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## LEXICO-SEMANTIC FIELDS OF GERMAN YOUTH VOCABULARY

### ЛЕКСИКО-СЕМАНТИЧНІ ПОЛЯ НІМЕЦЬКОГО МОЛОДІЖНОГО ВОКАБУЛЯРУ

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The article deals with the issue of lexico-semantic arranging German youth vocabulary. The given language subcode is a means of communication within a certain socio-age group. The impact of social processes and modern technologies on young people's language picture of the world determines changes reflected in the set of verbalized concepts. Creation and use of most analyzed lexical units is determined by extralingual factors. At the same time, young people's vocabulary is actively used to satisfy different communication needs beyond the above-mentioned socio-age group, which makes the proposed study relevant.

The author singles out 12 key lexico-semantic fields of German youth vocabulary, such as: people; subjective assessments; leisure activities; learning, physical and mental activities; communication; forbidden things; parts of body; physical and mental state; sexual contacts; conflict; physiological needs; clothing and hygiene. It has been stated that the most numerous lexico-semantic fields of the analyzed vocabulary include words and collocations to describe different types of people and express subjective assessments. It can be stated that German youth vocabulary is a personality oriented language subcode. We consider that a significant number of lexical units to express subjective assessments may be explained by realization of young people's desire to give an emotional description of the surrounding world, which is typical for representatives of this socio-age group. The studied subsystem of German language also has a variety of lexical units that reveal peculiarities of leisure activities, learning and communication. These concepts represent an integral part of young people's everyday life. There are also a lot of words and collocations to denote forbidden things, such as drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes or using drugs. Nominative processes in the research material are featured by verbalizing subcultural and intra-group value orientations regarding appearance, social status, traits of character, etc. The impact of extralingual determinants is expressed in the concentration of most lexical units within certain lexico-semantic fields.

**Key words:** language subsystem, communication needs, nominative processes, semantic modifications, language picture of the world, subcultural and intra-group values.

Стаття досліджує питання лексико-семантичної систематизації німецької молодіжної лексики. Зазначений мовний субкод є засобом спілкування в межах певної соціально-вікової групи. Вплив суспільних процесів і сучасних технологій на мовну картину світу молоді визначає зміни, відображені в комплексі вербалізованих концептів. Утворення та використання більшості аналізованих лексичних одиниць детерміновані екстралінгвальними чинниками. При цьому молодіжний вокабуляр активно використовується для задоволення різних комунікативних потреб за межами зазначеної соціально-вікової групи, що робить запропоноване дослідження актуальним.

Автор виокремлює 12 ключових лексико-семантичних полів німецької молодіжної лексики, а саме: люди; суб'єктивні оцінки; дозвілля; навчання, фізична та розумова діяльність; спілкування; заборонені речі; частини тіла; фізичний і психічний стан; статеві контакти; конфлікт; фізіологічні потреби; одяг та гігієна. Встановлено, що найчисельнішими лексико-семантичними полями аналізованої лексики є слова та словосполучення для опису різних типів людей та вираження суб'єктивних оцінок. Можна констатувати, що німецька молодіжна лексика є особистісно орієнтованим мовним субкодом. Вважаємо, що значну кількість лексичних одиниць для вираження суб'єктивних оцінок можна пояснити реалізацією бажання молоді дати емоційну характеристику навколишньому світу, що характерно для представників цієї соціально-вікової групи. Досліджувана підсистема німецької мови також включає чимало лексичних одиниць, які розкривають особливості дозвілля, навчання та спілкування. Ці концепти репрезентують невід'ємну складову повсякденного життя молоді. Зафіксовано також багато слів і словосполучень на позначення заборонених речей, як-от розпивання алкоголю, паління цигарок або вживання наркотиків. Номінативні процеси в досліджуваному матеріалі характеризуються вербалізацією субкультурних та внутрішньогрупових ціннісних орієнтацій стосовно зовнішності, соціального статусу, рис характеру тощо. Вплив позамовних чинників виражається у концентрації більшості лексичних одиниць у межах певних лексико-семантичних полів.

**Ключові слова:** мовна підсистема, комунікативні потреби, номінативні процеси, семантичні модифікації, мовна картина світу, субкультурні та внутрішньогрупові цінності.

**Formulation of the problem.** Youth vocabulary is a means of communication within a certain socio-age group. In terms of linguistics, the given group has a number of features that make its members different from other representatives of German-speaking community. This is clearly seen when analyzing lexico-semantic fields that form the basis of young people's vocabulary subsystem. In this case, age characteristics and social values influence the process of creation and functioning of most lexical units.

At the present stage of development of German language as a system of interconnected subcodes and patterns, the trend of using youth vocabulary for satisfying a wide range of communication needs beyond the above-mentioned socio-age group is becoming more popular. This determines the relevance of the proposed study.

**Scientific novelty of the article.** Youth vocabulary is a changing language subsystem. Young people's communication is featured by constant process of "inventing" new lexical units to meet the needs for originality and self-identification. Every generation of the given socio-age group want to look different from their "predecessors" continuously creating new subcultural styles, types of leisure time activities, clothing, etc. According to this evolution, their active vocabulary is being modified as well. Such rapid changes of the studied language subsystem cause fruitful lexicographic practice in compiling up-to-date dictionaries of youth vocabulary.

The impact of social factors and modern technologies on young people's picture of the world also determines changes reflected in the set of verbalized concepts which are the most relevant for the given group of speakers. Thus, it is necessary to describe German youth vocabulary in terms of its contemporary state.

**The purpose of the article** is to single out main lexico-semantic fields that verbalize the worldview of modern German youth taking into consideration the impact of social and cultural processes on the development of the given vocabulary system. The objectives of the proposed research are: to analyze earlier approaches to the thematic division of young people's vocabulary, finding out the possibility of applying them given today's interests and activities of the studied socio-age group; to provide quantitative description of this language subsystem; to establish connection between certain social and subcultural factors and popularity of the singled out lexico-semantic fields.

To achieve our objectives, we have applied the following methods of scientific research: descriptive method, as well as methods of analysis and synthesis have helped us in the study of approaches to the thematic division of German youth vocabulary; inductive method has been applied for the analysis of the selected lexicographic material; the use of quantitative methods has contributed to establishing proportions of the analyzed lexico-semantic fields.

The material of the research are about 2000 words of three parts of speech (including nouns, verbs, and adjectives), which represent a sampling from dictionaries of modern German youth vocabulary (4 lexicographic sources in total) [4; 7; 9; 10].

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** The literature review in the field of German language studies has shown that the issue of lexico-semantic arrangement of youth vocabulary has been of significant importance. This is expressed in a number of scientific papers published by foreign and Ukrainian scientists. These publications provide description of thematic division of German youth vocabulary which

was used by previous generations of German-speaking young people. Hence, we consider it necessary to analyze them and establish the possibility of their use to systematize material sampled for our research.

The first study under analysis was carried out by H. Henne over 30 years ago. The researcher singles out 7 main lexico-semantic fields of German youth vocabulary: 1) intra-group communicative relations; 2) internal state of the speaker; 3) attitude to others; 4) music; 5) objects of interest; 6) learning; 7) worldview and politics [6, p. 212-213]. In general, we consider this approach to thematic division of the studied language subsystem to be correct, as it reflects all spheres of young people's life. However, in our opinion, importance of music among other leisure activities does not exactly meet their modern range of interests. The spread of new hobbies (such as communication in social networks and online interaction using modern technologies) makes it less relevant. Besides, a significant part of today's youth is not interested in politics to such a degree as to create numerous lexical units for verbalizing this sphere of life. This proves the above-mentioned statement about distinctions in value systems of different young speakers' generations and rapid changes of their active intra-group vocabulary.

Further approaches to systematization of the studied language subsystem can be found in scientific papers by E. Neuland and M. Heinemann. Both researchers have singled out rather limited lists of lexico-semantic fields. E. Neuland suggests to divide youth vocabulary into groups of words and collocations which include the names of: 1) clothing and food; 2) forms of communication; 3) social values; 4) types of people and things; 5) feelings and internal state [8, p. 77]. M. Heinemann marks the dominance of lexical units to denote: 1) sexual relations; 2) intra-group relations; 3) relations in the family; 4) money; 5) music; 6) cars [5, p. 26]. We do not consider both divisions of German youth vocabulary to be comprehensive enough. The first approach does not cover lexico-semantic fields of free time activities relevant for contemporary representatives of the studied socio-age group. In the second case, the spheres of extragroup contacts, as well as subcultural activities are missing.

It should be mentioned that the given issue draws attention of Ukrainian scientists. For example, O.D. Oguy and S.A. Marynychyna single out 8 lexico-semantic fields of German youth vocabulary which include: 1) forms of greeting; 2) friends / other relationships; 3) expressions of surprise and admiration; 4) girls / women; 5) boys / men; 6) sexual life; 7) informal groups; 8) drugs [1, p. 95-97]. In general, we consider this division to be correct, but it does

not take into account learning which represents an important part of young people's life. Drugs are singled out in a separate lexico-semantic field, although they are not relevant for all representatives of socio-age group "youth". In addition, words and collocations to verbalize the spheres of modern technologies, communication, and subcultural activities do not occupy an important place in the given approach.

One of the latest divisions can be found in the dictionary of German youth vocabulary "PONS 15 Jahre Wörterbuch der Jugendsprache". Young people's words and collocations are divided into 16 lexico-semantic fields: 1) alcohol, smoking; 2) appearance; 3) images; 4) defecation; 5) unpleasant phenomena; 6) parents and other adults; 7) food and drinks; 8) flirting and compliments; 9) friends and leisure; 10) sex; 11) theft; 12) contacts; 13) parties and music; 14) learning and teachers; 15) style and clothing; 16) animals and children [9]. In our opinion, this division is the most comprehensive, as it is based on modern German youth vocabulary. However, we consider it not quite right to single out music and parties among other types of entertainment. The lack of lexico-semantic fields of words and collocations to denote young people's internal state and feelings should be mentioned as well.

**Results and discussions.** In view of the above, each of the analyzed approaches to systematize German youth vocabulary has its advantages and disadvantages, which has proved the relevance of the proposed study. That is why, to provide a comprehensive description of the sampled lexicographic material (1026 nouns, 583 verbs, and 397 adjectives), we suggest to distinguish 12 lexico-semantic fields each of which includes at least 50 words and collocations. The latter, in our opinion, reflect worldview, values, surroundings, age characteristics, and level of psychological development of German-speaking youth without regard to their social status and territorial belonging. In our study, we have arranged them by the number of lexical units. Given that, the suggested lexico-semantic fields are located in the following order.

1. People (498 lexical units which make 25.90 % of the analyzed vocabulary). This lexico-semantic field includes names of all people, as well as names of different groups of people regardless of their age, gender, place of residence, social status, and ethnicity. The quantitative data show that these lexical units make more than a quarter of the research material. However, we consider them to be relevant, given the above analyzed approaches to thematic division of German youth vocabulary. The dominance of words and collocations with these meanings is also supported by statements found in the papers

of J.K. Androutsopoulos and O.S. Khrystenko. Both scientists point out the popularity of such vocabulary among representatives of the studied socio-age group [3, p. 35-36; 2, p. 125]. By using these lexical units, young people emphasize positive and negative traits of character, appearance, type of behaviour, social status, etc. This is particularly clear when analyzing words and collocations to denote females. For example, the noun *Nachtkerze – hässliche Frau* emphasizes unattractive appearance of a person and has a clearly seen negative evaluative connotation. On the contrary, the metaphORIZED root of the word *Barbie – attraktives Mädchen* has the meaning of tenderness and elegance of a referred person.

2. Subjective assessments (308 lexical units – 15.35 %). The given lexico-semantic field is an expression of young people's need for personal characteristics of their surroundings. This part of German youth vocabulary is featured by superlative adjectives formed as a result of various nominative processes. For example, the word *ätzend – sehr gut, voll stark, hervorragend* is used to demonstrate passion that borders on a state of shock. This meaning is enhanced by adding a word-building morpheme. The adjective *fundamental – super, klasse, prima* is formed as a result of semantic modification of the root morpheme. In the studied vocabulary, it is used for positive assessment of people, things, and actions.

3. Leisure activities (219 lexical units – 10.92 %). We classify into this category words and collocations to denote fun and entertainment, as well as spare time organization (different kinds of subcultural activities including music, sports, vehicles, gaming, visiting parties and other leisure venues such as clubs, discos, concerts, restaurants, etc.). Thus, young people's interest in music, which is an important part of their leisure activities, is reflected in creating a set of special lexical units. A good example is the noun *Muckomat – MP3-Player* which refers to a device needed to play favorite songs. Visiting discos and nightclubs is also a popular way to spend free time. Such places are usually pretentious about the interior and quality of entertainment offered by them. In German youth vocabulary, this is seen in the use of the word *Schnellficktreff – Diskothek*, which has an emphasized ironic connotation.

4. Learning, physical and mental activities (157 lexical units – 7.83 %). This lexico-semantic field includes vocabulary to denote educational institutions, means of learning and labor, physical work, and mental processes. Getting an education, young people have to spend a lot of time at school performing tasks in various disciplines. Not everyone enjoys it. An example is the word *Büffelbude – Schule*. This com-

pound noun is characterized by metaphorical modification of both its roots. Performing manual labor also causes not too much young people's enthusiasm. A lot of lexical units to denote this process are marked by ironic connotation. A good example is the verb *muddeln – langsam, ohne Ziel arbeiten* formed with the use of a word-building suffix.

5. Communication (156 lexical units – 7.78 %). These words and collocations demonstrate communicative interaction of young people with each other and with other members of society. The analysis of this lexico-semantic field shows the dominance of vocabulary to emphasize negative attitude to boring, annoying conversations. Example here is the verb *zupowern – pausenlos auf jemanden einreden*, when disadvantages of obnoxious talking are pointed out. Having analyzed the research material, we can state that young people prefer communicative acts which are rather relaxed, not burdened with unnecessary additional information. The latter is clearly seen on the example of the verb *zusalben – jemanden mit Unsinn vollquatschen*.

6. Forbidden things (116 lexical units – 5.79 %). Taking into consideration differences in educational level, social status and values within young members of society, we have grouped words and collocations to denote smoking, alcohol, drugs, and theft into this lexico-semantic field. Before reaching adulthood, young people are under constant custody and control of parents and teachers. During this period of life, representatives of the studied socio-age group try to demonstrate their protest against existing rules by drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, using drugs, etc. Sometimes this protest is expressed by performing different kinds of deviant actions. As far as such actions are punishable, they are denoted by lexical units that are confusing to non-members of a subcultural or peer-group. For example, the meaning of the verb *twixen – heimlich rauchen* points to prevalence of smoking among young people. At the same time, the adjective *betrieft – betrunken* is used to show the attitude to consequences of alcohol abuse.

7. Parts of body (107 lexical units – 5.33 %). This category of the analyzed material is a proof of young people's concentration on their appearance. The wish to look attractive causes critical assessment of physical defects, such as shape of legs, arms, head, as well as focusing on genitals. Semantic transformations are regarded as an efficient way to create the above-mentioned vocabulary. For example, in the compound noun *Schalllappen – Ohr*, metaphORIZATION of the second root can be seen. The given lexical unit emphasizes that unattractive ear size is a remarkable flaw. The word *Lampe – Kopf* is also formed by

means of metaphorical modification and provides a negative description of a person's appearance, in particular the shape of his (her) head.

8. Physical and mental state (100 lexical units – 4.98 %). This lexico-semantic field reflects impressionability and emotional vulnerability inherent for representatives of the studied socio-age group. Young people's exaggerated focus on their feelings and experiences is verbalized by means of creating new words. Most of them have negative connotation. For example, the adjective *abgepfeffert – völlig erschöpft, entkräftet* points to exhaustion of the organism, while *matt – schwach, kraftlos* emphasizes its physical weakness.

9. Sexual contacts (97 lexical units – 4.84 %). The given part of German youth vocabulary reveals peculiarities of relationships between boys and girls based on sexual interest. Puberty, which occurs during the adolescent period of individual's development, contributes to explosion of sexual activity. Thus, the concept «Sexual contacts» takes an important place in young people's language picture of the world. Both male and female representatives of the socio-age group «youth» often choose it as a topic to discuss using various lexical units to verbalize their ideas and points of view. On the other hand, lack of experience often causes misconceptions and frivolous attitude to the subject of communication. For example, the verb *poppen – Geschlechtsverkehr haben* demonstrates incomprehensibility in choice of partners and represents sexual intercourse as general routine. Another verb *schnäbeln – küssen* shows an ironic relation to kiss as a sign of intimate relations.

10. Conflict (65 lexical units – 3.24 %). This lexico-semantic field can be regarded as a good example to demonstrate young people's nonconformism at satisfying the need for self-identification. Becoming a member of a peer-group in particular and society in general involves participating in various conflict situations with different ways of resolving them. Therefore, young people have specific vocabulary to denote the above-mentioned phenomena (*zentrieren – jemanden schlagen*). The choice of such words and collocations is variable depending on a communicative situation. For example, the meaning of the noun *Randalo – Schlägertyp* clearly indicates the subject of the action, emphasizing his (her) low social status.

11. Physiological needs (60 lexical units – 2.99 %). The basis for distinguishing this lexico-semantic field can be explained by the trend to use rude and obscene vocabulary, which is peculiar to the youth in general. As a rule, the motivation of these lexical units is clearly seen. For example, the verb *dönern – Darmgase entweichen lassen* demonstrates

young people's attitude to oriental cuisine and possible consequences of consuming its dishes. In the verb *sprudeln – urinieren* formed by means of lexical derivation accompanied by semantic modification of the root, metaphorization on the basis of similarity of shape can be observed.

12. Clothing and hygiene (58 lexical units – 2.89 %). We include into this category words and collocations that reveal the essence of youth style of fashion, cosmetics, accessories, self-care, etc. Appearance plays a considerable role in the process of achieving desired status in a subcultural or peer-group. In this case, we can distinguish two trends. On the one hand, young people try to imitate one style or another as accurately as possible. Some items of daily self-care become so beloved that they get playful nicknames (*Urwaldmaggi – Deodorant*). On the other hand, youth is a period of searching for one's own style. Both boys and girls are likely to dye their hairs, pierce different parts of the body, and get tattoos (*Blehpickel – Piercing*).

The rest of analysed research material (65 lexical units – 3.24 %) includes words to denote different spheres of everyday life and surrounding environment. By renaming well-known objects and phenomena, young people's tend to creativity and originality is shown. The latter is achieved by various verbal means. For example, the word *Dackelschneider – sehr dünner Fahrradreifen* draws attention to subjectively identified features of the referred object. An unusual morpheme structure of the noun *Monnis – Geld* is determined by germanization of a lexical unit borrowed from American English.

**Conclusions.** The results of the study have shown that the most numerous lexico-semantic fields of the analyzed vocabulary include words and collocations to describe different types of people and express subjective assessments within and beyond the socio-age group. The studied subsystem of German language also has a variety of lexical units that reveal peculiarities of young people's leisure activities, learning, and communication. Considerable attention is paid to people they deal with in routine communication situations. Subcultural and intra-group value orientations regarding appearance, social status or personality traits are verbalized in this way. Thus, it can be stated that German youth vocabulary is a personality oriented language subcode. In our opinion, a significant number of lexical units to express subjective assessments may be explained by realization of the desire to give an emotional description of the surrounding world, which is typical for representatives of the studied socio-age group. Words

and expressions belonging to lexico-semantic fields “Leisure activities” and “Learning, physical and mental activities” are numerous in the vocabulary of young people, because both leisure and study are an integral part of their everyday life. Communication is an important means for young people to learn about reality getting and sharing information. It is also an opportunity to establish new contacts in the group and beyond. An insignificant part of the analyzed material is represented by words and collocations to denote everyday concepts, where lexical units of standard German language are preferred.

Summarizing the proposed division of youth vocabulary, we would like to point out the impact of extralingual determinants, expressed in the concentration of most lexical units within certain lexico-semantic fields. These words and collocations verbalize the need for subjective assessment, demonstration of personal feelings, revealing key spheres of interests and activities of their creators and active users.

We see prospects of further research in study of using the analyzed lexical units in different types of media, which have become a favorable environment for realization of young people’s creativity.

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