˈxtraˈrdinaˈri” – British English “eˈtrɔˈrdinˈri”; American English “laˈbratoˈri” – British English “laˈbratrɪ” or “laboˈratrɪ”; American English “seˈkretaˈri” – British English “seˈkretˈri”.

In the American literary language, both thieves' cant, limited professional words, and random word combinations are widely used. It belongs especially to the language of the American press, because the strangest lexical units are found in this language. Puritan tradition is salient in the field of written speech in America. Even words and expressions that do not have full-fledged units of the vocabulary of the American literary language are included within the language of the press with expansive restrictions. In some cases, slangs are written in quotation marks to stress their “literariness”. It is an example from Charles Dickens: “To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance, was what the knowing one’s call “nuts” to Scrooge”. The phrase “Nuts to (a person)” was a colloquial neologism in the XIX century and meant a source of pleasure for some. In modern language, this slang of the XIX century is no longer used in that meaning.

Many concepts in American English are communicated in several words compared to British English and it ought to be mentioned that these lexical units are broadly used. A number of examples: “lift” (British English) – “elevator” (American English), “pub” (British English) – “bar” (American English), “wardrobe” (British English) – “closet” (American English), “to tick” (British English) – “to check” (American English.). Lexical differences are mainly in the slangs and normative language words in social, economic, political, technical and artistic spheres belong only to American or British realities. Americans, as members of a linguacultural community, cannot communicate without the slang they hear and read everywhere. In school, especially in the upper grades, slang units are encountered at every step. Simon Flexner said: “teen-agers are an example of a large sub-group contributing many words”. When graduates enter the university, they immediately try to adopt the “student language” not to differ from their peers. As the language of any profession or social group, student slang also assists them to communicate with each other, accelerates speech and mutual understanding, gives their speech an emotional tone. When slang is utilized in oral communication, the age difference between the

speakers is obvious. For example, young people use the word “cool” in the meaning of “excellent, good, funny”, while the original meaning of the word is given in a bilingual dictionary as “cool, to cool”.

Only older people use the phrase “the cat’s pajamas” (very excellent, uncommon, especially beautiful) in the process of communication. Pajamas were first made in the United States in the 1920s and were extremely new at that period. The word “the cat” in this phrase can be derived from the English slang “the Cheshire” (“necessary or desirable thing”) used in the 1770s because this thing (“grin like a Cheshire cat”) makes a person happy. For example, It’s a good poem. It’s the cat’s pajamas. The word “broad” (woman, female) is one of such words. This lexical unit is more typical for the speech of the older generation. Young people prefer the word “chick” (girl, woman). Lexical units such as “dude” (friend, boy), “dweeb” (fool), “to freak out” (to make mistakes, to lose control, to be dejected) are also utilized in the speech of young Americans:

- *Marvel was there to freak out with his – goofy smile.*
- *Why is he sitting with those dweebs?*

Prominent American linguist, who used American slang extensively in the communication process, said that “It is not right to ignore the words used today in poor blocks or in the field of limited profession. In the future, these words may be adopted by the people as a means of communication and may be included in Shakespeare’s daily dictionary in the twenty-first century” (Barnhart, 1999). The active use of slang in the communication process, of course, is reflected in American literature. Lexical and phraseological units of American slang are used both in the speech of the heroes and in the description and narrative of the author. Let’s show a few examples:

- *I’ve got a boy in a military academy down in Virginia, and t’s costing me an arm and a leg.*
- *If he guesses who tipped the cops to his operation, he may blow the whistle on you out of spite.*
- *How many times can you flop before you lose your chutzpah?*
- *If they get a chance, they’ll throw you to the wolves and call you a shmuck for letting them.*
- *Probably some liquored-up rednecks looking for trouble.*
- *“This kid is dynamite”, she said.*
- *But let’s look at something else: What if the guy can’t cut the mustard?*
- *That cockamamie raid went of just fine, didn’t it?*
- *Would it surprise you to learn that we also had a number of moonlighting New York policemen and an FBI man?*

In the examples given in oral communication, lexical and phraseological units have the following meanings: “Wishy-washy” – craven, indecisive; “To cost an arm and a leg” – very expensive (Cohen & Popik, 1999); “To tip” – to give (something); “To blow the whistle on smb” – denunciation (Allen, 1993); “To flop” – to fail; “Chutzpah” – impudence; “Shmuck” – a disgusting, stupid man (the last two words were borrowed (adopted) from Yiddish by the American slang); “Redneck” – peasant, boy servant; “Dynamite” – excellent; “Can’t cut the mustard” – it means the lack of masculinity of a man, and this expression is used in a more negative sense after World War I (Dobosh, 2011); “Cockamamie” – foolish, stupid, bewildered; “To moonlight” – to work in the second job, to earn money.

4. Discussion

Slang as a set of new words or meanings for communication in a group implements many social functions of the language; thus, its prevalence is frequently associated with the culture of the people, or rather with society, cultural traditions and the language needs of a particular people. For example, American slang has unique features: simplicity, humour, proclivity to different types of communication (Wang, 2020). It is distinguished by a rapid update of the lexical base, activity in terms of penetration into speech and fixation in a certain environment, an expansive nature, but in terms of general usage it cannot compete with the literary language. Slang phrases are a corporate speech culture, they are included in a closed lexical system, to which only a certain circle of people is devoted, they are described by stylistic expressiveness (Tursini & Fauziah, 2022).

Studies on slang are represented by the following aspects: the functioning of slang in urban culture (Partridge, 1933), the features of the formation of youth slang (Dobosh, 2011; Nikitina, 2007), the use of slang units in the political sphere (Philipson, 1941), structural features of slang (Soudek, 1967), characteristics of expressions (Galperin, 2016). G.L. Cohen and B.A. Popik (1999), B. Dumas and J. Lighter (1978), M. Pei (1949) also investigated the issues of slang. The study of slang is closely related to lexicology and phraseology (Ivanova, 2011; Ginzburg et al., 1979). When studying slang, dictionaries of R.K. Barnhart (1999), A.S. Hornby (2005), H. Wentworth and S.B. Flexner (1975) play an important role.

S.B. Flexner (1976) discusses the historical aspects of the development of American English, which is supported by the author’s etymological findings. L. Andersson and P. Trudgill (1990) consider the negative attitude towards the use of “bad language” (the so-called slang), try to explain its various types, arguing that most of them should be considered as parts of the national language. The study by E. Partridge (1933; 1994) glorifies “illegal” colloquial speech, which is a product

of "an abundance of mental activity and natural pleasure from creating a language".

Linguist J.E. Lighter (1994) is guided by the definition of slang as an informal, non-standard language filled with synonymous meanings of standard words and phrases used in the literary language. The author explores American slang, going beyond the time frame: past, present, or future, emphasising constant updates in speech and the speed of recording this moment in dictionaries. To build dictionary entries, the chronological principle is used, illustrated with quotations, i.e., the use of each slangism is strictly documented.

According to U. Tursini and P.I. Fauziah (2022), the language is divided into standard and non-standard, and slang is one of the examples of non-standard language and is manifested in the use of informal words that refer to profanity. Among the considered tools for the formation of English slang were the following: change in meaning, function, form, abbreviation, change in spelling, borrowing. All these methods are thoroughly investigated in the study from the standpoint of productivity.

Slang is the most common type of informal language, but according to Zh. Sun, R. Zemel and Y. Xu (2021), its flexible nature and limited information resources can adversely impact the existing natural language systems. The authors believe that machine generation of slang allows developing a structure and modelling the choice of a word, considering the context and the communicative situation. This technology allows encoding a slang meaning, linking it with the generally accepted one, considering syntactic features, and provides various opportunities for automated generation and interpretation of informal language. The study showed that considering semantic and contextual flexibility can improve the automatic generation of variants of slang words with limited data. Thus, modern researchers are making a breakthrough in the study of semantic space and the production of slang units.

A.T. Lipatov (2010) considers sociolects, namely family sociolects, the problem of demarcation of argot, jargon, and slang, explores the specific features of old jargons, scrupulously describes the processes contributing to the development of slang during the contact of different sociolect systems, investigates slang in comparison with jargon and argot, identifies slang varieties. The author also considers the behaviour and functioning of slangisms in related and unrelated ethnic environments, paying special attention to telescopisms. Interesting from the standpoint of linguistics is the process of intellectualisation of sociolects, including in derivational changes (abbreviations, truncations).

The concept of a "local" sociolect implies slang words and phrases that, in the development of a national language, enrich it and become a literary norm. For example, Black English uses diverse methods of semantic differentiation: enantiosemy (the same word is used with different meanings), contrastive semantics (the same lexeme denotes a negative and positive connotation at once), the transition of a negative meaning of a word into a positive one, pejorative changes, metaphorisation. The process of formation of slangisms occurs through the loss of connection with the local environment of functioning and falling into vernacular, and then into usage. After the transition to slang, occasionalisms, dialectisms, professionalisms, or jargonisms are neutralised, losing their main specificity: territorial pertinence, professional features, evaluative colouring (Lipatov, 2010).

M. Gotti (1999) analyses dictionaries and glossaries based on fixing jargon from the criminal sphere of the 17th-18th centuries. First, the author introduces readers to the historical context of England at that time, discusses a considerable increase in the number of vagrants and criminals and the possible reasons that caused such social differentiation, explores research on this issue and describes the evolution of criminal slang in this period.

O.V. Tsibizova and I.I. Galankina (2021) explore youth slang, which is considered the most mobile area of the language. Thanks to the adaptation of English lexemes at different language levels, such units are adapted in national languages, considering their derivational and grammatical features, word-formation activity. Borrowings penetrate speech according to the principle of saving language resources, which is associated with the nominative function. The updating of the youth vocabulary occurs with the change of generation, and therefore, thematically, the lexical layer maximally corresponds to the needs of the speakers of this language culture, has a pronounced anthropocentric orientation. According to the authors, slang adapts language units to the grammatical and syntactic system faster than the literary language.

The study of the paradigmatics of teenage slang showed that a sense of community prevails in it, which makes provision for the involvement of participants in a group based on a sense of solidarity. Thus, the colloquial nature or social restriction in the use of slang words and phrases is aimed at establishing or strengthening intra-group social identity (Sanchez Fajardo, 2019).

Linguist M. Widawski (2013) investigates abstract semantic changes on the example of African-American slang, considering its two main mechanisms: figuration and shift, which are productive and form many slang expressions derived from standard English. A detailed description of these processes is carried out with an emphasis on the author's early publications, extensive lexical material from modern African-American sources obtained during field research in the United States.

Thus, the study of slang goes through several stages: from the formation of sociolects to the optimisation of slang units and their transition from informal language to literary speech. Modern researchers are engaged in automating the process of selecting slang meanings, ways of producing new lexemes and adjusting them to the systems of national languages in terms of grammatical and syntactic structure. Thus, today linguists are interested in the fact that slang units go through the stage of adaptation as quickly as possible, and the development of national languages corresponds to the time and needs of speakers.

5. Conclusions

America has essentially created a modern language: The changes took place not as it were in phonetics and vocabulary, but also in language structure. In this manner, discussions were realized around British and American English. Originally, American and British English were not diverse from each other, since the primary English colonists brought with themselves to America the language they spoke in Britain. In 17th century, the English language was extremely colorful. It depended more on the speaker's habitation and social class. Even normative written speech was not monotonous. It can be observed in orthography (spelling), grammar, and the works of Shakespeare and Milton.

To limit the most diverse classification of words of the non-formal layer of the literary language, to distinguish them from each other, we think that "slang" should be understood as a layer of lexicon and phraseology that manifests itself as colloquial neologisms in colloquial language and easily transitions to a common literary colloquial lexicon. Slangs are brightly emotional and often figurative. The stylistic function of slangs arises from their nature. They are frequently utilized to specific a more enthusiastic characteristic of the object and event being described.

We have already noticed that the terms "slang", "jargon" and "cant" are often used as a synonym in lexicology and lexicography, and have demonstrated that they have repeatedly tried to distinguish them, and still do. They note that the main feature of slang is their secrecy, that is, they show that the meaning of these codewords is limited only to the social group in which it is circulated. Slangs are created by 3 ways:

- by distorting the morphological and phonetic appearance of the word;
- by borrowing from other languages;
- by giving new meanings to existing words.

However, it should be noted that it seems so in general, but in fact the problem is much larger and deeper. If low lexicon (vocabulary) is not utilized in the communication process, speech is boring, devoid of emotional tones, and without many subtle tones. In the process of communication, as each person tries to express his or her thoughts more emotionally and responsibly, he or she inevitably applies to a lower lexicon (vocabulary) – American English. All these facts give us reason to talk about the multifunctionality of slang in the communication process.

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