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Foreign slang in Russian

Slang is one of the most interesting linguistic systems of modern linguistics. Many researchers compare the concepts of slang and jargon. However, there are significant differences between them. First of all, jargon is used in specific social groups while slang is wide-spread among young people as youth often come up with new words, their own unique and understandable language.[3] Secondly, most young people try hard to become part of American and English culture and style using English-speaking slang.

Slang may express positive or negative emotions. For example, to express feelings of love towards someone, people use the phrase «to have a crush». The word «crush» is used in both Russian and English in the meaning of somebody you love. Friends can often call each other «bro» which came from the word «brother». It means that people have such a close friendship that they are willing to consider each other a part of their family. It makes speech expressive and vivid. As for emotional-negative slang, in most cases it refers to rough slang. The kind of this simplicity tends to reduce the quality of the human being and social significance. There are a few examples of obscene words in relation to a person: a loser – an unsuccessful person, a chicken – a coward, a deadhead – a boring person. [3]

Slang is characterized by briefness, emotionality and popularity. Phrases and words which are difficult to pronounce are often replaced by shorter ones as people prefer to speak briefly. For instance, the word «Sup» was made of a phrase «What's up». In Russian the word means «How are you» as in English. [5] In Russian, there is not always a short form of a word, so there is a borrowing of English terms. For example, black list is a list of persons or other entities that are denied a specific right, privilege or action, retail is a type of trading activity related to the purchase and sale of goods for their use for personal purposes, not related to the implementation of business activities, face-palm-cover is your face with your hand because of embarrassment (also used in the Internet memes).

The second aspect is emotionality. Everyday speech is quite expressive and contains almost no emotionally neutral vocabulary. Therefore, if you decided to learn English slang, you should clearly memorize what meaning each specific phrase has. For example, the word «Noob» means not just a newcomer, but a person who does not know how to do anything, asks questions and constantly complains about his failures without making any attempt to learn something. [3]

Thirdly, phrase or word has to be popular. Thanks to the Internet and TV, everyday English vocabulary is spread around the world at incredible speed. However, slang meaning is not always correctly understood. There are cases where replica of the main character from a movie or a line from a song has taken on a principally other meaning.[4]

People use English borrowing words because they are afraid of being ridiculed, that they will not be taken seriously, not only in everyday life, but also in business. For example, innovation is used instead of the word "новшество", and investment is used instead of «вложения». After using foreign words in speech, the status of a person rises. Borrowings expand the vocabulary of a language when ordinary words do not have an alternative in the native language, for example, marketing and realtor. [1]

All borrowings can be divided into two types: old borrowings related to the change in the political system of Russia, for example, terms that appeared with the development of cosmonautics (cosmonaut, cosmodrome, etc.). New borrowings enter speech by reinterpretation. This happened, for example, with words such as ivory which literally means the color shade; body came from the fact that this type of clothing fits exactly the body; leggings are fashionable glamorous gaiters; hoodie is a sweatshirt with a hood. [1]

All groups – it does not matter whether they are gamers, sportsmen, criminals – always create their own language to include or exclude people from the group. There are several kinds of slang such as sportsmen's slang, computer slang and slang of people working in television and so on.

It is typical of a sports language to use nouns (a pigskin that means a soccer ball; a punter is a person who hit the ball), compound nouns (a roundball is the second name of basketball; matchwinner is player who scores a winning goal), phrasal verbs (to huddle up that means make up your mind; to warm up is to flex muscles) and idioms (to be down and out is to be exhausted; to sand somebody to grass means to knock over). [2]

As for computer slang, people, especially young people, shorten almost all the words and phrases to abbreviation in order to chat online. They use short constructions to type messages more quickly and easily on social media. For instance, BTW means «by the way», AFAIK is «as far as I know», TTUL is «talk to you later», LOL is «laughing out loud» and so on. [7]

However, professional computer language is markedly different from user language. Equipment terms are also replaced by abbreviations, for example, HDD (hard disk drive), CPU (central processor unit) and WWW (World Wide Web). [7]

People working in television often apply metaphors and compound nouns. When the staff uses the word combination «a passion pit», they mean the car cinema, or the noun «off-net» in the meaning TV series which are sold to the syndicate. [2]

To sum it up, it is worth to say that slang is an essential part of people's life. Borrowings from English come to Russian with the advent of new technologies and phenomena for which no proper names have been developed in Russian yet. Moreover, slang is a way of bringing together different social groups and cultures.

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