

Word-building mechanism of functioning of drug addicts' jargon (a case study of regional sociolinguistic research and data of substandard lexicography)

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Abstract. This article reveals the role of word-building in the performance of such drug addicts' jargon functions as nominative, utilitarian, worldview, pseudo-aesthetic, playing, agitational, symbolic, identification, and conspiratorial. Based on a material of vocabulary gathered during the regional sociolinguistic studies, as well as in the analysis of dictionaries of drug addicts' jargon the word-building means of implementing of named functions are studied; the issue of natural causes of drug addicts' jargon "conspiracy" is discussed; it is concluded that drug addicts' jargon is not a primitive subsystem of their language, and its negative assessment on the part of scientists is often caused by a negative attitude to the phenomenon of drug addiction.

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Introduction

The scientific study of social and communicative system of the modern big city requires a broad consideration of all used by the urban population and interacting social dialects, and also by their social substrate, i.e. the varied socio-communicative groups. According to the remark of B.A. Larin, the language often acts as "a factor of social differentiation to no lesser degree than the social integration. We feel its organizational role even stronger – because it can be means of social groups clumping" [1: 191].

The development of Russian philology speaks for the preeminent interests of scientists in such urban subsystems of the national language, as colloquial language, vernacular, general jargon (slang), and youth slang, for which the integrative function (association of large public communicative communities) is likely more important than the differentiating (isolation of a separate communicative community). L.P. Krysin points out that "before recent time, in the national Russian philology it was believed that the communicative role of social jargons and argot is small" [2: 25]. The still insufficient knowledge about the many varieties of social jargons (jargons of drug addicts, homosexuals, prostitutes, representatives of youth subcultures, etc.) is explained by this, as well as the previously existing unspoken prohibition on the study of "linguistic correlates" of negative social phenomena. That is why, "the objective of Russian philology is, in particular, to study the diversity of modern social jargons and their relation to the human environment, which generates such jargons" [2: 26]. Its solution requires the applied

researches, which help to understand the consciousness specifics of its members, their values, motives and needs through the analysis of "language" that is used by one or another cast.

In this article we will discuss the drug addicts' jargon. The Criminologists, Psychologists and Narcologists are mainly engaged in its collecting and studying (S.V. Berezin, A.G. Danilin, K.S. Lisetski, A.G. Lomtev, L.D. Miroshnichenko, E.A. Nazarov, et al; you can observe a similar tendency abroad; see, for example: [3; 4]). At the same time, as it was noted by V.E. Pelipas, "In the literature there are almost no examples of linguistic and, in particular, phonetic analysis of the drug addicts' slang" [5:75]. Apparently, we can agree that this fact is explained by the "social deviousness of potential respondents from the linguists" [6]. And although, over the past decade even the Dissertational linguistic studies of the drug addicts' jargon have appeared [7; 8], it is not necessary to speak about its active studying: there are only a few scientific articles, where it appears as a relatively independent linguistic object of study [9-16].

The understudied study of the drug addicts' jargon by the linguists is evidenced by the fact that the degree of its prevalence and usage is estimated differently by the linguists and experts, who interact directly with the drug addicts. O.P. Ermakova writes about "a certain caste" of the drug addicts' jargon, and that it's "limited to a small number of carriers, and only the separate words are beyond this scope" [17: X], whereas L.D. Miroshnichenko characterizes it as "a widely used language" and "a quite significant part of the Russian culture" [18: 3], due to the constant increase in the number of drug addicts (in Russia there

are more than three million of such people). The expansion of the drug addicts' jargon is manifested in its implementation in the everyday speech of non-addicted youth as it was shown by the results of the socio-psycholinguistic study we conducted in Kemerovo (for details see [19]), and the comparative vocabulary data [20]. It's consistently that A.S. Merkulova defines the jargon of drug addicts as "the semi-opened lexical and phraseological subsystem used by one or another social group for the purpose of separation from the rest linguistic community" [8: 11].

Thus, the objective of this work is the development of sociolinguistic aspects of studying the drug addicts' jargon, and namely, the comprehension of contribution of the word-building units and mechanisms in the implementation of its key functions. In this case, the material for analysis is not only the already recorded in dictionaries lexicon, but the words received during the anonymous sociolinguistic survey of drug addicts in Kemerovo.

Main body

Reference to the features of the cant word formation of the drug addicts is determined by the fact that, to one extent or another, the functions of the drug addicts cant are implemented exactly due to the word-formation means: (1) nominative, (2) utilitarian (function of the speech means saving), (3) worldview, (4) pseudo-aesthetic (protective and compensatory), (5) playing (6), agitational (7), symbolic, (8) identification (stratified), (9) conspiratorial (see, [5, 6, 8, 21]).

(1) It makes sense to discuss the prevalence of *nominative* function over others in the case that if a slang word is created for the denomination of the reality, action, and so on, as well as variations thereof that do not have a single-word denomination in the literary language, or in the professional lexical system of medical staff and criminologists; compare: *check* – 'dose of the drug (usually heroin) in a bag prepared for sale', *vzryvat* – 'to light a cigarette with the drug', *poiskukha* – 'obsession of search for the allegedly hidden drugs, appearing upon the occurrence of drug fasting', *svinyak*, *svin* – 'state of strong hunger after the drug use', *volokushka* – 'state of the drug intoxication during the second, the longest phase with the experience of ease and detachment', *pobochka* – 'an undesirable side effect of the drug use', *seksovukha* – 'the home-made methamphetamine that has aphrodisiac properties' et al. (hereinafter there are examples from [18], as well as words, collected during our own research). "The value" of any slang word rarely consists in satisfaction of the nominative needs, so the creation of most of the words is associated with the implementation of a number of functions.

(2) The *utilitarian* function is realized by the words formed by using various kinds of truncations, abbreviations and concretions; compare: *dichka* – 'wild cannabis', *barbi* – 'barbiturates', *fen* – 'amphetamine', *tsykl* – 'cyclodol', *khimka* – 'the drug made from the hemp plants using the chemical solvents', *nark* – 'a drug addict' etc.

(3-6) The *worldview*, *pseudo-aesthetic*, *playing* and *agitational* functions of the drug addicts cant are closely interrelated. The core values of the narcotic worldview is a narcotic substance and states, achieved with the help of it [22, 47], and in this case the use of cant "models in the speech form of a new system of meanings generated by the new value and semantic formation – the desire to be intoxicated" [22: 59]. Verbalization of such socially disapproved value orientation is associated with the aestheticization, a special mysterious aura around everything that is associated with the drugs. The question is about *pseudo-aestheticization* because the usage of most drugs destroys human health and can lead to painful untimely death, that cannot be attributed by a normal person to the potential objects of aestheticization, romanticizing. Prerequisite of the aesthetization of the drug addict lifestyle is the destruction of the idea of drug abuse danger that is achieved by converting the drug usage in a carefree game. Compare: *ekskursiya* – 'search for the drugs', *bulavka*, *pchelka*, – 'injection needle', *chpoknut'sya*, *vtreskat'sya* – 'make an injection', *zabaldet* – 'begin to experience the drug intoxication', *tsvetomuzyka* – 'state of the drug euphoria', etc. As a result, the words involved in aesthetization of the narcotic lifestyle and hindered its adequate perception, perform the agitational function, because they serve as a lure for potential first-timers.

Usually, the above functions forming the narcotic consciousness and worldview, are performed by the words, carrying a positive emotional and expressive nature. First of all, this is achieved by using diminutive suffixes in the formation of the slang words. Compare, for example, some "affectionate" names of the drugs: *mul'tyashka*, – 'heroin', *belyashka*, – 'cocaine', *chernyashka*, *chernysh*, – 'raw opium', *kislushka*, – 'LSD', *travka*, – 'the hemp drug', *morfusha* – 'morphine', *relashka* – 'relanium or reladorm', *loshadka* – 'methadone'. Moreover, for many cant units, formed with the help of semantic derivation the producing words are the words of the literary language, containing in its lexical meaning an element of positive evaluation and associated with the romance of adventures, or, on the contrary, related to the everyday life, and hence, non-hazardous activity. Compare: *yubilyar* – 'a person who has used drugs for the first time', *omolodit'sya* – 'to lower the tolerance to the drug, deliberately bearing the abstinence for it', *malinka* – 'mixture of drugs', *bukhta*, *villa* – 'a

narcotics den', *vitamin* – 'amphetamine', *compote* – 'decoction of poppy heads with sugar', *festival* – 'a party with drugs', *rafinad*, *rai* – 'cocaine', *teacher* – 'an experienced drug addict, explaining to the beginners how to prepare and use the drugs', *marathon* – 'long, continuous use of drugs', *pirate* – 'a drug dealer', etc.

(7) The *symbolic* function of many elements of the drug addicts cant is shown in the fact that they are able to perform as a verbal substitution, "a symbol of the resulting euphoria, a verbal sign included in the integrated personal (psychophysiological) experience of the state of intoxication" [21:73]. As a consequence, the use of the slang words may exacerbate the desire to psychoactive substances and serve as a conditioned and reflectory "trigger" that initiates a chain of actions associated with the drug usage. First of all, such a function is owned by the words describing the pleasant sensations during taking drugs and empowered within the cant with the positive emotional and expressive color. It is necessary to emphasize the verbs without prefixes (*baldet'*, *kaifovat'*, *plyt'*, *letet'*, *peret'sya*, *tatschit'sya*, *taskovat'*, *torchat'*, *khumarit'* – *get off, be hooked, swim, fly, dig, go bananas, be high, etc.* – 'to experience the state of the narcotics euphoria') and the verbs with prefixes (*priperet'sya*, *protatschit'sya*, *protorchat'sya*, *udolbat'sya*, *uletet'*, *otorvat'sya*, *razlomit'sya* – *dig, go bananas, fly away, etc.* – 'to achieve the state of euphoria'), as well as numerous nouns: non-derivative and derivative, formed with the suffixes, including the zero suffix (*prokhod*, *razlom* – *joyride* – 'the beginning of the narcotics euphoria', *volok*, *volokukha*, *volokusha*, *tyaga* – *haul, traction* – 'second, the longest stage of the narcotics euphoria', *baldezh*, *bodryak*, *volna*, *prukha*, *rasporka*, *taska*, *ugar*, *ulet*, *emat* – *high, glad hander, wave, luck, junk, fly away, etc.* – 'the state of the narcotics euphoria in general').

(8) The *identification* (stratified) function of the drug addicts cant is shown in the fact that its elements can serve as an indicator of involvement of the people using it in the communicative community associated with the illicit trafficking and usage of psychoactive substances. Sometimes this function in a bit more narrow sense associated with the communication limited by the group boundaries, is also known as the "character" [23: 252]. In this case it makes sense to speak about the special role of the word-building means with reference to the words having formally similar equivalents in the literary language, but differing from them by the morphemic composition; compare: *abstinence* – *abstyaga*, *abstyak*; *ampoule* – *ampulyak*; *vein* – *venyak*, *venyarka*; *needle* – *iglyak*, *morphine* – *morfusha*; *narcotic addict* – *nark*, *narkosha*, *narkot*; *opium* – *opiukha* et al. The identification function can be

performed by the semantic derivatives used in the combinations atypical for the literary language; compare the possible expressions *kupit' detsyl pyli* – *to buy the decyl of dust* (i.e. the small amount of the drug in the form of powder), **nasobirat deneg na dva cheka* – *to gather up money for the two checks* (i.e. for two doses of the drug, usually heroin, packed in a paper bag).

(9) The performance by the drug addicts cant of the *conspiratorial* function is determined by the fact that, in view of the illegality of trafficking of the most narcotic substances (as opposed, for example, to alcohol and tobacco), "the addict is forced by circumstances to break the law and go into some kind of cult, although he/she would prefer to feel the pleasure of the drugs in a normal human environment without violating the laws" [18: 7]. Therefore, the community of drug addicts tends to lead a secluded life if applicable, closely related with the major life situations of the drug addict: search, purchase, preparation, use of the drugs and experience of euphoria. As a result, a special vocabulary is gradually created, reflecting those situations that need to be hidden, and therefore incomprehensible to the ordinary native speakers that make the elements of the drug addicts cant as a means of conspiracy.

Due to the fact that the drug addicts cant, as well as the criminal cant, performs the conspiratorial function, some researchers consider it as a "leading hallmark" [7, 10]. In this case, V.E. Pelipas estimates the cant (in the terminology of the scientist it is the slang) of the drug addicts as a primitive and brutal kind of encrypted language, "that does not require special education, the subtleties of language proficiency, taste, and other signs of intelligence" [5: 75], and as the closest to the criminal argot. The primitiveness of the drug addicts and criminal "languages", from the point of view of the author, is shown in the following: "In both cases, the forming of the new speak uses the word creation – quite straight, spontaneous, unsystematic (non-systemic) and wasteful, as evidenced by the numerous synonyms. Moreover, the more subtle ways of encryption are ignored – for example, verbigeration special syntactic and grammatical distortions, language inserts, substitution, etc." [5: 75]. In our view, a scientist requires from the drug addicts cant something to what, like the criminal argot, it is not targeted, unlike the so-called gibberish. M.A. Grachev therefore indicates that if in the gibberish "the lexical tokens are created mechanically, by a conation, then the argotisms are created spontaneously. The argot word derivation is not used as the means of changing the countrywide lexical tokens for the purposes of secrecy, but performs other functions, the most important of which are the following: strengthening of the speech

expressivity, creation of new nominations, and – in some cases – the desire for economy of language material" [24: 11-12]. It is necessary to note that according to the origin and functions the drug addicts cant is very similar to a subsystem of the national language such as argot. Compare: "If in the professional "languages" and argot the dominant social feature is the occupation (in the second case, an occupation with the negative characteristics from the society), so the cant is defined by the social feature of age. The first two varieties of social dialects are determined by the socio-productive request (already by the type of the deprecated occupation), are responsible for it, and are considered by us as the types of speech. The Cants are cemented only by the emotional and psychological inquiry and are the socio-speech style of the youth" [25: 13]. At the same time, the drug addicts cant is endowed with many features of the cant in the strict sense of the word, because introduction of many words is motivated exactly by the "emotional and psychological inquiry" that is quite natural, because most drug addicts cant speakers are young people. In other words, the conspiratorial function of argot (and, therefore, of the drug addicts cant) is secondary to its other functions and is not connected with the task-oriented artificial modifications of the external form of words designed to hide the content of the voice message. Therefore, the "encoding nature of argotisms, as indicated by the researchers, is the incomprehensibility of their origin and meaning" [24: 16], similar to the well-known case of a sequential transformation of the name "*Alexander* → *Aleksasha* → *Sasha* → *Sashura* → *Shura*" and determined by the oral form of the cant existence, involving the formal diffuseness of the words. Apparently, one has to agree with the fact that at the present stage of development of language and the science of language the secret, encrypted nature of argot is a "beautiful, still not fully dispelled legend" [26: 7].

Incomprehensibility, the apparent encrypted nature of drug addicts' cant is associated with two more factors. Firstly, many of its elements are used for the denomination of realities unknown for the ordinary native speaker (similarly, the word *forsunka*, *nozzle* may be deemed as encrypted for the person who does not know anything about the structure of engines and boilers). Second, many words in the cant are the borrowings from English, Arabic, Chinese, Tajik and other languages. Compare: *spid*, – 'amphetamine' (from the English '*speed*'); *drugstore* – 'pharmacy, where you can get intoxicating drugs' (from the English *drugstore* – '*pharmacy*'); *H* – 'heroin' (from the English *H* – 'first letter of the word *heroin*'); *pusher* – 'a drug retailer' (from the English '*pusher*'); *kizyak*, *khusus*, *chars* – 'hashish'; *kara-khan*,

kashkar, *han* – 'opium', etc.

Findings

The negative assessment of the jargon drug addicts' and, in particular, operating in it mechanisms of the new words formation as "a quite straight, spontaneous, unsystematic (non-systemic) and wasteful" [5: 75] is largely untrue and can be explained due to the general negative attitude towards the drug abuse as a harmful social phenomenon.

The jargon of drug addicts, just like any natural language subsystem, "lives" under the general laws of that language, and for its functioning it is quite corresponds to the general system regularities operating in the language. Thus, the most typical for the Russian language methods of new words-building (affixation, addition, fusion, semantic derivation, etc.) are also used in the jargon of drug addicts. Moreover, there are also such words in the jargon of drug addicts, which show us the presence of lingua creative abilities at his user.

One of the manifestations of the language game in the jargon of drug addicts is a quite frequency operation of the mechanism of so-called secondary nomination (read more about it in [27]), that presupposes a conscious playing transformation of the word's external appearance to form "a special familiarity both with respect to the subject of speech, and to the interlocutor" [27: 256]. For example, please, compare the names of drugs: *Gashek* 'hasheesh', *Gerasim* 'heroin', *Dima* 'diphenylhydramine', *Katya* 'codein', *Lyusya* 'LSD', *Marfa* 'morphine', *Marya Ivanovna* 'marijuana', *pendel* 'Penthalgin', *salut* 'solutan', *Fedia* 'ephedrine', *Fenya* 'fenamin'.

Another direction of the language game – is the parodying of medical terminology, usually is manifested in the creation of words using the special formants, involved in the formation of terms of various medical fields; comp.: *durmachina* 'injector', *stremopatia* 'the unconscious condition of fear associated with the onset of narcotic starvation', *durtsefal* 'bamboo puffer', *torchikoz* 'taking drugs'. Many of the words of the jargon of drug addicts represent the figurative, metaphorical names in their basis. Comp.: *metro* 'axillary vein', *injector* 'syringe, injector', *rabbit* 'drug addict used by other addicts to test the effect of the self-made drugs'.

It is obvious that in all the above-described phenomena that characterize the functioning of the drug addicts' jargon, the word-building plays a significant – if not the key – role.

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