

**ФИЛОЛОГИЯ***(шифр научной специальности: 10.02.19)*

УДК 81

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It has been considered the essence of slang as an important factor of language diversity and language ecology. Language diversity is viewed not only as the existence of various world languages that differ from each other, but also as properties characteristic of one language which imply coexistence of stylistically and pragmatically different units and constructions. An important constructive role of slang is noted. Slang is interpreted as one of the factors ensuring linguistic diversity. The destructive role of slang is revealed in the aspect of language ecology. The significance of such kind of study is determined by the urgent necessity of theoretical reflection on language diversity and language ecology.

Key words: language diversity, language ecology, English, slang, communication, style.

Modern communicative space is characterized by numerous features and properties [1; 3; 5; 6]. Slang is viewed as an essential part of the communicative space. Slang as a special and specific set of units can be discovered practically in any language, it possesses the universal characteristics of a substandard phenomenon [6]. In our understanding, kinds of language other than standard (slang, jargon, argot, etc) contribute to language variety and language diversity. In the present article language diversity is viewed not only as the existence of various world languages that differ from each other, but also as properties characteristic of one language which imply coexistence of stylistically and pragmatically different units and constructions, e.g. slang.

It should be noted that slang as a specific and unique language phenomenon is characterized by diversity and multifaceted nature, as it possesses various traits. Slang is famous for its novelty, humour, rich and vivid metaphors, widely spread

synonymy, gender specification as the semantics of modern English slang reflects androcentric point of view, encoded character as it reflects philosophy of its users, ethno-specific traits typical of different regional slang varieties [2; 4].

In modern communicative space slang still maintains the status of the marker of “insider/outsider” borders as a whole. On the other hand, slang goes beyond the collective, socially conditioned communicative space, as it performs this function already in relation to the communicative space of the linguacultural community or a set of collective communicative spaces of various societies including non-marginal. At the same time, slang of marginal societies, as a special functional class in this subsystem, still marks the boundaries of the corresponding communicative spaces.

The main trends in the development of slang are common to this subsystem in different national languages. One may observe external and internal trends in the development of slang. For slang as a whole, there is an external tendency towards expanding the sphere of its use in the communicative space, a peculiar communicative expansion, increasing influence on the literary language, as well as an internal tendency towards appearance of grammatically stable features.

The trends mentioned above are interdependent and interrelated. The expansion of slang determines the need for specification of slang at the grammatical level, and this process, to a certain extent, facilitates the functioning of slang in such types of discourse which have never been characteristic of slang. Slang as a complex unity has not only lexical-semantic, but also certain grammatical characteristics, indicating a tendency to more or less fixed substandard grammar.

An important feature of language diversity is the increased degree of colloquialism the modern public discourse is characterized by. This trait is especially relevant in the context of a considerable level of entropy associated with a decreasing role the classical fiction literature plays nowadays. In such a situation language diversity is connected with the imbalance of the language system. What is more, slang is actively penetrating those areas of communication that used to be served by the literary language means. The latter fact is used by diversity opponents to prove the idea of negative diversity effects which may be quite serious and give rise to ecological view of slang and other non-standard language units. The phenomenon of substandard may be considered in the context of modern linguistic ecology ideas, since the problems associated with the essence and functioning of non-literary language units are rightly believed to be related to environmental ones.

The term "ecology" was originally (in the XIX century) used to refer to science, which studies all the organism connections with the surrounding world, all the conditions of existence – both organic and inorganic.

Since the mid-twentieth century, ecology has been involved in the study of processes that embrace the whole biosphere. At the same time, such a task as maintaining the stability of communities and their ability to withstand unfavorable or destructive factors is put forward. The problem is twofold: from the ecological point of view, man, on the one hand, affects the landscape, and the results of its activities are subject to study. On the other hand, the person himself is the object of influences which can significantly affect his safety and wellbeing.

At the end of the twentieth century, new aspects, such as cultural and historical values began to be included in the concept of the human environment. This process resulted in the emergence of many new terms: ecology of consciousness, ecology of childhood, ecology of morality, ecology of the soul, ecology of ethics and aesthetics, ecology of civilization, ecology of thinking, ecology of relations, ecology of words, environmental tolerance, human ecology, environmental law, environmental culture and subculture and linguistic ecology.

The term "linguistic ecology" is believed to be first used in 1970 by E. Haugen in a lecture entitled "Ecology of Language" [3, 20]. The combination "language ecology" has become widely used in situations related to disappearance, extinction of languages (and the task of linguistic ecology in such cases was to preserve these endangered languages). It was further pointed out that an environmentally-oriented approach was possible in less critical situations, that is, when the language was not in danger of genuine destruction. The term "linguistic ecology" has been applied to the problems of speech impoverishment, to the situations related to the destruction of language and culture balance, to the alarming number of borrowings (primarily, English ones). Later the term got strong ties with the problems of the substandard.

Linguistic ecology as a scientific field has a distinct interdisciplinary character: it integrates various branches of humanitarian knowledge. At the same time, researchers note its high axiological, social, linguistic, cultural, spiritual and moral significance. In the environmental aspect, it is proposed to comprehend the problems of traditional linguistic disciplines. For example, the culture of speech is proposed to be interpreted in ecological understanding as a component of a healthy and safe environment of the modern speech. In fact, all traditional problems of

Russian or English studies can be considered from linguoecological point of view, the same approach may be applied to the problems of such borderline disciplines as psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, ethnolinguistics and pragmalinguistics.

In the context of the ecological ideas such metaphors as *protection of language, lexical erosion, the improvement of the language, the pollution of the language environment, the disease of language, language environment*, etc. have become popular. Similar to traditional ecological term *ecocide* (destruction of the natural environment, disturbance of the ecological balance), the term *linguocide* was constructed to denote the policy of restriction, discrimination and suppression in any language; by analogy with *soil erosion*, *lexical erosion* has appeared. The term nominates the process of losing especially valuable words in the language. However, for two decades of their existence, these terms, have become neither generally accepted nor frequent. Nevertheless, the general message – to present a real picture of the current language state, to comprehend its various aspects, to identify and define possible dangers and suggest ways to preserve and increase the wealth of language – should be recognized as highly fruitful.

The environmentally-oriented approach to language consists, first of all, in observance of the general ecological rule established in medical science. The rule is simple, it says “Do No Harm”. In addition, the language ecology requires the mass education of speakers, the formation and development of language culture, and, above all, semantic and rhetorical culture among native speakers.

Close to these ideas is the idea of necessary distinguishing between distant and near pragmatics of speakers. Near pragmatics is understood as purposes of the statement which are realized within the concrete speech act, while distant (far-fetched) pragmatics is related to those which serve to save the communicative space as a whole. The latter approach implies the general positive sense, the benefit for all native speakers.

Taking into account the subject matter of our study, we observe the fact that the successful use of slang within a particular situation corresponding to the "near pragmatics" (that is, specific communicative goals) may have a negative impact on the "far-fetched pragmatics", that is, it does not contribute to the harmony and development of public communicative space. The role of slang has been studied and described in our previous articles [5]. «Slang items are known as a powerful manifestation of unity. The use of slang is caused by the speaker's intention to reveal

the social role that he plays in a certain group at a certain period of time. In this regard slang words in V. V. Putin's speech are very characteristic. The use of a slang words is a mark of a higher degree of communicative freedom. People having certain official status resort to slang due to various reasons but the main one is to achieve special informal relations between the participants of the communication. Such method may be estimated as "lingua-ideological bribery". An emphasized intention of the addresser to mark his position as "an in-member" can mean for the addressee that the sender of the speech is an "out-member" who intends to change a social and psychological distance of the communicative space» [5, 180].

In general, the ecology concept is actualized when there is a contradiction, even a conflict between immediate and short-term interests and needs, on the one hand, and long-term needs, on the other. Such conflicts make specialists in various fields of science and practice construct strategies that are balanced in terms of private and short-term interests and common interests in the future. The need to respect the common benefit, that is to maintain high cultural standards (primarily in public discourse) should minimize the manifestation of a destructive point, even when such a point is relevant in certain specific conditions and situations of communication and meets the audience needs (the latter is easy to observe in advertising texts).

Within a broad understanding of the language ecology one of the weak points is environmentally competent attitude to the substandard in general and slang in particular. There is a proposal to understand the term "language ecology" as concern for the language purity of the habitat of an individual and the whole nation. It is noted that the specific character of the environmentally-oriented approach is largely determined by the basic principle of parametric characteristics of all language processes in a certain period of language development: positive/negative, valuable/worthless. It stands to reason that ecological approach implies careful attitude to the literary language, guarding this weapon of culture from the vernacular and slang influence. It is significant in this respect the concept of pure speech as a speech devoid of language elements that are alien to the literary standard.

It is widely believed that the mass invasion of substandard, in particular slang, leads to the communicative degradation. The development of communication in this case takes an unstable character: the desired effect is achieved through impoverishment of communication, cultural diversity suffers. Thus, there is a well-known situation in the environment: the achievement of short-term benefits at the

cost of the system destruction. As a result, a cultural and ecological catastrophe may occur. This attitude to slang is close to linguistic purism, based on the idea of one version of the language as more pure and, as a result, better than the other. Purism is a specific language policy aimed at changing the language, based on the concepts of the acceptability / unacceptability of certain language units. It is hardly possible to accept purism as a positive and constructive approach to language study, as it completely ignores a great number of various fruitful elements any non-standard form of language may (and actually does) possess.

At the same time there are no less popular and widely spread views, according to which the current language situation does not differ much from the previous stages, the language has safely experienced by now. In general, the language ecological situation is similar to environmental problems: on the one hand, the environment is an integral part of the developed society, and, on the other hand, the society is characterized by an understatement of environmental danger. The importance and necessity of slang knowledge in modern communicative space should be recognized. Without slang knowledge it is almost impossible to read modern literature and periodicals, listen to the radio, watch TV, communicate on the Internet or watch political debates. Thus, different approaches to the non-standard language are possible: it can be (especially in its extreme – invective – manifestations) ranked among the factors destabilizing, violating the ecology of culture and the ecology of language. At the same time, it is obvious that this phenomenon is complex, ambiguous and inevitable in the structure of any language. In conclusion, it should be noted that not all elements in slang are aesthetic, but as time passes, the haze and dirt settle or are carried away in the boundless speech ocean and the life-giving freedom stays as a clean current in the language system. Language diversity alongside language ecology may contribute to the growth and development of the language system.

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*17 ноября 2018 г.*