



El concepto de “argot” en el discurso de la comunicación juvenil por internet en inglés y chino

The conceptosphere of “slang” in the discourse of youth internet communication in English and Chinese

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Resumen

El presente artículo tuvo como objetivo estudiar los aspectos funcionales, lingüístico-pragmáticos y semánticos de la jerga juvenil en la comunicación por internet en inglés y chino. Para ello, se utilizaron los siguientes métodos empíricos, componentes discursivos, comparativos, lingüísticos y pragmáticos, así como elementos estadísticos y descriptivos; a fin de lograr los objetivos de la investigación. El estudio identificó los conceptos predominantes de la jerga en el espacio de Internet para jóvenes en inglés. Estos son “educación”, “Descanso”, “amor”, “apariciencia”, “emoción”, “beber”, “características de personalidad”, “internet”; siendo los más numerosos “educación” y “recreación”. El discurso en chino en la comunicación por internet se presenta con menos claridad que en inglés. El uso de muchas jergas en el espacio de internet se debe a la necesidad de expresar la individualidad y el deseo de concisión en la comunicación verbal entre los jóvenes. Asimismo, existe una tendencia creciente hacia el surgimiento, la difusión y el uso de la jerga de internet para denotar los medios y las herramientas del aprendizaje a distancia. Los resultados y conclusiones del estudio se pueden utilizar en clases de lexicología, sociología, comunicación intercultural, lingüística culturalmente orientada y lecciones de inglés.

Palabras clave: Meme, idioma chino, jerga, idioma inglés, lingüística, información, comunicación, juvenil.

Abstract

The aim of the article was to study the functional, linguistic-pragmatic, and semantic aspects of youth slang in Internet communication in English and Chinese. The following empirical, component discursive, comparative, linguistic and pragmatic, adding statistical, and descriptive methods were used to achieve the goal and fulfill the objectives of the research. The study identified the predominant conceptspheres of slang in the youth English-language Internet space. These are: “education”, “rest”, “love”, “appearance”, “emotion”, “drinking”, “personality characteristics”, “internet”. The most numerous among them are “education” and “recreation”. Chinese-language discourse in Internet communication is presented less clearly than in English. The use of a large number of slangs in the Internet space is due to the need to express individuality and the desire for conciseness in verbal communication among young people. Likewise, there is a growing trend toward the emergence, spread, and use of Internet slang to denote the means and tools of distance learning. The results and conclusions of the study can be used in classes in lexicology, sociology, intercultural communication, culturally oriented linguistics, and English lessons.

Keywords: Internet meme, Chinese language, slangism, English language, linguistics, information, communication, youth.

Introduction

The conceptsphere of national culture is objectified not only in the literary language that serves the elite, bookish culture, but also in other forms of language existence, in particular, social and territorial dialects. Being a “mirror” of the youth subculture, youth slang reflects the values, priorities and stereotyped view of the younger generation in the most relevant and meaningful concepts for youth (Babin, 2020). The conceptsphere of youth slang is lacunar; it almost does not represent the concept of “nature”, but the semantic field of “person” which represents the concept of the same name is extremely widespread (Silvia et al., 2020). The activity or, conversely, the lacunarity of certain fields, give grounds for the conclusions about the range of interests of slang speakers, for identifying key concepts and their axiological component, of native speakers of English and Chinese (Li, 2016).

By its part, youth’s language is an experimental field of language, which largely determines its future development and areas of its functioning. In fact, the latest direction of media linguistics has emerged due to the active presence of language in Internet communication. According to the Statista (2020) report “Most common languages used on the internet as of January 2020, by share

of internet users”, the percentage of English-speaking Internet users is 25.9%, dominating all other languages. The Chinese language comes next with a percentage of 19.4%. To understand the priority position of these two languages, it is enough to indicate that Spanish is in third place with a percentage of only 7.9%. These data determine the choice of English and Chinese languages in order to reveal the peculiarities of youth communication and the functioning of youth slang in the environment of English- and Chinese-language online communication.

It's basic to young people promptly respond to changes in society, which entails the language innovations, some of which become the common language, some remain the youth language, while some other part disappears quickly. Each new generation contributes something to the youth language, causing changes not only at the lexical but also at the cognitive level: the relevance and topicality of certain concepts changes, new structures of knowledge appear. The digitization and informatization processes are especially noticeable in English, slightly less — in Chinese. Accordingly, these are the two languages where new words, slang in particular, appear to name new realities of digitalized thinking that is definitely interrelated with language and speaking, writing as ways of language expressing. Concepts act as codes that convey broad implicit information through several semiotic signs. Therefore, the dependency of all these processes structures a language, in particular, slang as the most sensitive part of youth's language.

In light of all this background, the aim of the article is to identify the linguo-pragmatic, semantic and functional aspects of youth slang in Internet communication on the example of English and Chinese. The need to study youth slang is because it reflects the worldview and values, and performs the functions of identification, consolidation, hidden prestige, demarcation and it is a complex structural organization that includes several narrower subsystems, depending on the affiliation of youth to a certain social or socio-professional group, has regional and gender differences in use (Khrystenko, 2009).

Methodology

Research design

Preparation for the experiment. At this stage, it is necessary to describe in detail all stages of work, provide management and executors with objective information about the upcoming project: the purpose of studying youth slang in Internet discourse in English and Chinese, procedure, expected results of linguistic study and cyberdiscourse analysis of these two languages.

The study was conducted by monitoring Internet publications of young authors (18-30 years), especially students, on various topics during 2018-2020. The focus was mostly on those aspects where slang can be used as much as possible — reactions on social networks, communication on forums, student pages of universities. The collection of material for research (slangisms) took place during the three-year period determined above. The sources for the selection of slang were the resources presented in the Table 1.

Table 1
Resources for sampling English and Chinese slang words

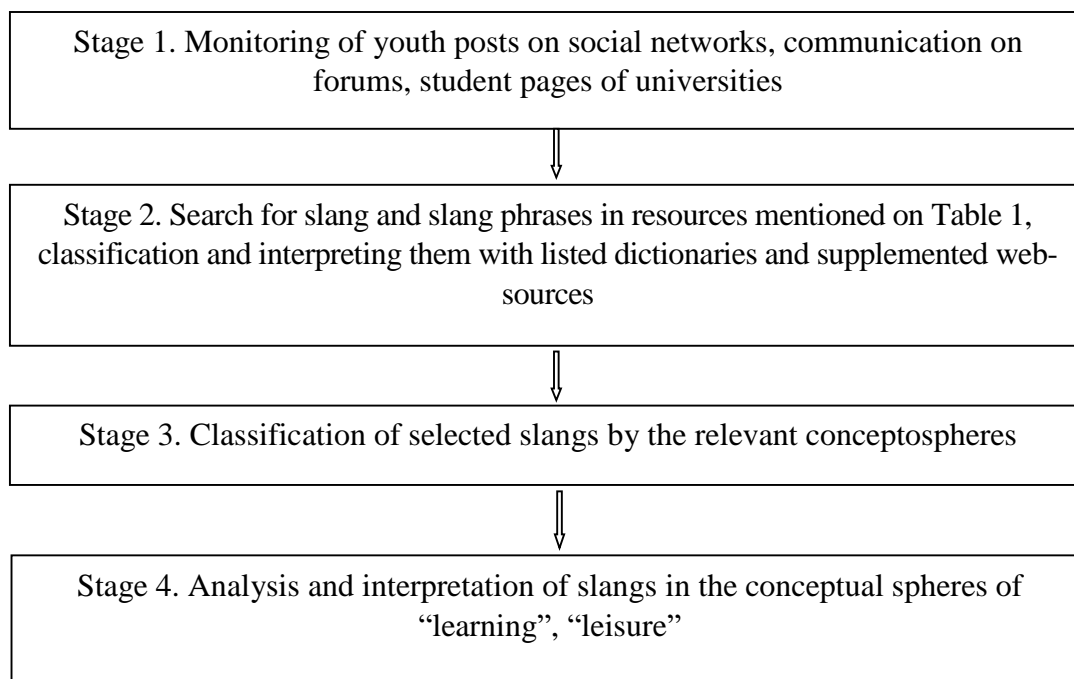
Type of the resource	Approximate percentage of the total sample	English	Chinese
Social media	50%	WhatsApp	WeChat
		Twitter	Weibo
		Reddit	Baidu Tieba
Video Content	25%	YouTube	Youku
		Tik Tok	Kuaishou / Douyin
Apps and websites for students' free communication	25%	Bloomz	Discord
		ClassDojo	LingQ
		LivingTree Engage	The MasterChinese
		Classtag	WeSpeke
		Remind	Eggibun
		Comic Life	MeetYou.Me

The material for the samples was open access user posts on their pages in social media, comments on posts and videos, content of chats. Slang words were copied in a textual or other (video, audio, image, meme) context and entered into the appropriate Excel registers with the reference to the resource from which the slangism was taken. If a slangism occurred several times in the same lexical arrangement, the frequency of use was noted. If it was a variant of slang, it was entered under an invariant slang word or expression, which later made it possible to track modifications.

The register was kept separately for English-language and Chinese-language slangisms, and at the stage of generalization, the samples were compared, compared and analyzed collectively and the subject of trend tracking. To identify and interpret slangisms, in addition to the context of

communication, official dictionary resources with samples of slangisms helped. E.g., youth speech (English corpus) is quite fully represented on electronic sites, which are versions of well-known dictionaries UrbanDictionary and Merriam-webster, Dictionary.com's slang dictionary, Chat Slang Dictionary on the App Store. Internet Slang Glossary (Haha China, 2022), Hack Chinese (Nalesnik, 2021), FluentU, Xinhua Zidian - Xinhua Dictionary (12th Edition) resources helped to interpret Chinese slang.

Figure 1. Research design



Sampling

Mizin (2013) listed the most relevant concepts in youth's life: "education", "career", "leisure", "computer", "unhealthy lifestyle", "relationships". The observations of Internet discourse were classified according to the corresponding lexical and semantic groups, which further formed the above-mentioned conceptospheres. A total of about 2,000 slangs and slang phrases taken from different speech situations were analysed, in particular: family life, daily life, learning process, preparation for learning, acquaintance between young people, etc.

In order to establish pragmatic ties, clarify certain aspects of the spread and use of certain slangs, we will focus on the analysis of Internet slangs in the field of "learning" and "leisure" as

the most representative for youth in terms of frequency of use and in terms of the match to the main activity — education. We will consider the ties between them to distinguish these concepts into a special piece of the youth's picture of the world. These are the key concepts because, first, they are verbalized by a large number of words (representing different types of systemic relations: genus-species relations, synonymy, antonymy relations), and second, these series of words are intensively supplemented and actively function in the Internet discourse of modern youth. It should be noted that the concepts of “learning”, “leisure” have always been relevant for youth. In the context of digitalization, a distance education they have got into the youth thesaurus with new connotations.

Methods

The selected slangs and slang phrases were analysed by means of their attribution to the relevant conceptsphere, which has been logically and gradually formed. The research involved the following general scientific and linguistic methods: empirical (primary collection of material on the Internet), discursive, component, comparative, linguo-pragmatic methods; statistical — mathematical processing of selected Internet slangs (slangs and slang phrases in the Internet discourse); descriptive — description and verbal fixation of the results obtained.

Results

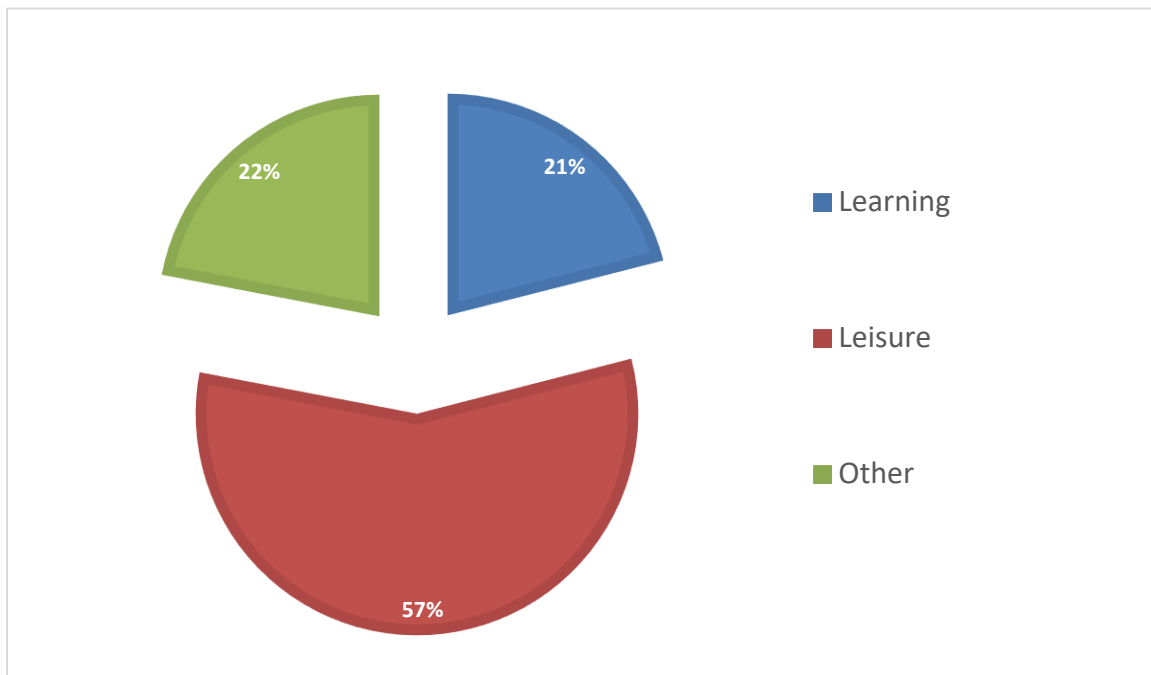
The English slangs and slang phrases obtained for analysis in the Internet discourse in terms of their frequency can be grouped into the conceptspheres that most fully reflect the implicit information of youth communication.

Table 2
Basic concepts of youth English-language Internet slang

Conceptosphere	Frequency of use, %	Typical examples
Flirting, love	19 %	<i>bag – to flirt; boodle – embraces, kisses; crash, face – “blowing off”; homework – a mistress.</i>
Leisure	18%	<i>fling, drag – party; jam, rage, jive and juke – to have a good time; crawl – to dance; kick – to relax, to rest.</i>
Appearance	9 %	<i>chick, peach – a beauty; biddy, roach, scank, scuzz– a rascal/roach; cromagnon, malvin – an ugly being (about a man).</i>
Learning	12 %	<i>bust – to fail the exam; crib course, snap course – an easy training course; squid, weenie – a swot; cut-throat student – an excellent student; pony – a crib.</i>
Intelligence, character traits	9 %	<i>book smart, fossil – a clever man; dumb-head, brain-dead, flake – a fool; crank – an irritable person; grunge, gweeb(o) – a bore.</i>
Essentials	2 %	<i>grazing – a food; chas, ches – matches; stompers – shoes, boots; shank – a knife.</i>
Lexical means of expressing emotional state	3 %	<i>Anxiety (Chickie! – Conceal yourself!), astonishment (Bonk! – Bah!); disagreement (Dude! – Under no circumstances); approval (Cool! – Great! Super!); embarrassment (Sqeeps! – Jeez!); disgust (barf, barf me out – Fie!).</i>
Names of food and drinks	4 %	<i>booze – alcohol; boodle – sweets; za – pizza; jigger – a butter with fruits, nuts.</i>
Alcohol, drugs	15 %	<i>loadie– a drunkard; pummeled, trashed, bamboozled– drunk; hooter – marijuana; flake – cocaine; ret, bogue – a cigarette.</i>
Criminal acts or hooliganism	5 %	<i>scarf (up),scoff– to steal; flap, romp – a fight between street gangs; turkey – a victim of street robbery.</i>
Socially and culturally determined phenomena	4 %	<i>bone, ends – money; smoke – dollar; sleaze – to go begging, to pester sb (for sth); Z(ee) – to sleep, to doze off.</i>

Source: Mizin (2013)

It should be noted that some selected concepts can be grouped into broader lexical-semantic fields based on similarity in appearance, the basis of the phenomenon of nomination, characteristic feature, method of action, and others, less used, can be left for future studies. So, the concepts of “flirting, love”, “criminal acts or hooliganism”, “alcohol, drugs” can be combined into a broader concept of “leisure”. Combine other groups, such as "intelligence, character traits", with the "learning" group. The data obtained can be graphically represented in the following categories: “Learning”, “Leisure”, “Other”.

Figure 2. Basic concepts of slang of English-speaking youth in Internet discourse

Verbs and expressions with the connotative element “learn/work industriously”: pull your weight, geek out, to bend over backwards, dirty work, book it, beat one's brains out, to keep one's nose to the grindstone, to work beyond sb's wildest dreams, to powerstudy, slave away (at something), work one's buns off, split a gut, work one's tail off, to work like a dog, hit the books and pound the books, to buckle down, oil it, lean and mean (efficient work, capable and ready for hard).

The wide range of vocabulary of the semantic field of “love of work” confirms the fact that the distinguishing features of Americans in their activities are: hyperactivity, dynamism, hard work, perseverance in fulfilling the task, the ability to concentrate on work, drive, focus on the result. Any American put serious efforts to achieve success: to make a pitch for smth (to make a determined effort to get sth), to knock oneself out (to take a great effort), to reach for the stars (to try to be successful at sth that is difficult), go out of one's way (do more than necessary, to make a special effort).

Americans clearly understand that to succeed: to get off the ground (to start to be successful), to make the grade (to succeed in), to come through with flying colors (to be exceeded, to be successful), to go places — they need to set goals that will strengthen their self-confidence. They are firmly convinced that after their significant investment in education/work they will

inevitably succeed: big time, hit at work, hit, killing (a great financial success).

There are several expressions in the language that have a negative connotation about students who try to copy off from someone: a copy-cat (pupil who copiestest answers from someone setting next to him or copies someone else's homework); cheat-note, crib, a pony (a slip of paper on expected answers to exam questions are written and which is smuggled into classroom). But they are not as numerous as, for example, expressions that have a positive connotation, which emphasizes the honesty (to be fair and square) of students when completing assignments and passing tests: a tool, a gunner, a geek, a grub, a grade-grubber, a dweeb, a gunner, a wonk, a squid, a weasel, a super-strap, a throat, a weenie.

There are fewer words with negative semantics and more words related to cognitive activity. We can also name synonymous series her, for example: skipping lessons: to cut classes, (to) play truant, to play hooky (to skip school, not to attend school), to pull a no-show. The student is engaged in servile flattery (to toady): apple-polisher (someone who tries to appeal to the teacher by excessive helpfulness, politeness); grade-grubber (a student who flatters the teacher in hopes of a higher grade), brown-noser, teacher's pet (someone favored by the teacher).

There is a close interaction between students in the learning process, where everyone shows their character traits and abilities. Accordingly, they get different nicknames for classmates or groupmates. We can attribute nouns with positive connotations in the meaning of "smart", "capable" to the first group of nicknames: brain, conehead, double-dome, egghead, mental giant, one smart apple, pointy-head, clever-clogs, smartie-boots, the upper storey, top, clever Dick, clever-boots, long-hair, clever stick, wise-ass, smart-ass, poindexter, clever sticks, as well as adjectives with the same meaning: on the beam, nifty, sharp.

We can attribute adjectives with a negative connotation meaning of "uneducated", "stupid" to the second group of nicknames: dimwit, nimwit, dope, moron, soft in the head, nutcake, nutcase, airhead, birdbrain, dumbell, meathead, knucklehead, clapbrain, numbskull, gonzo, screwball, airheaded, birdbrain(ed), goon, brain-dead, clucky, cornball, crackbrained, dead from the neck up, dopey, dumbski, fatheaded, lamebrained, lardhead, klutzy, McFly, meatheaded, nothing upstairs, lamebrained, nutty, shy of a load, thick, thickheaded, frogface, thick as a plank, jel, thick as a docker's sandwich, thick dick, thick as a pudding, thick as a pigshit.

As well as nouns with the same meaning: cluelessness, jack-shit, knuckle-dragger, fathead, ace, feather brain, lamebrain, thickie. Americans will say about a person who is not quite ready for

intellectual conversations on professional topics (to talk shop): “One pancake short of a single-stack”. Not only students and schoolchildren received nicknames that distinguish with a high emotional colour, but teachers as well: teach(teacher), bear (a teacher), prof (teacher, professor) bad news (a tough, demanding teacher), push-over (an extremely easy or naive teacher, easy to deceive). In this case, teachers constantly encourage students to acquire knowledge and be “smart apples” in order not to be “totally clueless” (a stupid person). Parents also constantly instruct their children to “hit the books”: “Do you want to spend the rest of your life flipping burgers? (an occupation that offers practically no opportunities for advancement).

But the whole educational process is not as easy as ABC/as easy as pie (not an easy business), because you should remember about blue books (exams at university) in order not to fail the exams (to flunk, to lay an egg, to fall flat). This is why “credit students” burn the midnight oil (to stay up all the night studying) in order to do the trick (to be successful, to achieve a good result). But there are those students who spend all their time learning only: bookworm (someone who has his/hernose buried in a book), grunt, crammer, Know-it-all, grind, keener, wonk, labor, geek man (someone always studying, cramming for exams). Therefore, youth seek to adapt and self-fulfil in this world when they get into the student and school environment. Slang will always remain one of the ways of self-fulfillment, while the education, which includes these types of slang, will continue to expand, providing endless opportunities for its study and adequate idea of youth English-language culture.

For a majority of young people the studentship is, on the one hand, a carefree time with no burdens of family and work. But on the other hand, they make the most important decisions during this period on their own, without the involvement of parents. Youth leisure is a kind of realization of such a freedom and a field for self-fulfilment of young people.

There is no clear definition of the concept of “leisure” as an independent or organized form of leisure in students’ free time. In general, it is an activity that an individual is engaged in of his or her own accord, being free from professional, family, and civic responsibilities. There are two main forms of youth leisure: organized and unorganized. The organized leisure implies youth organizations, art and sports studios, clubs, sections, which involves inclusion in new social relations, creative self-fulfilment of young people. Such a wide meaning allows encompassing a large number of slangs and slang phrases.

“Thanks God it’s Friday” means that the weekend will be put as much effort as left after

working week. The semantic field of “Leisure” includes a large number of concepts related directly to various hobbies, and spending free time from learning. Young people attribute a significant role to communication in leisure time. A distinctive feature of youth leisure is emotional coloring, the opportunity to do their favorite things, meet interesting people, be a participant in important events.

Watching many English-language films and TV series allows getting an idea that the richest personal life of young people begins while studying at higher educational institutions. The student years are the best fun and carefree years, when young men and women get to know each other, make friends, share experiences and build serious relationships. Young people are trying to have a “tiptop” (apple pie order) love life.

Next, we will consider the semantic field of “flirting”, which anticipates dating. Those who like flirting in their environment are called “a player”. Emotionality and lively facial expressions are special character traits. They rarely have a “stony” face (deadpan), so you can often see a man with eyes open wide (all eyes adj.), looking with amazement, admiration and curiosity at the opposite sex. The verbs with a component “to glaze”: to eyeball (to look hard at someone or something), to make eyes, to scope (on) someone (to evaluate a member of the opposite sex visually), to strip-search (to search someone’s entire naked body), to do a bean count (to stare at female breasts), to scope someone out (to look someone over; to check someone out), to work someone over (to give some one's body a thorough examination or treatment). Nouns with the “examination” component: going-over, the glad eye, once-over lightly, onceover, look-see, bedroom eyes (eyes or a look suggestive of sexual desire), comehither (an alluring or seductive look or glance, usually done by a woman). A man who only pays attention to the appearance of a girl is called “leg man”.

Asking his friend, a typical young man will say: “How is your love-life?”. There are (male and female) gossipers (a bublin brook, an ear-duster) who will tell not only about what happened during the dates (drags), but also about what did not happen (dogs). There are also “chatterboxes” (big mouth, a blabbermouth) and “chatters” (a cat, an yenta), who do not “keep a still tongue in their head” and they like to gossip (to beak, to yap, to gab, to fan the breeze, to peg someone, to rank on someone, to dish, to dish the dirt, to shoot the bull) and reveal all secrets (to big-mouth, to tattle a secret, chew the fat), making them a scandal/sensation (big stink, dirt, dirty linen).

In order to objectively read and perceive Chinese-language content with the inclusion of slang, it is necessary to take into account that the Chinese language is tonal. This means that small

differences in the pronunciation of words can produce a completely different meaning. The use of hieroglyphs with the same phonation but different spelling and semantic load in Internet communication is an very important phenomenon of modern Internet discourse. For example, a word 神马 [shénmǎ], for which the homophone is 什么 [shénme] – “what”. The semantic similarity of homophones is evidenced by the expression 神马都是浮云, where 神马 has the meaning of “what”. According to Southern Metropolis Daily, this expression is among the most common on the Internet, in particular in private correspondence and forums. Since the hieroglyph 神马 “mystical horse” is used with meaning of 什么 “what”, the expression 神马都是浮云 acquires the semantics of “Everything is floating clouds”, that is, the world is so changeable that you should not pay special attention. The literal translation of the expression is: “mystical horse — only floating clouds”. It is evident that such an expression does not make sense.

There are also about a dozen slang expressions in Chinese youth chats and blogs, which include a component to denote an animal or a certain mystical creature. The latter is usually a homophone of the token with a different meaning. This is caused by the increased control of Chinese censorship over the vocabulary used in Internet discourse. This is why Chinese youth created their own homophone-based dictionary for the regular Internet users to avoid criticism of censors and the use of obscene language. In fact, such expressions sound very close to obscene words. Among the slangisms with words to denote animals, sea creatures, the most common are:

“*Hidden fire crab*” 潜烈蟹 [qiánlièxiè] – orthoepy of the expression is similar to the word 前列腺 [qiánlièxiè] – “prostate”. According to traditional story, this is the “legendary crab” that once blocked the “Great Trench” of China. It is important to emphasize the actualization of associative culturally determined ties;

“*River crab*” 河蟹 [héxiè] – pronunciation of the phrase is similar to the word “harmony” 和谐 [héxié]. After 和谐 [héxié] “harmony” was forcibly removed from the active vocabulary of Internet discourse, young people veiled the word 和谐 [héxié] “harmony” with an adequate homophone [héxiè] “river crab”, which resulted in a semantic convergence of tokens;

“*Little elegant butterfly*” 雅蠃蝶 [yǎmièdié] – the expression comes from the Japanese “yamete” — “stop”. This slangism clarifies the perception and attitude of Chinese culture to Japanese scenes of rape, erotomania, and pornography. The origin of the name of a species of butterfly (“small elegant butterfly”) registered in 2009 in the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, associated

with a young Japanese girl who, according to the legend, turned into a butterfly after the cruel behaviour of a loved one.

“*Long white whale*” 尾申鲸 [wěishēnjīng] – the pronunciation of the expression sounds similar to the word 卫生巾 [wèishēngjīn] – “feminine hygiene products”. According to the Chinese search engine Baidu, the term was suggested by a Chinese navigator. This means hunting white whales to obtain materials for making lingerie;

Humor is another equally important factor that promotes active use and rapid spread of such expressions. In particular, young people resort to the means of homophony, using the hieroglyph 大虾 [dà xiā] “big shrimp” instead 大侠 [dàxiá] “crackjack”, 油墨 [yóumò] “mask” – instead of 幽默 [yōumò] “humor”. The use of digital elements is becoming widespread: for example “886” [bā bā] to render the meaning of “拜拜” [báibá] (bye-bye), “526” [wǔ èr líng] – in the meaning of “我爱你” [wǒ ài nǐ] (I love you), “995” [jiǔ jiǔ wǔ] – «救救我» [jiù jiù wǒ] (Rescue me!) etc.

There are two reasons underlying the active use of numbers in Chinese culture. The first comes from Eastern philosophy, according to which the whole world is divided into two opposite poles — “yin” and “yang”. It means the opposition of light and darkness, heaven and earth, animate and inanimate, male and female. The second factor is directly related to the homophony, which attributes additional connotation. In fact, homophony for modern Chinese emphasizes the understanding of the symbolism of numbers, which, given the homophonic features, is often important when choosing a date for an important event (family, business, etc.).

It is worth noting that numbers are used more often than words in modern Internet communication (more often — in instant messengers, for example, ICQ, QQ), which probably results from a general law of economy of linguistic means. The number 2 means inequality and contradictions underlying the world division. Two is “yin” — earthly, feminine, conflict, unfavorable beginning. At the same time, “2” is often used in modern Internet communication instead of the hieroglyph 爱 (“love”, “to love”), because it is easier to type “2” on the keyboard than to type hieroglyph “love” in pīnyīn (Latinized transcription of Chinese language units), and then choose.

The number “5” is the most important for the Chinese because of the natural rhythm of the world order. Moreover, it is the most appropriate equivalent to “7” in European culture. Associative series for the number “5” is 五行 “five elements”, 五气 “five pneumas”, 五声 “five

sounds”, 世界四方 “four cardinal directions” plus 中心 “center”, etc. In Internet discourse, “5” is used instead of the hieroglyph 我 (pronoun “I”). Hence, the homophone for the number “5” is the hieroglyph 无 — “nothing”. The number “6” in the Chinese mentality is associated with success. Sometimes 6 [liu] is used to mean 乐 [le] — to rejoice. It should be noted that the number “666” in China is not associated with the “number of the devil”, but means the sky. The hieroglyph 流 “stream” acts as a homophone to the number “6”.

Finally, the favourite number in the Celestial Empire is “8” — a symbol of perfection and completeness. The associative series of this number is 八个方向 “eight directions”, 八个季节 “eight seasons”, and 八个风 “eight winds”, which determine the weather. The number “8” is used in sacral-symbolic expressions: 八个天主 “8 immortals”, 八个节日 “eight holidays”, 八个宝 “8 jewels”, 八个精神 “8 spirits”. The Chinese pronounce the number “8” as [ba], while it is pronounced as [fa] — “to get rich” in the south of the country. This is why the Chinese like the numbers which include 8.

Discussion

Therefore, the analysis of English- and Chinese-language slang gave a lot for understanding the trends of development of English and Chinese languages in general, as well as for the formation of a linguistic and linguistic-philosophical, social portrait of a young native speaker. As for the English discourse, it is noticeable that it is multinational, so it does not have a coherent linguistic-philosophical background, which is present in the more homogeneous Chinese-speaking community of users. Everyone is influenced by the very structure of Internet communication, such as the need to provide quick and accurate, witty responses and reactions to content and content of communication. Hence the brevity and semantic and emotional capacity of slangisms in both Chinese and English. There is a noticeable opposition in the semiotics of Chinese slang, which is caused by different religious and worldview ideas of the East and the West. Those slang sevens that are perceived as negative in the English-speaking world have a positive connotation in Chinese interpretation.

It’s necessary to point out that Chinese internet discourse superimposes the youth's digitized postmodern perception of the world on ancient Chinese philosophy, powerfully presented in the inherently archaic Chinese language. Certain linguistic archetypes are visible in Chinese

slang, which we have analyzed in the results block. In addition, in Chinese slang, compared to English, a distinct zoomorphic and numerological meaning can be traced, which requires separate research on the subject of the connection with the Chinese religious worldview and its compilation on modern technogenic worldview.

Observation of the communication of young people on the Internet revealed the basic moral, ethical and value orientations of young people, identified modern students' areas of interest, and gave grounds for the analysis of the use of slang in real communication. This is necessary for the presentation of the student social group as a society with its own language and value hierarchy. So, slangs and slang phrases selected for analysis were grouped into the following conceptspheres: "learning", "appearance", "flirting, love", "leisure", "alcohol, drugs", "names of food and drinks", "lexical means of expressing emotional state", "criminal acts or hooliganism", "intelligence, character traits", "essentials", "socially and culturally determined phenomena". We distinguished two groups among the above-mentioned lexico-semantic groups — "learning" and "leisure", which are the most important conceptspheres, in our opinion, and which most fully describe the lives of young people through the prism of expressive Internet communication (Mazer & Hunt, 2008).

Youth slang is multifunctional and is stable as a linguistic phenomenon in general and as a special language level in particular despite the variability of its thesaurus. The main functions of youth slang are expressiveness, figurativeness and familiarity of the speaker in relation to the subject of language. The language of youth is an interesting linguistic material for research, as it strives to diversify it in different ways (Redkozubova, 2018). The reason is the aspiration of the younger generation to limit the scope of their community, to separate themselves from the mass of social strata, achieving intra-group linguistic mutual identification and self-presentation (Abu Sa'aleek, 2015). The basic values of a typical young person are individualism, personal space, equality of people, time (punctuality), informality (in clothing, communication), diligence, straightforwardness, prospects (Alshawi, 2018). So, youth identify themselves as a separate group with their own value orientation, which is different from the classical one.

According to Izmaylova et al. (2017), one of the main functions of slang is social, which involves establishing trusting relationships at work, promoting professional growth, because it is known that important decisions and great ideas often come in an informal atmosphere. This is confirmed by the slangs analysed in the lexico-semantic group of "learning". Liu et al. (2019) prove

that the linguo-pragmatic function of language, slang in particular, which marketers and the advertising industry successfully use, is also growing from this perspective. Among others, this aspect is emphasized in the active involvement of the symbolism of numbers in Chinese culture, in particular the number “8”. Silvia et al. (2020) state that the media actively use appropriate verbal markers with the connotation of warning, protection, which sometimes turns into toxic intimidation. Redkozubova (2017) fairly notes that slang is an effective tool to manipulate and create a situation of persuasion of the recipient.

The positive impact of using slangs to learn foreign languages (Boylu & Kardaş, 2020), enriching the vocabulary of language (Babin, 2020; Medvid & Andriiash, 2019; Li, 2018), determining the level of emotional and intellectual development of primary school pupils (Kang, 2019; Dalzell, 2018) was emphasized. Hubysh and Holoboroda (2020) conclude that slang is sometimes difficult to translate as a linguistic element of another language, as it is often nationally marked. Therefore, background knowledge, a certain background of the origin and existence of this slang are required for the appropriate translation. This requires knowledge about the leisure of English-speaking young people to understand their slang or learning peculiarities. It is necessary to learn the history of the country to understand the symbolism of numbers in Chinese culture. At the same time, Li (2016) found that in some languages, in particular Chinese, English slang has become so actively used in the speech of native Chinese that it creates a new form of language, which is different from slang. The theoretical consequences of this study are an extension of the scope of youth slang, the conceptual sphere of youth communications. The practical implications of this study are the possibility of using its results to write monographs on slang in Internet communication among young people.

Limitations of the study

The main limitations of the study are its coverage exclusively of student youth. In the long run, the research we have started needs to be expanded through the study of the conceptual sphere of the slang of representatives of various professions, areas of activity, professional communities, and social groups. Regional and gender differences in slang use also need to be considered. Expansion of research vectors will significantly enrich the scientific potential for language research in the dynamics of its development.

Conclusions

The study of English and Chinese slang identified the main conceptospheres of the slang of modern English-speaking youth in cyberspace: “learning”, “leisure”, “love”, “appearance”, “emotion”, “drinking”, “personal traits”, “Internet”. Chinese-language discourse in Internet communication is presented less vividly than English-language. The Internet space initiates the emergence of numerous slangs, the stimulation of neosemantic processes in modern Chinese. The study results can be used in classes of lexicology, sociology, intercultural communication, linguistics, and English. A promising research interest is the study of the features of youth slang in other types of discourse.

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