

**MODERN YOUTH SPEECH: JARGON AND ITS USAGE
(ON THE EXAMPLE OF UZBEK AND TURKISH LANGUAGES)**

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ABSTRACT

This article examines jargon units that are widely used in the oral speech of modern youth and analyzes their social and communicative functions from a linguistic perspective. The main focus is placed on the lexical-semantic features, origins, functional potential, and role in discourse of contemporary jargon used in the Uzbek and Turkish languages. Based on illustrative examples, the study analyzes the functions of jargon as a marker of group affiliation among young people, a means of ensuring mutual understanding, and an indicator of modernity. The similarities and differences between Uzbek and Turkish jargons are examined from a comparative perspective. On the basis of the analysis, the role of these lexical units in youth speech and their sociolinguistic significance are elucidated.

Keywords

argot, jargon, slang, argotisms, jargonisms, modern language, youth speech, Uzbek language, Turkish language, lexical unit, sociolinguistics.

In the context of contemporary globalization, intercultural interaction, digital communication tools, and mass media exert a significant influence on various layers of language, particularly on the composition and usage of jargon. In this respect, Uzbek and Turkish represent languages that combine both unique and shared characteristics. In both languages, jargon created or adopted by young people is widespread, and its usage fulfills similar sociopragmatic functions; however, it differs in terms of lexical sources and stylistic features.

Vocabulary is an inseparable reflection of social thought, social structure, and cultural worldview. In particular, modern youth language is characterized by rapid changeability, informality, and group-specific features. Within this process, jargon units occupy a special place. Jargon refers to words used in the speech of representatives of a particular social class, stratum, or group, sometimes carrying a hidden meaning. Such units enhance communicative efficiency, create internal linguistic codes, and at times function as a means of humor, social distancing, or expressing group affiliation. These words belong to restricted lexical units and historically have been associated with the speech of specific social groups. Argot, by contrast, refers to lexemes with concealed meanings. Historically, the term *jargon* had a different meaning: it originated from Persian, where “*заргон*” (*zargun*) meant “*зар*” (gold-colored) “*zar*” – (gold), “*гун*” (*gun*) – color. Precious stones of such a hue were referred to as “jargon.” Today, however, the term is used to denote a special language employed within specific groups.¹

In many linguistic sources, the distinction between the terms *jargon* and *argot* is not clearly defined; they are often used interchangeably or conflated. Nevertheless, in essence, jargon and argot differ in their lexical-semantic characteristics, social functions, and spheres of usage, which necessitates distinguishing between them.

¹ Bolikulova Hilola. Italian Language Jargons. Samarkand.: 2020. – C. 48.

Early references to jargon are mainly found in Russian linguistics, particularly in the linguistic dictionaries of V. Dal, O. S. Akhmanova, S. I. Ozhegov, L. P. Timofeyev, and N. V. Vengrov. Subsequently, many linguists began to study jargon and its analysis.

According to V. Dal's² dictionary, *jargon* is recognized as a borrowing from French and translated as "speech," "conversation," "pronunciation," or "local dialect." However, the interpretation of *argot* as "*corporation des jeux*" ("a group of ill-intentioned people") indicates its historical association with socially marginal groups.

In Robert's dictionary, jargon is described as an incorrect, artificial language understandable only to a specific group. This perspective is also reflected in the views of many French linguists, emphasizing the encoding and concealment functions of jargon. Nevertheless, the *Larousse* dictionary defines *argot* as a system of words used for communication among members of a social or professional group, indicating that *argot* is not limited solely to illegal or deviant groups but also arises from professional and social communicative needs.

Linguist O. S. Akhmanova³ virtually eliminates the boundary between these two concepts, regarding *argot* and jargon as closely related phenomena and emphasizing the absence of a derogatory tone in *argot*.⁴ This view suggests that it is incorrect to always perceive *argot* as negative or coarse speech.

Argot, in comparison to jargon, is a partially secret language typically created by a group to prevent outsiders from understanding it. Dal emphasizes the difference between jargon and coded language, noting the absence of informality in the semantic scope of jargon.⁵

S. I. Ozhegov characterizes jargon as a special form of speech with a conditional nature, where "conditionality" implies that jargon words are often incomprehensible to outsiders and function as a coded means of communication within the group.⁶ Linguists L. P. Timofeyev⁷ and N. V. Vengrov interpret jargon as a system of artificial and conventional word combinations reflecting the aesthetic views and needs of a particular social group. According to them, jargon serves not only as a means of communication but also as a marker of distinctiveness, solidarity, and differentiation among group members, reflecting their linguistic worldview and cultural tastes.

In Uzbek linguistics, jargon as a restricted lexical unit has not been sufficiently studied as an independent lexical-semantic phenomenon. Only brief definitions and general descriptions of jargon used in certain fields are found in some scholarly works.

In the textbook *Modern Uzbek Literary Language* by A. Nurmonov, A. Sobirov, and Sh. Yusupova, intended for second-year academic lyceum students, *argot* and jargon are explained as socially restricted lexical units. Lexemes used only within certain social groups are referred to as socially restricted words. For example, among horse traders, words such as "*yakan*" (money)

² Даль В. Толковый словарь живого великорусского языка. – М.: 1998. – С. 546.

³ Ахманова О.С. Словарь лингвистических терминов, – М.: СЕ. 1969. – С. 419.

⁴ Дюбуа Ж., Эделин Ф., Клинкаберг Ж. "Общая риторика" – М.: Прогресс. 1986. – С. 391.

⁵ Копыленко М.М. "Основы этнолингвистики" – Алматы.: Евразия. 1995. – С. 47.

⁶ Ожегов С.И., Шведова Н.Ю. Толковый словарь русского языка.

⁷ Тимофеев Л.П., Венгров Н.В. Краткий словарь литературоведческих терминов. – Москва.: 1958. – С. 48.

and “*danap*” (girl) are used, while among railway inspectors, terms like “*qaychi*” (inspector) and *kolkhoz* (ticketless passenger) are common.⁸

In sociolinguistics textbooks for university students, detailed explanations of *argot*, *jargon*, and *slang* are provided. Jargon is described as a set of words and expressions primarily used to create distinctiveness and differentiation among interlocutors, often carrying specific meanings actively employed within group communication.

In Turkish linguistics, the concept of *jargon* is often used alongside *argot*, and in some cases they are treated as synonyms. Argot and jargon units are studied as important elements reflecting the social layers of the language system. Early manifestations of such units can be found in historical sources, particularly in Mahmud al-Kashgari’s *Diwan Lughat at-Turk* (1072), where certain lexical items with argotic meanings appear.⁹

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, jargon units were reflected in Turkish folk theater, especially in Karagöz and Hacivat performances. The character of Karagöz, representing folk speech humorously, played a significant role in conveying argotic language. Later, writers such as Orhan Kemal, Yaşar Kemal, and Sait Faik employed jargon as a stylistic device to artistically depict social stratification.

Argotisms and jargonisms refer to lexemes specific to a particular argot or jargon. Argo and jargon represent the “constructed languages” of certain social groups such as athletes, criminals, speculators, and others, and are therefore also referred to as social dialects.¹⁰ Jargonisms may carry not only hidden meanings but also connotations of disparagement or exaggeration. For instance, Uzbek “*quloq*” (informant), Russian “*stukach*”, and Turkish “*gammaz*” function as equivalents. Similarly, Uzbek youth slang “*g’isht*” (ugly) corresponds to Turkish “*kazma surat*”, while “*kulba*” (house) used among artists corresponds to Turkish “*delik*”. These units are mainly used in spoken language, though they may appear in literary works to enliven characters.

Professional and social jargons formed in the 19th century, particularly youth jargon, have become a separate field of linguistic research. While the boundary between professional jargon and literary language is relatively clear, defining the scope of youth jargon remains complex.

According to M. M. Kopilenko, individuals aged 14–25 use hundreds of special words and expressions in communication. Researchers sometimes interpret this layer as a non-systematic social-lexical repertoire and sometimes as an independent lexical-semantic subsystem of the language.

Youth jargon functions as a means of informal communication among peers, serving to express personal identity, group affiliation, and social status. Unlike school, student, or sports jargon, it retains a strong “outsider exclusion” function. Such jargon is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but also an important sociolinguistic marker. For example, in Uzbek, *dodasi* or “*oppoqdodasi*” (excellent, outstanding) is often used in commercial contexts, while in Turkish, similar meanings are conveyed by “*mük*” or “*manyak*”. For money, Uzbek uses “*soqqa, ko’k, ko’kat*” (US dollars), whereas Turkish employs “*yeşil, kağıt, Benjamin*”. The Uzbek jargon *strelka* (meeting) corresponds to Turkish “*mekan yapmak*”, and “*sirpandim*” (I left or escaped) corresponds to “*kaçtım*”. These examples demonstrate both similarities and differences between Uzbek and Turkish youth jargon and reflect the influence of contemporary cultural factors.¹¹

⁸ Nurmonov, A., Sobirov, A., Yusupova, Sh. *Modern Uzbek Literary Language*. – Tashkent.: – “Ilm Ziyoi,” – 2010. P. 64.

⁹ M. Arslan. *Argo Kitabi*. – Kitabevi.: – 2004. – S.47.

¹⁰ Jamolxonov. H. *Modern Uzbek Literary Language*. – Tashkent.: “Talqin,” – 2005 – P. 201.

¹¹ Usmanova, Sh., Bekmuhamedova, N., Iskandarova, G. *Sociolinguistics*. – Tashkent.: 2013.

Today, jargon is widely used in modern youth speech. These units do not always enrich language in a traditional sense but fulfill social functions such as strengthening internal group communication, concealing meaning from outsiders, and expressing irony or humor. There is no single, strict classification of jargon; it is often conflated with argot, slang, and sociolects. Common types include youth, professional, and criminal jargon.

Youth jargon is formed from various sources: foreign languages (Russian, English), the internet and popular culture (films, music), phonetic distortions, metaphors, and abbreviations. Its main types include:

1. Professional jargon – simplified or abbreviated terms specific to certain professions (e.g., “*progs*, *app*, “*klavye*” (*keyboard*), “*servak*” (*aervis*), “*makine çöktü*” (*the computer crashed or server crashed*)).

2. Criminal (prison) jargon (argot) – vocabulary typical of criminal environments (e.g., Uzbek “*oq kaptar*, *shakar*” and Turkish “*beyaz*, *tuz*, *toz kar*”¹² for heroin).

3. Youth jargon – informal communication among individuals aged 14–25, closely linked to the internet, trends, memes, technology, and social media. Examples include *user*, *like*, *chat*, *story atmak*, *scroll qilish*, (*scrolling*) / *kaydirmak*, *spam qilish*, / *spamlamak*, *bloklash* / *engellemek*, (spamming, blocking) and many others.

Additionally, Uzbek youth slang includes expressions such as “*yopmoq* / *dersi gömmek*” (to pass a session), “*kamchatka*” (the last row), “*tank* or *krishasi bor* / *torpili*” (having strong backing), “*tapichka* / *piyon*” (errand person), “*çakti*” (understood), and “*tepdimi?*” (Did you get it?). These expressions facilitate mutual understanding among youth while simultaneously distinguishing their speech from that of older generations or formal contexts.

The analysis shows that Uzbek and Turkish youth jargon share many common features while also exhibiting notable differences. Both are informal, metaphorical, connotative, emotional, and ironic, fulfilling evaluative and identificational functions. Uzbek jargon is more influenced by Russian, whereas Turkish jargon relies more heavily on English borrowings, reflecting differences in language policy and cultural influence. Turkish demonstrates stronger affixal adaptation, while Uzbek favors translational and analytical strategies.

In conclusion, the study of jargon units widely used in youth’s informal communication remains a relevant issue in linguistics. In both Uzbek and Turkish, this layer is distinguished by unique lexical-semantic characteristics, external linguistic influences, and cultural contexts. Jargon units reinforce internal group communication and define sociolinguistic boundaries. The rapid spread of such units through digital communication and internet platforms facilitates their deeper integration into language systems, making them a significant cultural and social phenomenon that warrants comprehensive study.

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¹² Hulki Aktunç Türkçenin Büyük Argo Sözlüğü (Tanıklarıyla). Yapı Kredi Yayınları. 2002. S, 56, 289, 300.

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