

## THE USE OF SLANG BY TEENAGERS IN ENGLISH FICTION

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Acest articol tratează tema: Folosirea slangului de către adolescenți în opere literare. Actualitatea temei reiese din faptul că toți cei care învață limba engleză ca limbă străină acordă o atenție deosebită limbii standard, slangul fiind ignorat, cu toate că el există și este deseori utilizat în limbajul de zi cu zi al vorbitorilor nativi de limbă engleză, în opere literare și în orice împrejurări. Articolul de față se ocupă nemijlocit de slangul folosit de adolescenți în cele trei opere literare menționate.

Sunt analizate trăsăturile caracteristice ale vorbirii adolescenților din punct de vedere stilistic, lexical și fonetic. Mai mult ca atât, toate exemplele sunt selectate conform diferitelor domenii, așa ca: evaluarea pozitivă sau negativă a unei persoane sau fapt, drogurile, relațiile dintre adolescenți, alcoolul. Acest articol este de mare ajutor celor care intenționează să citească o operă literară menționată în articol, întrucât el oferă o caracteristică succintă a limbajului folosit de adolescenți, fapt ce va facilita înțelegerea mai complexă a operei.

Language, according to social scientists, is what differentiates humans from other animals. Language contains the symbolic meanings and shared consciousness of a society, whether it is the consciousness of class, ethnicity, geography or even age. Perhaps one of the most interesting facets of language is its mutability. Languages change from place to place, past to present, and among different age groups.

Slang's popularity and power with speakers of American English should not come as a surprise. By design, slang is wittier and cleverer than Standard English. With slang, each generation or subculture/counterculture group has the chance to shape and propagate its own lexicon, and is doing so to exercise originality and imagination. The end result is a lively, playful body of language that is at times used for no other reasons than that it is fun to use and identifies the speaker as clever and witty.

However annoying the slang might be, we can be assured that as time passes, the common non-words and phrases die out. Slang is used as the language of the young, a "cool" or "dope" way to express ideas and emotions without using the tongue of the establishment or "the man".

Teenage slang has always been important in youth culture. It's the dialect of the young generation, a special language that says "This is us. This is how we talk". Today the use of slang continues to be a major factor in how youths in America communicate with one another.

The purpose of such speech has gone well beyond the deception of adults to a sort of communication barrier between kids and adults.

Teenagers could now speak of such acts as drinking, smoking, or even sex right in front of their parents, teachers or even campus aides. As time went on, teens found such convenience in this new lingo that the vocabulary began expanding at a tremendous rate.

Most of the literary works are written in Standard English because namely it shows the beauty of the language's face and body. We, the learners of English, can easily understand the message of these works because they are written in the language that we study at school or at the university. Still, some authors use slang words and expressions in their works in order to make them more stylistically colored and attractive. As examples can serve such literary works as "Catcher in the Rye" by J.D. Salinger, "Harry Potter" by J.K. Rowling, "Clockwork Orange" by A. Burgess. The language used by these authors is similar to the language spoken by native speaker teenagers.

The usage of such a language makes their works appear more realistic, it is as if these are the teenagers who wrote and not the real authors.

While reading one of these works, we, the learners of English, will encounter difficulties because we are not familiar to the colloquial aspect of the language unless we had to deal with native speakers. So it is very important to identify and to analyze the features that characterizes teenagers' speech and what fields attract it most of all.

First of all his "free" speaking style is achieved by the following devices:

1) **The frequent usage of parasite words and phrases**

- a) *and all – and so on and so forth.* E.g. "How my parents were occupied and all"; "They are nice and all"; "He's my brother and all"; "that was in the Revolutionary war and all" etc.

Sometimes instead of *and all*, teenagers use equivalents of this meaning that are more emotionally colored such as *and stuff and crap*. E.g. "godman checkups *and stuff*"; "tickets *and stuff*"

b) *or something, or anything – something like that*. E.g. "my whole goddam autobiography *or anything*"; "You were supposed to commit suicide *or something*"; "no gloves *or anything*" etc.

c) *sort of – (a kind of, a if) together with adjectives and verbs*. E.g. "you feel *sort of* sorry for her"; "she was *sort of* deaf"; "I *sort of* brushed my hair back"; "I was bringing to *sort of* hate him".

d) **Demonstrative pronouns *this, these, those***. E.g. "He wrote *this* terrific book".

2) **Repetitions** such as in the following examples. "What I *did* was I *went over*" etc.

3) **Deviation from the grammatical norms**.

a) *using the nominal predicate instead of gerund after an account of*. E.g. "on account of I wasn't coming back"; "on account of it was Sunday".

b) *using the wrong form of the verb*. E.g. "I'd *woke* him up"; "She's been laying here all night"

c) **using personal pronouns of Nominative case instead of Objective case**.

E.g. "told Allie and *I*"; "kept telling Stradlater and *I*"; "I woke *he* and his wife up".

d) **Deviation from syntax such as:**

1. *Different types of elliptical constructions*: E.g. "except Alice had a cold" instead of "except that Alice had a cold"; "I don't like that type language" instead of "I don't like that type of language"

2. *"double negation"* E.g. "I hardly didn't even know"; "didn't hardly say anything".

3. **Deviation from the phonetic norm expressed in written form**.

a) *the falling of the final "g"* E.g. callin', comin', hurtin', roughin'.

b) *the elision of the unstressed them* E.g. cut'em, for'em, got'em, tell'em

the elision and mispronunciation of pronoun you. E.g. ain'tcha = ain't you; can'tcha = can't you; don'tcha = don't you; didja = did you; hellja = hell did you; letcha = let you;

*word elision and word shortening*. Eg. c'mon = come on; g'by = good buy; gimme = give me; gonna = going to; gotta = got to; how'bout = how about; lemme = let me;

4) **the usage of slang phrases such as**: to shoot the bull; to chew the rag; to chew the fat; to chatter; to shoot the crap; to shoot the breeze;

Emotionality is the second feature that characterizes teenagers' speech. The authors use lexical means to express the feelings of their characters.

1) **The frequent use of evaluative epithets such as:**

a) **"phony"** – not genuine, false E.g. "phony bastard", "phony smile", "phony handshake".

b) **"lousy"** – interior, second-rate, unpleasant. E.g. "lousy teeth", "lousy manners", "lousy childhood", "lousy movie", "she was worried that it might make her legs lousy".

c) **"terrific"**, that might be used in a positive evaluation with the meaning "great".

E.g. "terrific book", "terrific friend", "terrific guy", "terrific sentence", "terrific legs", "she looked terrific" etc., and in a negative evaluation meaning "disgusting".

E.g. "terrific bore", "terrific lecture"

and as an emphatic word E.g. "terrific liar"; "terrific patience"; "terrifically bored"

2) **A frequent use of interjections**.

a) **"Boy"** – exclamation of surprise used to express pleasure or disgust. E.g. "Boy, did I get in that house fast"; "Boy, I know it"; "Boy, you can't imagine how sorry I was getting".

b) **for Chrissake! – for Christ's sake** - a highly offensive term used to express surprise, annoyance, exasperation or alarm. E.g. "for Chrissake, grow up"; "I don't know for Chrissake".

We should also analyse the *vulgarisms* used by teenagers. They make their language even more emotional coloured.

1. *The emphatic epithet "goddam" (= god – damned)*.

That is used to express anger, frustration, or some other strong emotion. Besides this, damn or its euphemistic equivalent darn, is frequently met in such expressions: E.g. "not to give a damn" – "I don't care"; "not worth a damn" – "It is worthless".

2. Emphatic intensifier “**hell**” (or its euphemistical equivalent “heck”) that is used in different syntactic structures,

- *in comparisons* E.g. “touchy as hell”, “old as hell”, “charming as hell”, “sad as hell”, “cold as hell”, “dirty as hell”, “mad as hell”, “rusty as hell”, “playful as hell”, “hate like hell”, etc
- *in different collocations* E.g. “get the hell out”, “clear the hell out”, “bang the hell out”, etc.
- *used together with verbs in order to express the opposite meaning*. E.g. “the hell he did” etc.
- *with relative pronouns* E.g. “where the hell”, “when the hell”, “what the heck”, etc
- *used as adverbial intensifier*. E.g. “it annoyed hell out of old Ackley”; “that annoyed hell out of me”; “it fascinated hell out of her”; “it scared hell out of old Phoebe”.

3. The vulgar word “**ass**”, that is used both in its **direct meaning**: E.g. “freezing my ass off” and **indirect meaning**: E.g. “a nice old guy that didn’t know his ass from his elbow” – a nice old man who is not able to understand anything, or is very ignorant.

“**Ass**” can also be used as an interjection E.g. “Game my ass. Some game”. – A very good game. “lovely my ass”, “strange my ass”.

4. Another feature of teenagers’ speech is its tendency to use *adjectives ending with the suffix -y* E.g. “unhairy”, “grippy”, “Christmasy”, “poverty”, “pimply”, “wrinkly”, “fisty”.

The same adjectives are used as adverbs in compound adjectives constructions such as:

E.g. “bleedy – looking”, “corny – looking”, “horny – looking”, “pimply – looking”, “showy – looking” etc.

Most of the slang words and expressions used by teenagers refer to negative/positive and positive evaluation of a thing or a person. This is due to the fact that slang is emotionally colored slang that is mostly used to express someone’s feelings and emotions. That is that language that shows the intensity of their emotions. “madman stuff” – stupid story; “turd” – a highly offensive term for a piece of excrement or dung; “to horse around” – to act like a fool; “dopy” – stupid; “hot – shot guy” – a successful, important, or highly skilled person; “sharp as a tack” – very intelligent, bright.

The other slang words and expressions refer to 1. **alcohol**: E.g. “booze hound” – a drunkard; “slightly crooked” – drunk; “You could tell he was a little oiled up” – It could be easily seen that he had drunken. 2. **Relation between a girl and a boy**: E.g. “to give smb. a feel” – to touch somebody or a part of somebody’s body for the purpose of sexual gratification; “give her the time” – to sleep with her; “to shack up” – to live with a lover without being married. 3. **Drugs**: E.g. “drencrom” – drug; “knives”, “synthemesc”, “vellocet”. These are the spheres that are prohibited for teenagers that is why they are forced to find substitutes so that nobody will understand them. Thus the aim of using slang by teenagers is seldom the exchange of information. More often, slang serves social purposes:

- to identify members of a group; -to change the level of discourse in the direction of informality; -to oppose established authority; -to escape the dull familiarity of standard words; -to suggest an escape from the established routine of everyday life; -the pure joy of making sounds; -to attract attention by making noise.

Slang is the linguistic equivalent of fashion and serves much the same purpose. Like stylish clothing and modes of popular entertainment, effective slang must be new, appealing, and able to gain acceptance in a group quickly. Slang is typically cultivated among people in society who leave little real political power (adolescents, college students) or who have reason to hide from people in authority what they know or do.

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Prezentat la 03.04.07