

**FEATURES OF YOUTH SLANG: LINGUISTIC,  
SOCIOCULTURAL, AND PRAGMATIC ASPECTS**

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**Abstract:** This article examines the key features of youth slang as a dynamic and multifaceted linguistic phenomenon. The study focuses on its expressive, structural, sociocultural, and pragmatic characteristics, highlighting its role in identity construction and communication among young people. Special attention is given to lexical innovation, the influence of digital media, and the rapid evolution of slang. The analysis demonstrates that youth slang is not merely a deviation from standard language but an essential component of linguistic development reflecting broader social and cultural processes.

**Keywords:** youth slang, lexical innovation, sociolinguistics, identity, expressiveness, pragmatics, linguoculture, language change, communication, globalization

### **Introduction**

In contemporary linguistics, youth slang has emerged as an important object of study due to its dynamic nature and strong connection with social change [11]. It represents a non-standard layer of vocabulary actively used by young people in informal communication. Unlike codified language, youth slang is characterized by variability, creativity, and rapid transformation. Its study provides valuable insights into the interaction between language, culture, and society [12].

The relevance of this topic lies in the increasing influence of globalization, digital communication, and media on language use. Youth slang reflects these processes most vividly, making it a sensitive indicator of linguistic and cultural shifts [1].

One of the central features of youth slang is its high degree of expressiveness. Slang units often carry strong emotional and evaluative connotations, allowing speakers to convey attitudes, judgments, and interpersonal meanings more effectively

than neutral vocabulary [2]. This expressive function enhances communication by introducing elements of humor, irony, exaggeration, and subjectivity. As a result, youth slang contributes to more vivid and engaging interaction [13].

One of the most distinctive characteristics of youth slang is its continuous lexical innovation, which reflects both the creativity of young speakers and the influence of rapidly changing communicative environments [14]. Unlike standard vocabulary, which tends to evolve gradually, youth slang develops through highly productive and flexible word-formation processes. These processes allow speakers to create new lexical items that are concise, expressive, and contextually relevant [3].

Among the most common mechanisms is **clipping**, where longer words are shortened to more convenient forms [15]. For instance, the word “application” is frequently reduced to “app”, especially in digital communication. Similarly, **abbreviation and acronym formation** are widely used, particularly in online discourse, where speed and brevity are prioritized [4]. Expressions such as “LOL” (laugh out loud) or “IDK” (I don’t know) illustrate how complex phrases can be compressed into short, easily recognizable forms that carry both semantic and emotional meaning.

**Semantic shift** also plays a crucial role in the development of youth slang [16]. Existing words are assigned new meanings that differ from their original usage. For example, the word “sick”, traditionally associated with illness, is often used in youth slang to mean “excellent” or “impressive.” This reinterpretation of meaning allows speakers to create novel expressions without introducing entirely new lexical forms [5].

In addition, **borrowing from other languages**, particularly English, has become increasingly prominent in many linguistic contexts, including Uzbek and Russian. These borrowings are often adapted to fit the phonetic and grammatical systems of the receiving language, resulting in hybrid forms [17]. Such processes reflect the impact of globalization and digital communication, where linguistic boundaries are more permeable than ever before [6]. Lexical innovation in youth slang is not random but follows identifiable linguistic patterns. It demonstrates the adaptability of language to new communicative needs and highlights the role of young speakers as active agents of linguistic change. Through these processes, youth slang continuously renews itself, maintaining its relevance and expressive power in an ever-evolving social landscape [18].

A crucial function of youth slang is the construction of social identity. The use of specific slang expressions signals belonging to a particular social or cultural group [7]. It fosters solidarity among group members while simultaneously distinguishing them from outsiders. In this sense, youth slang operates as a marker of in-group membership and social differentiation.

Moreover, slang reflects shared experiences, values, and interests, strengthening interpersonal connections within youth communities [8].

From a linguocultural perspective, youth slang serves as a reflection of contemporary culture. It incorporates elements from music, film, social media, and technology, thereby mirroring the environment in which young people exist [19]. The influence of globalization is particularly evident in the widespread borrowing of English slang into other languages, including Uzbek and Russian.

This interaction between local and global elements leads to the formation of hybrid linguistic forms, illustrating the interconnected nature of modern cultures [9].

Youth slang plays an important role in the pragmatic organization of communication. It allows speakers to reduce social distance, create informality, and express solidarity [20]. At the same time, its use is highly context-dependent. While appropriate in informal settings, slang may be perceived as inappropriate in formal or institutional contexts.

This highlights the importance of communicative competence, as speakers must be able to adjust their language according to the situation [10].

Another defining feature of youth slang is its instability. Slang expressions often have a short lifespan, as new terms quickly replace older ones. This rapid change is driven by the desire for novelty and originality, as well as by the influence of digital platforms where linguistic innovations spread rapidly [21].

As a result, youth slang remains one of the most dynamic components of language, constantly adapting to new social and technological conditions.

### **Conclusion**

Youth slang is a complex linguistic phenomenon that combines expressive, structural, social, and cultural elements. Its features—such as creativity, emotionality, identity-building, and rapid evolution—highlight its significance in modern communication. Rather than being viewed as a deviation from linguistic norms, youth slang should be understood as a natural and essential aspect of language development.

The study of youth slang contributes to a deeper understanding of language change, social interaction, and cultural transformation in contemporary society.

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