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## ИСТОРИЯ И ОСОБЕННОСТИ ЭТИМОЛОГИИ АНГЛИЙСКОГО СЛЕНГА

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### Аннотация

В статье рассматривается этимология англоязычного сленга. Сленг как языковое и культурное явление достаточно широко используется в современной литературе, речи, средствах массовой информации и интернет ресурсах. В статье дается дефиниция термина «сленг» и краткий обзор его происхождения, а также факторы, повлиявшие на его развитие.

**Ключевые слова:** сленг, неформальная лексика, разговорная речь, социальная субкультура.

## HISTORY AND FEATURES OF THE ETYMOLOGY OF ENGLISH SLANG

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### ABSTRACT

The article deals with the etymology of English slang. Slang as a linguistic and cultural phenomenon is quite widely used in modern literature, speech, the mass media and Internet resources. The article gives a definition of "slang" and a brief overview of its source, and the factors that influenced its development.

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**Keywords:** slang, informal language, colloquial speech, social subculture.

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### Introduction

Nowadays slang is one of the most interesting language system in the modern linguistics. Various cultures have such a means which allows to express themselves, their thoughts and ideas. Approximately a vocabulary of any language can be change greatly for the life-period of one generation. These changes can concern the increase and the decrease of the vocabulary and the transformation of a word or a whole expression which change fast and dynamically. Therefore, a language or rather to say, its word shell is very changeable in such societies.

According to the data, the English slang is widely spread and exist in the language for some time then it disappears and allows a new lexical unit to replace it. The researchers consider slang from both positive and negative sides, as something contrast to a standard language, which is not used by the educated society. Nevertheless, we can observe how slang is integrating in all spheres of human activities, as it tends to briefness and expressiveness and appears as a protest to an accustomed or a long word, as a desire to name an objects or its features on its own. Slang is changeable. Researching its history we can say, that some words are used only for some time, other words transform into the common speech. Nowadays, slang takes a firm position in the language and this phenomenon is usual for all walks of life.

Speaking about the origin, we would like to say that the word "slang" has some synonyms such as "lingo, argot, jargon, cant" and each of them has the same meaning "jargon". There is no data when the English slang was used in oral speech for the first time. However in medieval ages such writers as Geoffrey Chaucer, William of Malmesbury and William Caxton found territorial differences in the dialects and in the pronunciation of many peoples and cultures. This fact provides the development of the term "slang". For the first time it was recorded in the written form in the XVIII century and meant the thieves' speech. As a result, slang entered into the colloquial speech of different professional and social groups at the end of the XIX century. But till the XIX century slang was a new type of speech, which was used by the criminals and the scams in the different pubs and gambling houses. At first the English jargon with criminal features was considered as foreign. Thus many scientist suggested, that it had appeared in Romania or had been connected with the French language.

The criminal jargon was developing extremely slowly despite its fast spread. Only some thousands of people used the criminal jargon in their speech. The application of such a type of lexis was not acceptable in the colloquial and written speech of different walks of life. That is why in the XVIII century the teachers of various schooling establishment persuaded their students that the fact, that the English criminal jargon was incorrect and distorted from the point of view of the English language. Consequently, it was forbidden for aristocracy and the whole intelligentsia.

Later, there were presented some researching works where both slang and jargon were used. Khomyakov V. A. Said in one of his books, that the term "slang" with the meaning "language of low or vulgar type" was applied in 1756 for the first time. And since 1802 this term has been considered as "The cant or jargon of a certain class or period". In 1818 the term "slang" meant a language of a high colloquial type, but it was lower than literal English, due to the words which had some special meaning. [1, p. 43].

The British lexicographer Francis Grose created a term "slang" as a synonym to "cant" in his famous dictionary. "A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue" in 1785: slang - cant language. He explained the slang through the cant. In the introduction to his dictionary Grose divided the informal language into 2 parts, calling the first part the "slang" or "cant". Perhaps, due to great authority of Grose's work, as his dictionary was rather popular and was considered

as a standard, the following authors of dictionaries of a low language started to connect slang with cant.

Among the researchers there is no common how to define the term "slang". One of the most researchers of slang E. Partridge and his followers as well as Games B. Greenough and George Lyman Kittredge gave the following definition of slang: "existing in the colloquial speech very fragile, unstable, uncodified, random combinations of lexemes, which reflect the social consciousness of people belonging to a definite social or professional group". [2 p. 9].

There is a theory, which presents a Scandinavian origin of the word "slang" in the etymological dictionary by Barnhart C.L. [3, p.1015]. This factor is connected with the Scandinavian invasion of Europe. It is known that England was attacked by the Scandinavians in the IX-X centuries. It could cause the changes of the English language, which absorbed a lot of Scandinavian expressions, including the word "slang". The Norwegian language also has similar forms, the word "slang" means a special style of the oral or written speech. [3, p.1015].

In the Soviet linguistics the most detailed definition of the slang was given by Khomyakov V. A. "Sleng is a relatively stable for a certain period, widely used, stylistically marked lexical item (nouns, adjectives and verbs, which mean events of everyday life, things, acts and features). It is an element of expressive colloquialism, which is included in the standard language and is impure by its origin and its degree of closeness to a literal standard, which has pejorative expressiveness. [4, p.11].

The etymology of the development can be learnt by numerous historical reference books and literal essays. However, any printed or electronic resource has no accurate definition of the term "slang". Besides, there is no common opinion about its origin among the linguists. The term "slang" has some meanings and various authors of dictionaries and researching have given various definitions of slang for last ten years. Besides, this term causes a great discussion among the researchers. The development of slang has been lasting for several centuries. During this period, it has changed greatly. As a result its meaningful structure has changed as well. So there is a great number of the definitions of this phenomenon, which has some uncertainty in theoretical conception to this day. This fact is described in researching works of linguists who have studied or are studying this problem.

### **Conclusion**

Slang develop as a language as well. That is why this problem is actual in the lexicology till the language will exist.

Thus, slang and language are inseparable parts of the whole item. Both of them have continued their development since medieval centuries and they have definite sets of expressions and words, which modern generation use in different social group. It is impossible to list the number of slang items, which are used nowadays. Despite the fact, that slang stands out of the literary language, it is widely used in the informal speech.

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