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УДК 81

***E.A. Redkozubova****Southern federal university**Rostov-on-Don, Russia**kateredkozubova@mail.ru***THE PHENOMENON OF THE SECONDARY CODING  
IN MODERN ENGLISH SLANG****[*Е. Редкозубова* Сущность вторичного кодирования  
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It is considered the essence of modern English slang as an encoded communicative system. The aim of the article is to research the basic models and ways of forming such slang items which can be characterized as belonging to the secondary encoded communication. Such phenomena as slang and effective communication skills are analyzed. Main thematic slang groups and subgroups are established. Special attention is paid to rhyming slang. The relevance of such kind of research is determined by the urgent necessity of theoretical reflection on basic communicative problems. Effective communication requires very good knowledge of such areas as ethnolinguistics (anthropological linguistics, or linguistic anthropology) and sociolinguistics related to this ethnic group or ethnic groups, to this society or social group. In other words, a person who wants to communicate successfully with foreign speakers is expected to know Standard as well as Sub-Standard (or Non-Standard), to get used to the mentality of other people (ethnic group) or subethnos, to the mentality of its particular social (caste, class, professional, gender) group. Language is not just a self-contained system of signs; it is a system of rules determining the human communicative behavior in a particular culture and society.

Key words: communication, English, encoding, decoding, linguistics, slang.

Human communication is an interesting and complex process, the mechanisms of which are still not fully understood. There are different approaches to the analysis and description of communication, one of them is based on such concepts as code, encoding and decoding.

Slang, according to modern researchers of English Substandard, can be related to the field of encrypted (or coded) communication because slang as well as jargon is a kind of code, which is quite clear to in-members and rather obscure and cryptic to out-members [2; 3; 5; 4]. Such secrecy and to some extent isolation lead to the fact that many aspects of slang remain poorly understood. It is exactly what

happened to the mechanisms of secondary coding in modern English slang, as they still have not received proper attention from linguists. However, the analysis of the secondary coding is interesting from the following points of view:

as a linguistic phenomenon

as a psycho-linguistic item

as a cultural and sociolinguistic manifestation.

Taking into account all characteristic features of slang it is obvious that this phenomenon can be studied both as a pure linguistic and psychological item and as a sociolinguistic phenomenon.

On the other hand, the study of slang as a system, practically not influenced by codification, i.e. not normalized (or standardized), allows us to see the latest trends in word-formation, current, or "fashionable" thematic groups, that is, to see what happens with that part of the language, which is to a certain extent free from the shackles of grammatical, phonetic, spelling, and other rules. These reasons prove the relevance of the studies undertaken by the author.

According to our observation, slang is far more often used than studied but, nonetheless, it forms an essential component of the 'tangled tradition' of English lexicological and lexicographical study.

Contemporary civilization is influenced by such a huge number of issues including modernization and innovations in many spheres of social life that it has become quite common to come across slang words and expressions not only in every-day speech but in mass media as well: in television programs, magazine and newspaper articles, net-sites, politicians' speech etc. Obviously nowadays slang plays a much more important role in the social and political discourse as it has become a considerable part of it. There has been much discussion whether it is appropriate or not to use slang in such spheres. Nevertheless, slang is getting more and more widely-spread. It is an important part of modern communication in different societies.

Human communication is regarded to be one of the most essential and central activities for people's survival in the civilization. Human beings are social animals who need to interact with others of the kind (people) to satisfy their needs and necessities. Consequently the need and importance of communication has always been fundamental for people at different historical moments.

We always needed effective communication skills to achieve and promote goals. But nowadays with the manifold growth of challenge and competition in every sphere and field of business, political, economical and social life, it has obviously become more significant and gained much more importance. At the present a speaker should be even more well-resourced and well-equipped with excellent communication skills to realize his tasks and to achieve his aims and targets professionally and effectively.

One of the ways to investigate the communication process is to describe it in the terms of encoding and decoding. These phenomena are studied by different scientific branches, for example lexical pragmatics, which is based on the assumption that the meaning communicated by a lexical unit is determined by its semantics. Typically lexical pragmatics analyzes the processes involved in bridging the gap between the encoded and the communicated meaning of words. A different but still related subject matter is the following: whether different types of linguistic encoding can play an empirically distinguishable role in lexical pragmatics.

Encoding refers to the process where people choose, consciously or unconsciously, a certain modality and method by which they can create and send a message to someone.

Decoding refers to the process where a person receives signals from the encoder and translates these signals into meaningful messages. Just as "adequate" encoding depends on understanding and using verbal and nonverbal behavior rules, "adequate" decoding depends on these rules so that messages were interpreted in the way, they were supposed to convey. A part of verbal communication which clearly shows its encoded character is constituted by lexemes generated by more or less closed social groups. Such lexemes are created conventionally, according to a certain agreement, i.e. they represent slang and some other phenomena closely related to it (argot, jargon). Such verbal signs can be considered codes or items of coded communication.

There exist many different definitions of slang introduced by its numerous researches. The definition of slang proposed by V.A. Khomyakov can be taken as a basic one, because in it slang is depicted as an "umbrella" term that includes both jargon and cant (it is created by more closed groups, therefore, it is more encoded by nature), and general slang (it is created by less closed groups, it is comprehensible and less coded).

So, according to V.A. Khomyakov, slang is the main component of the Non-Standard language (the norm of the second level), which includes, on the one hand, social options: cant and some close to cant speech phenomena (Rhyming slang and others), professional and group jargon, and on the other hand, widespread and the familiar social microsystem, highly heterogeneous in its origin, composition and its relation to the norm of the first level having distinct emotionally expressive evaluative character and peculiar vocabulary in which words and phrases often implicitly convey sarcasm on social, ethical, aesthetic, linguistic and numerous other conventions and authorities [5].

The most encoded part of English slang is Rhyming slang (Cockney slang). It plays an important role in the history of the English language and contributes much to the culture of London and the whole Kingdom. The study of Rhyming slang has been and is still being conducted by both foreign and domestic linguists. In our opinion, the following important aspects of Rhyming slang study should be considered: the problem of the origin, classification and issues of terminological nature.

There is a synonymous term existing alongside the term “Rhyming slang”, it is Rhyming Substitution. The latter term is quite fair as it reveals the mechanism of rhyming slang, and therefore captures the essence of the studied phenomenon and can be considered quite successful. One more term may be proposed to define what is usually called Rhyming slang – it is rhyming cant. The main reason for such term is the secret, highly encrypted and encoded nature of this language phenomenon.

Originally, as slang researchers underline, this encoded vernacular was the secret language of the British underworld, a lingua franca among thieves, tramps, and beggars. But the suggestion that cant is a language separate from English is far from being completely accurate. Some of words and word combinations, though they began life as cant terms, have, by whatever development and progression (and their records in numerous dictionaries of cant may well have been part of that process), become part of the so-called ‘mainstream or conventional language’ and could hardly be described as cant.

Cant as well as slang represents an exceptionally interesting though rather complicated object for studies. Many linguists are quite aware of the possible unreliability of such sources as cant dictionaries and raise the (eventually unanswerable) question throughout the times gone by about how precise and correct these sources are. Nowadays scientists turn the focus of their attention from

the pragmatic historical question of what cant dictionaries can tell us about the lingo of the criminal world in this epoch to an analysis of what these thesauruses can tell us about contemporary outlooks at crime, the underworld and its practices. It is quite obvious that many of those whom we call the recorders of jargon and cant strictly speaking were far from being elements of the criminal illegal underworld. It is well-known that some of these recorders, Harman for example, represented the powers- that- be and the establishment, so there may be at least the risk that the criminals they checked the vocabulary with were intentionally misinforming and misleading them. It explains the existence of absolutely non-motivated items of rhyming slang in modern English: such items were possibly invented by criminals whose main purpose was to deceive and mislead those who were too inquisitive and curious.

Rhyming slang in modern English has such basic functions as coding, euphemistic and aesthetic functions. Expressions of Rhyming slang are common in English folklore, literature, they are heard on radio and television, and they are used for pragmatic purposes in the advertising of goods and services. In modern English slang in its numerous territorial variants (American, British, Australian, New Zealand) one can observe an interesting language process which has been undeservedly ignored by researchers of slang and, as a result, has not received any more or less complete study or description up to now. Meanwhile, this process is interesting both from the point of view of its linguistic peculiarities and psycholinguistic, cultural, and sociolinguistic features. We are talking about the so-called secondary coding in the slang of the modern English language. This encoding is done in different ways, but the main (most productive, common) are four.

The first method of the secondary encoding is such clipping of the rhyming expression (the area of the primary coding), that leads to disappearance of any rhyme which is the main mechanism of creating Rhyming slang expressions. For example, instead of such Rhyming slang expression as *green eyes = nice* only the first word *green* is used, but it still preserves the semantics of the adjective *nice*.

Another way of the secondary encoding in slang is the following: not a literary English word is substituted by a rhyming slang but a slang word is, i.e. a unit that was previously encrypted undergoes a certain encoding again. So, in English slang a police officer is called *a cop*, then this slangy word rhymes with the phrase *ginger pop* which replaces the noun *cop*. Thus, the *ginger pop* means *a police officer*.

Most expressions of rhyming slang (81%) belong to the first type: they substitute for standard words; less number of expressions of Rhyming slang belongs to the second class: they substitute for slang words. In spite of the fact that in England people using Rhyming slang have always been considered uneducated and ignorant, the slang of Cockney is built so ingeniously, that at the beginning of existence of the rhyming slang an uninitiated person would not be able to understand the simplest phrase based on the Rhyming slang. Usually clipped variants of Cockney expressions are used in speech. For example, instead of the phrase *butcher's hook* (it means a *look*) one may use *a butcher's*. The microcontext makes it clear: *Take a butcher's at that!* Or: *Let's go for a Ruby!* = *Let us eat a curry!* (Ruby Murray (Irish singer) = curry; Ruby=curry).

Thus, in Cockney slang a special encoded system is used when a phrase or a part of it substitutes a word. Names of famous people are often used in Rhyming slang.

Except the two mentioned above mechanisms of encoding it is necessary to distinguish two more ways. The less productive method of the secondary encoding is related to the back slang. Units of back slang can perform functions of lexical duplicates – deputies of literary words (primary encoding) and lexical duplicates – by the deputies of slang words (secondary encoding). The well-known examples of back slang are words like *peels* (instead of sleep), *ynom* (instead of money), *slip* (instead of pills) etc.

Finally, there is another way of the secondary encoding. The essence of this method is the following: a back-slang word (i.e. such a word which is pronounced in reverse order, from right to left) can be substituted by a unit of Rhyming slang. This way of encoding is the most complicated one: first, unit of back slang is created (e.g. knife→fine), and then the word *fine* is replaced by the Rhyming expression of *two and nine*. In the end, you may receive Rhyming slang *two and nine* which gets the semantics of the noun *knife*.

The analysis of the Rhyming slang semantics indicates that the encoding is usually the result of 1) the desire to conceal meaning when talking about something illegal or immoral or too rough and so on; 2) the play of words; 3) euphemistic use of words. Therefore, the thematic groups are very diverse: from the theme "Breaking the Law" to the theme "Family". The greatest number of units of the secondary coding is found in the following thematic groups: People, Breaking the Law, Alcohol, Family, Home, Health, Nationality.

According to the analysis of modern slang dictionaries and those recorded in the dictionary by E. Partridge [1] in contemporary slang (late XX – early XXI centuries) there is a tendency to create more rhyming units, composed of anthroponyms – names of famous people (actors, athletes, politicians). Such expressions of Rhyming slang occur in all thematic groups.

Being taken as a basis for slang studies the theory of encoded communication can give rise to a new system of definitions (cant/argot, jargon, slang).

Argot (cant) is considered to be viewed as a completely encoded language system understandable for those who are so to say “in the know”. The in-group of users is strictly limited and fixed.

Jargon can be referred to as a semi-encoded language system. Its sphere of usage is closely connected with professional groups, that is why we traditionally distinguish such classes as professional jargon (for example, medical jargon) and group jargon (skaters’ or free-riders’ specific language).

Slang represents a system which is widely used and comprehensible, but still encoded and it demands certain knowledge of modern notions and current events. Slang helps to realize the strategy of manipulation because of its linguistic nature, the essence of which is to conceal or change meanings. Slang can help the speaker to hide the real meaning; it can make the audience hesitate which semantics is applied. Being polysemantic and metaphoric slangy units are not always suitable for clear explanation or persuasion, but they are highly effective in manipulation.

In conclusion, it is necessary to underline the following idea (which is hardly new but still true): human communication in general and language communication in particular are subject to the conventions that have been adopted in this or that ethnic culture or the social group in the present historical epoch. Therefore, knowledge of the language system and its phonological, lexical and grammatical rules is not enough for those whose pragmatic aim is to communicate successfully.

Effective communication requires very good knowledge of such areas as ethnolinguistics (anthropological linguistics, or linguistic anthropology) and sociolinguistics related to this ethnic group or ethnic groups, to this society or social group. In other words, a person who wants to communicate successfully with foreign speakers is expected to know Standard as well as Sub-Standard (or Non-Standard), to get used to the mentality of other people (ethnic group) or subethnos, to the mentality of its particular social (caste, class, professional, gender) group.

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To sum up, it would be appropriate to stress that slang can be viewed as a kind of code the analysis of which seems interesting and fruitful for further studies of slang and for better understanding of this linguistic phenomenon.

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*15 сентября 2016 г.*