Professionally-related communication: sociolinguistic monitoring of most frequently used words of youth sociolect

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Abstract. The current article deals with functioning of youth sociolect in professionally-related and everyday communication. It relies on the concept of professional discourse. A special attention is given to professional interaction, based on professional interests. The field study is developed to investigate the usage of youth sociolect words, involving macro-sociolinguistic monitoring of frequency occurrence of English slang words in production sphere. The initial stage of the field study included the questionnaire development, defining the boundaries of monitoring, the number of lexical items under monitoring, the place of monitoring and the age of respondents. The second step in the project was monitoring. Finally, the results of monitoring were analyzed. The study was carried out through on-line questionnaire, face-to-face and remote interviewing, administered to respondents both in the production sphere and other spheres of activity. Native and non-native speakers from different countries and regions participated in the on-line questionnaire. The monitoring of frequency usage demonstrates that a limited number of lexical units of English youth slang are used in professional activity; the other part of lexicon presents a diverse picture. The article gives a number of diagrams and graphs to provide statistics confirming priority and universal use of English words of youth slang.

1. Introduction

As is known, the typology of social communication is based on the stratification of society and professional activity, with industrial specific communication features in economy, politics and social sphere as well [1]. Moreover, there are such spheres as everyday communication, professional, business communication, sport business communication and etc. It is assumed that in our modern era of communication, professional communication, which is connected with production relations, processes and other components of production activity, is ever more relevant as we spend most of our hours at workplace and occupation provides us with livelihood opportunities [2]. Thus, it makes possible to speak about professional discourse as an interaction of people united by professional interests. Professional discourse has received scholarly attention depending on the respective research approach: strategic planning in communicative management of production companies [3], corporate communication at enterprise in terms of communication backgrounds of business discourse [4], professional oath [5] and etc. However, there is no empirical research on professional communication in the domestic communicative studies [cf. 6].

The purpose of this study is to investigate the frequency use of youth words, taking into consideration the fact that youth language penetrates in all spheres of communication including the professional language. This idea is confirmed by findings of Degaltseva which provide evidence for
the fact that most jargon words used by bank employees are the words of youth and computer jargons [7, p 66]. Moreover, the frequency of word use of the youth sociolect in professional and everyday communication will be compared in this study. As it deals with the processes of society and language interaction, this article provides understanding of youth language as a variety of social and group dialects; thus, in this respect, the term “youth sociolect” is used. The youth sociolect is a multidimensional phenomenon including such parameters as language, social status, culture and age; at the same time it performs differentiating as well as integrating functions [8]. The evolution of the youth sociolect can be proved by its concept and theme development, increase and renewal of lexical items and phraseology. Currently, young people demonstrate different sociolects depending on a sphere of communication [9]. This allows us to suggest “common youth jargon” which it is understood by all young people regardless their social background, occupation and professional activity and is being actively used in conversational interaction [10].

The study focuses on lexical units of youth sociolect, codified in the Dictionary of Youth Slang, based on English, German, French and Russian languages [11]. Therefore, the frequency usage of English words from this dictionary, used in professionally-related and everyday spheres of communication, is studied [12].

Related research topics include sociolinguistic studies, studies on evaluation, studies on pragmatic and youth language.

The study is based on the methods adopted in the area of macro- and microsociolinguistics: field study, questionnaire, face-to-face and on-line interviewing, statistical data processing as well as methods of scientific description: observation, collection of information, interpretation and classification [13].

2. Discussion of results
This work is thus designed to investigate the use of youth sociolect in professional as well as everyday communication. The starting point for the analysis involved the development of the pilot project for the field study aimed at macro-sociolinguistic monitoring of the frequency use of English youth slang words. It included the questionnaire development, the boundaries of monitoring, the number of lexical items under monitoring, the place of monitoring and the age of respondents; the second step of the project included monitoring. Finally, the results of monitoring were analyzed [14].

Native and non-native speakers (they speak English) participated in the Internet on-line survey, the 16 - 44 age range. The survey was carried out on such websites as Google Forms and Survio. The respondents were from different spheres of activity (Professional employee, student English teacher, Employee, Industrial Engineer, Part-time employee, 3D Artist, HR employee, Assistant, Foreign Education Consultant, Freelancer), as well as different countries of residence (Poland, United Kingdom, Russia, Viet Nam, Yemen, Thailand, Belgium, Croatia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Turkey, Germany, Algeria, U.S.A., Greece, Egypt, Indonesia, Korea).

The questionnaire includes a sample of 20 slang words from the dictionary, listed in alphabetical order.
Figure 1. The example of the questionnaire on the website Google Forms:
The study examined 200 lexical units. 155 informants were included in the survey. Let us consider some examples.

2.1. Field study 1.
The questionnaire includes the following slang words [11, pp 92-96].
1. **Ya** • yes; you; your
2. **To yack** • to talk, especially uninterruptedly and idly; gab; chatter
3. **Yada** • et cetera (popularized by the Jerry Seinfeld tv show)
4. **Yahoo** • exclamation of delight; "hooray"; a weird person
5. **Yard** • a thousand dollars
6. **Yas** • used to express high levels of approval; often times the word is drawn out to add emphasis!
7. **Yawn** • something that is very boring
8. **Yay!** • an exclamation of happiness
9. **Yeah** • conversational form of “yes”
10. **Yeet** • used when the speaker is excited about the situation
11. **Yeezy** • rapper Kanye West
12. **Yes man** • a person who always agrees with superiors
13. **Yikes!** • an expression of surprise or astonishment
14. **YMMV** • short for “your mileage may vary”
15. **Yo** • used to get someone's attention; used as a prefix to a greeting
16. **Yob** • a loutish, uncultured person; back-slang; derived from the word boy
17. **To yoink** • to steal
18. **YOLO** • acronym for "you only live once"
19. **Yonks** • a long time
20. **Yo-yo** • a stupid person; someone who doesn't know what he's doing

![Age](image_url)

**Figure 2.** Age of respondents.
As to the language competence, there are 5 native speakers and 12 are non-native speakers.
Figure 5. The results on lexical unit 2. (To yack - to talk, especially uninterruptedly and idly; gab; chatter)

The frequency of the word usage (from 0 to 5 where 0 - do not meet at all, 5 - very often) demonstrates the results: “0: do not meet at all” - 7 informants, “1” - 4 informants, “2: rare case” - 3 informants, “3” - 2 informants, “4” - 1 informant and “5: very often” - 0 informant.

Figure 6. Sphere of usage.

According to the sphere of usage, the results are: “parents” - 3 informants, “university/work” - 1 informant, “friends” - 8 informants, “home” - 1 informant, “other: I know the word, but never use it” - 1 informant, “other: Jews” - 1 informant, “other”: none” - 1 informant and “other”: never use it/nor hear of it spoken” - 1 informant.
The respondents meet the word: “Internet” - 8 informants; “TV” - 3 informants; “Communication” - 5 informants; “Other”: my synagogue” - 1 informant

According to the results of field study 1, almost all the words from the above list are popular not only with young people [14]. The most frequently used words are lexical units expressing exclamation and agreement, for instance, ya, yeah, yay!, yikes! and etc. In particular, the word yeah is most frequently used slang word. It is worth noting that all 17 informants meet it very often as among friends as well in professional communication [15].

According to the frequency usage, all 17 informants use the word very often.

Figure 7. Where you can meet it.

Figure 8. The results on lexical unit 9. (Yeah - conversational form of “yes”)

Figure 9. Sphere of usage.
As to the spheres of usage, the results as follows: “Parents” - 1 informant, “University/work” - 0 informant, “Friends” - 13 informants, “Home” - 0 informant and “Other: all” - 3 informants. Where you can meet: “Internet” - 4 informants, “TV” - 0 informant, “Communication” – 11 informants and “other: all” - 2 informants.

Thus, the most frequent areas where the informants use slang words are friends, the Internet and professional activity. According to the field study, the frequency of word use is as follows: every communication is 86% and professionally-related communication is 14%. The less popular word is yet. 13 respondents out of 17 have not met it before. The abbreviations YOLO and YMMV are not widely used as well. Let us consider some examples.

Example 1. Yeezy is a rap-singer Kanye West. As this proper word characterizes both a man and a subculture, such as hip-hop, it is an expected result that the greater part of the respondents does not know this word. The most popular spheres of usage are the Internet and friends; one of the informants reports that he has heard this word on the radio.

Example 2. A remarkable fact that has emerged is that the word “Yes man” is mainly used in such spheres of activity as work and university.

Example 3. The word “Yo” is used to attract attention and as a greeting. The word is quite popular among the respondents. All 17 informants report that communication with friends, the Internet and professional activity are the most popular spheres of this word usage.

2.2. Field study 2.

8 native speakers from Great Britain and United States participated in the survey as well from Lebanon, Nigeria (English is the official language) and Germany (respondent is from Great Britain). Moreover, 7 non-native speakers from Germany, Portugal, Croatia, Mexico, Columbia and Costa Rika were also included in the study. With regard to gender, 7 informants are females and 8 are males.

Table 1. Representation of respondents (language, country, place of study/work, age and gender).

| No. | English            | Country    | Place of study/work      | Age | Gender |
|-----|--------------------|------------|--------------------------|-----|--------|
| 3   | Non-native speaker | Germany    | University Oldenburg     | 28  | Female |
| 5   | Non-native speaker | Mexico     | Mexico City Intl. Airport| 29  | Male   |
| 6   | Native speaker     | UK         | Self employed            | 26  | Male   |
| 7   | Native speaker     | Germany    | door2door                | 22  | Male   |
| 8   | Native speaker     | United States | Restaurant             | 25  | Female |
| 13  | Native speaker     | Costa Rica | Government               | 35  | Female |
| 14  | Native speaker     | UK         | Education                | 27  | Male   |
| 15  | Non-native speaker | Croatia    | Volgograd State Technical University | 23 | Female |

Thus, the findings of the study indicate that most frequently used words from the list are “OK” и “Oh my god!” . The phrases “On the heavy” and “On the beam” are less frequently used. A part of respondents reports that they do not know about 50% of words.
Figure 10. Frequency of word use.

2.3. Field study 3.
17 respondents were included in this study, mostly native speakers.

The respondents hear most words from the given list from their friends (11): dinosaur, dorky, drag queen, duck soup, dude, dynamite, fam, fangirl, flake out, fleek, to be on fleek. 6 words from the list are used in communication: deadbeat, deck, dirt, fairdinkum, fomo, front. At working place/study they hear the following words more often (5): dampsquib, deadpan, dodgy, dunno, flatoutlike a lizarddrinking. Only 2 words are heard from parents: dicey, dinero. The word “dirty” is the only word which is mostly used at home. The words used more frequently are fam, dinero. The less used word is dragqueen.

Conclusion
Thus, the results of the survey indicate that 20% of 200 analyzed words are most frequently used by the speakers both in professionally-related and every day communication; 80% of words present a diverse picture: some lexical units are not used/ heard /identified; some of the words are used/ heard /identified in rare cases. In some cases respondents (mostly native speakers) identified a word but marked it as obsolete. For instance, the slang word “backhander”:

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backhander
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|                     | yes | no |
|---------------------|-----|----|
| with parents        | 0%  | 100%|
| with friends        | 0%  | 100%|
| at home             | 0%  | 100%|
| Internet            | 0%  | 100%|
| TV                  | 0%  | 100%|
| Communication       | 0%  | 100%|
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15 (100%)
The lexical unit “backhander” is reported as an “unknown word”. However, a native speaker reports that the word “bribe” is used instead of “backhander” in his state [15].

Out of 20\% most frequently used youth slang words, about 7-8\% of lexical units are regularly used in the production spheres, such as Mexico City Intl. Airport, Restaurant, Industrial Engineer, Professional employee and etc. [16].

In conclusion, the present article makes evident the relevance of studying youth language in the field of professional communication [17]. It should be noted that this kind of research is a rare case, mainly, slang words manifestation has given attention in fiction, mass-media, the Internet, in other words, multi-media sources. Therefore, this pilot study is an attempt to cover global and macro-sociological space of English slang words function in professionally-related and everyday communication. Finally, it indicates the necessity to supply monitoring of words usage in productive sphere by providing particular themes with transcripts.

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