

# The Importance Of Youth Lexicon Dictionaries In Linguistics

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**Abstract:** This article discusses the concept of youth lexicon, the dictionaries related to youth language, and their specific characteristics.

**Keywords:** youth lexicon, colloquial language, youth language, lexicography, specialized dictionaries, monolingual and bilingual dictionaries.

In recent years, youth language or slang has become a distinct subject of study within the field of linguistics. In society, young people use unique, emotionally rich, and sometimes informal lexical means to fulfill their communicative needs. There is an increasing need to study this lexical layer on a scientific basis, to systematize it, and to record it through official dictionaries. Dictionaries that include youth lexicon are particularly important tools for documenting language change and for advancing modern linguistics.

Youth Lexicon is a specific vocabulary system used by a certain generation of young people during a particular period. When interpreted lexicographically, various approaches are applied to the youth lexicon. For example, explanatory dictionaries incorporate words related to youth lexicon into their entries and provide definitions; specialized youth lexicon dictionaries contain only words and expressions used among young people; sociolinguistic dictionaries investigate language change based on age groups and compile youth vocabulary that is used in social life. In addition, historical and evolutionary dictionaries examine how youth lexicon changes over time. These dictionaries study and compare the earlier and current usage of words and expressions associated with youth language.

In general, the inclusion of youth lexicon in lexicography contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamic and ever-changing nature of language.

From a methodological perspective of lexicographic analysis, the French linguist Algirdas Julien Greimas proposed that in lexicological analysis, words should be grouped according to their meanings rather than arranged in alphabetical order. In this study, however, a complete lexicological analysis is not conducted; instead, a lexicological approach is applied specifically to identify newly coined words created by young people and to determine their place within the language system.<sup>1</sup>

In terms of content, lexicographic analysis can take two main forms:

1. Historical analysis – investigates the historical development of a word.
2. Descriptive analysis – examines the vocabulary used by a specific social group within a particular period from a synchronic perspective (i.e., in its current state).

The linguist A. J. Greimas defines descriptive lexicology as follows: "Descriptive lexicology generally does not take into account the historical meaning of words; it is

<sup>1</sup> Greimas A. J. On meaning: selected writings in semiotic theory. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, P. 165.

limited to simple description, which may later serve as a basis for historical or semantic research<sup>2</sup>."

Based on this, the methodological part of the study is aimed at explaining how the analysis is carried out. In the study of youth language lexicon, the first step is to identify creatively used words and expressions. Then, the methods through which these new words are formed are determined. Subsequently, their integration into the system of the standard (i.e., official) language is examined. The following lexicological phenomena are taken into account in the analysis

- Linguistic transference – the adoption of words from other languages through borrowing, substitution, or translation;
- Intensification of meaning – the enhancement of word meaning (e.g., through exaggeration);
- Semantic shift – changes in meaning (e.g., semantic loss and reinterpretation);
- Neologisms – newly coined lexical units formed by word formation processes;
- Sound-based words – words based on sound (e.g., onomatopoeic formations).

In lexicography, units belonging to the youth lexicon are classified into lexicological categories. Finally, their integration into the main language system and their semantic meanings are analyzed.

In linguistics, the need to solve language-related issues, to create scientific sources about words that can serve humanity for years to come, and to establish an order of words that are universally understandable and usable in communication without difficulty – all of these factors have given rise to the demand for dictionary compilation. Dictionaries usually serve a practical function, but they also play an important role in defining the theoretical basis of language in lexicography. Dictionaries designed to meet the scientific needs of linguistics are structured according to specific principles, compilation procedures, and dictionary classifications. The process of dictionary compilation is highly complex, and the Russian linguist L. V. Shcherba acknowledged this by stating: "I do not know of any field in linguistics more serious than lexicography."<sup>3</sup> In Duden, Germany's most renowned dictionary, a dictionary is defined as follows:

"A dictionary is a reference work in which linguistic units are listed and explained according to certain criteria. It may be monolingual, bilingual, etymological, a dictionary of the German language, or a dictionary of colloquial German."<sup>4</sup>

Lexicographic archiving of youth lexicon in the German-speaking world has, up to the present day, not been carried out in a fully systematic manner. However, publishing houses have made efforts to engage in this work. General observations on German youth language dictionaries published since the early 1980s show that, in the process of compiling these dictionaries, publishers have not only aimed to inform their target audience based on lexicographic criteria and reliable sources, but have also

<sup>2</sup> Greimas A. J. On meaning: selected writings in semiotic theory. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, P. 169.

<sup>3</sup> Щерба Л. В. Русско-французский словарь. Москва, Советская энциклопедия, 1936, С. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Duden-Das Bedeutungswörterbuch. Berlin, Dudenverlag, 2018, S. 1137.

included definitions of youth-related vocabulary along with critical reflections on their semantic, grammatical, and morphological features.

Since the early 1980s, there has been a noticeable increase in the publication of dictionaries related to youth lexicon on the German book market—a trend that has, to a certain extent, continued up to the present day. This reflects a growing interest in the phenomenon of youth language within society.

As linguist Eva Neuland has noted, many of the youth language dictionaries published so far are "at best popular and often lack scientific rigor."<sup>5</sup> Therefore, these dictionaries should not be approached with full scientific trust. On the contrary, it is essential to conduct an in-depth analysis of these works in terms of their content, form, and ideological orientation.

The growing acceptance of youth language in society—meaning that youth language styles are no longer limited to adolescents alone, but are increasingly penetrating various social domains—is reflected in the emergence of new types of dictionaries. In such dictionaries, terms like "New German," "trend words," or "group-related languages of youth" are often used instead of simply "youth language."

According to Wippermann, the expression "group-related languages of youth" refers to all individuals whose vocabulary changes in response to societal developments and technological demands. Several other scholars understand youth lexicon as a form of colloquial language used by individuals who consciously create such a "trend" vocabulary to construct their professional or social image, and present it as innovative knowledge for future discourses.

Since 2008, the Langenscheidt publishing house in Germany has been organizing the annual competition for the "Youth Word of the Year" ("Jugendwort des Jahres").<sup>6</sup> This competition focuses on identifying new and popular words that reflect the contemporary lexicon of young people.

These words rarely appear in official dictionaries, yet they are widely used in everyday spoken language. Youth language dictionaries serve to define these terms, document the contexts in which they are used, and trace how they have entered the language. Such dictionaries:

- Document contemporary lexical changes on a scientific basis;
- Highlight the distinctive features of youth language;
- Provide practical support for fields such as translation, literary studies, and cultural studies;
- Serve as reliable resources for teachers, journalists, and translators.

Today, there are several studies in Uzbek linguistics that explore youth lexicon, however, their main shortcoming lies in the fact that the vocabulary has not been systematically compiled in the form of dictionaries. Therefore, in modern linguistics, the creation of specialized dictionaries dedicated to youth lexicon is among the most pressing tasks.

In conclusion, dictionaries related to youth language are not only significant for linguistics, but also for social analysis, cultural research, education, and information sciences. They possess exceptional scientific value in identifying the dynamics of language, the communicative styles of social groups, and lexical innovations. Thus, the systematic study of youth language and its standardization through dictionaries must be considered one of the key directions in contemporary linguistic research.

<sup>5</sup> Neuland Eva. *Jugendsprache: Eine Einführung*. Tübingen, A. Francke Verlag, 2008, S. 265.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.langenscheidt.com/jugendwort-des-jahres>

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