

MODERN GERMAN THROUGH THE PRISM OF YOUTH LANGUAGE**Safin Dmitry Shamilevich**Teacher of the Department of Second Foreign Languages
Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages
Samarkand, Uzbekistan
ds6170516@gmail.ru

Abstract. This article examines youth language (Jugendsprache) as a significant and dynamic component of contemporary German. The study aims to analyze its structural, lexico-semantic, and functional features, as well as its role in shaping modern linguistic trends. The methodological framework combines descriptive, comparative, and lexico-semantic analysis, along with the examination of digital discourse, enabling a comprehensive investigation of youth language in its natural communicative environment. The findings demonstrate that Jugendsprache is characterized by a high degree of lexical innovation, driven by anglicisms, neologisms, and abbreviations emerging in digital communication. Word-formation processes, including compounding, affixation, and conversion, exhibit increased creativity and hybridization, often deviating from standard linguistic norms. Youth language also performs important sociolinguistic functions, such as identity construction, emotional expression, and the differentiation of social groups. The study highlights the crucial role of the digital environment in accelerating linguistic change and shaping new communicative practices. While Jugendsprache contributes to the enrichment and adaptability of the German language, it may also lead to challenges related to normativity and intergenerational communication. Overall, youth language is interpreted as a “laboratory of linguistic innovation” and a mediator between linguistic change and standardization, reflecting the broader processes of globalization and digitalization in modern society.

Keywords: German language, Jugendsprache, youth language, neologisms, anglicisms, word formation, lexical innovation, digital discourse, sociolinguistics, language change.

Introduction. The modern German language represents a complex and dynamically evolving system whose functioning is determined by a set of extralinguistic factors, including social transformations, technological progress, and cultural shifts. Under conditions of accelerated globalization and digitalization, the linguistic system demonstrates an increased degree of variability and adaptability, which is manifested primarily at the lexical and pragmatic levels (Bushuy 2015: 82). One of the most representative and rapidly evolving subsystems within contemporary German is youth language (Jugendsprache), which serves as a distinctive marker of current linguistic trends and an indicator of sociocultural dynamics.

Jugendsprache should be regarded not only as a set of specific lexical units characteristic of a particular age group, but also as a multi-level sociolinguistic phenomenon that encompasses specific strategies of nomination, expressivity, and identity marking. Youth language operates within a space of intensive interlingual and intercultural interaction, which accounts for its openness to borrowings – primarily from English – as well as to innovative word-formation models and semantic transformations (Androutsopoulos 1998: 31).

The relevance of this study is determined by the fact that youth speech exerts a significant influence on the transformation of the lexical system of the German language, contributing to the formation of new nominative units, the reinterpretation of existing meanings, and the development of hybrid communicative models. Within this process, Jugendsprache performs

not only nominative but also socio-identificational, expressive, and pragmatic functions, which allows it to be considered an important mechanism of language evolution.

The aim of this article is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the structural, lexico-semantic, and functional features of youth language, as well as to identify its role within the context of contemporary trends in the development of the German language as an integral system.

Methods. The methodological framework of the present study is comprehensive in nature and is based on a set of complementary linguistic approaches, which is обусловлено the multi-level nature of the phenomenon under investigation. In particular, the study employs the descriptive method, which makes it possible to systematize and interpret linguistic units of youth language in their actual functioning, as well as to identify their structural, semantic, and pragmatic characteristics within contemporary German.

A comparative-contrastive analysis is used to identify differential features between standard (normative) German and Jugendsprache. This method makes it possible to determine the degree of deviation of youth linguistic practices from codified norms, as well as to identify the directions of language change arising under the influence of sociocultural and communicative factors.

The lexico-semantic analysis is aimed at examining the meanings, connotative nuances, and functional load of new and transformed lexical units. Within this approach, particular attention is paid to processes of semantic derivation, metaphorization, reinterpretation, and pragmatic reorientation of words characteristic of youth communication.

In addition, an analysis of digital discourse is employed, including the study of internet sources and media content such as social networks, forums, and user interaction platforms. This method makes it possible to examine Jugendsprache in its natural environment of use, thereby ensuring the empirical validity of the study and capturing the dynamics of linguistic innovations in online communication.

The empirical basis of the research consists of contemporary lexical units and expressions of German youth language recorded in the digital space, as well as those documented in specialized dictionaries and lexicographic sources. The selection of material was carried out with regard to its frequency, relevance, and representativeness, which ensured the reliability of the results obtained and their correspondence to the current state of the German language.

Results. The lexical system of youth language (Jugendsprache) is characterized by a high degree of dynamism, variability, and innovativeness, which is determined by both internal laws of language development and external sociocultural and communicative factors. One of the key features of this subsystem is the accelerated renewal of its vocabulary, manifested in the intensive emergence of new lexical units and the rapid disappearance of some of them from active use (Bushuy 2018: 65). Thus, the lexicon of Jugendsprache exhibits a distinctly transient character and functions under conditions of constant сменяемости linguistic trends.

Among the most productive sources of youth vocabulary formation are, above all, Anglicisms, which result from globalization processes and the dominant role of the English language in the digital and media space. Borrowed units such as *cool*, *nice*, and *cringe* not only retain their original semantics but also undergo adaptation within the German linguistic system, acquiring new pragmatic nuances and stylistic functions. Their use is associated with the expression of evaluation, expressivity, and affiliation with a particular social group.

An equally significant source consists of various types of abbreviations and acronyms (*lol*, *omg*), which emerge primarily within the context of digital communication. These units represent a result of linguistic economy and the стремление toward maximal compression of

information while maintaining communicative efficiency. They perform not only a nominative function but also a discourse-pragmatic one, marking the speaker's emotional state and the specific features of the communicative situation.

A special group is formed by neologisms created within the language system itself through word-formation and semantic mechanisms (*Ehrenmann, lost*). Such units demonstrate a high degree of creativity and linguistic play characteristic of the youth environment. At the same time, there is an active reinterpretation of existing words, resulting in the emergence of new meanings that often differ from their standard usage (Bushuy 1996: 32).

In general, lexical units of youth language primarily perform an expressive-evaluative function, serving as a means of conveying subjective attitudes, emotional reactions, and social identity. Their use allows not only the transmission of information but also the construction of a communicative space in which linguistic means function as markers of group affiliation and relevant cultural codes.

Word-formation mechanisms within youth language (Jugendsprache) demonstrate a high degree of productivity, flexibility, and innovativeness, which allows them to be regarded as one of the key instruments of linguistic creativity and expressive self-representation. In contrast to standard word formation, which is governed by relatively stable models and rules, derivational processes in youth speech are characterized by variability, deviation from conventional patterns, and the active use of language play.

One of the most productive means of word formation in Jugendsprache is compounding (composition), which is traditionally a typologically significant feature of the German language (Bushuy 2022: 9). However, in the youth environment this mechanism acquires new forms of realization, often extending beyond normative models. For instance, in units such as *Stabilo-Style*, hybridization is observed, combining elements of both German and English, as well as the use of metaphorical and associative links. Such formations frequently perform not only a nominative function but also an evaluative and expressive one.

Affixation also retains its productivity; however, in Jugendsprache it is often accompanied by semantic shifts and non-standard uses of affixes. Suffixes and prefixes may be employed to enhance expressivity, create ironic or hyperbolic effects, and form new stylistically marked units. For example, the suffix *-mäßig* in expressions such as *chillmäßig* and *stressmäßig* (Dudenredaktion 2020: 856) loses its original meaning ("in relation to something") and acquires a generalized evaluative function, serving as a marker of informality and subjective interpretation.

Similarly, the suffix *-ig* may be used to add emotional coloring to an utterance: *cringig*, *lostig* – formations in which hybridization occurs between an English lexical base and a German word-formation element. In such cases, the suffix performs not so much a derivational function as an expressive-pragmatic one, signaling affiliation with youth discourse.

Prefixation likewise demonstrates a tendency toward semantic reinterpretation. For example, the prefix *mega-* in units such as *megagut* and *megapeinlich* functions as a universal intensifier, reinforcing evaluative meaning and often extending beyond its original quantitative semantics. A similar function is performed by the element *über-* (*übercool*, *übertrieben* in its newer sense), which in youth speech may acquire a hyperbolic and subjectively evaluative character.

In a number of cases, affixes undergo desemanticization, whereby their original meaning is neutralized and the primary functional load shifts to the pragmatic level. For instance, the suffix *-er* in words such as *Lästerer* and *Checker*, in youth interpretation, may serve not so much to

denote an agent of an action as to function as a marker of social categorization, indicating a particular type of behavior or status within a group (Ehmann 2001: 18).

Thus, affixation in Jugendsprache goes beyond its traditional word-formation function and turns into an instrument of expressive, evaluative, and identity-related representation, reflecting the broader tendency toward the pragmatization of linguistic means in contemporary communication.

Conversion, as a process of shifting words from one part of speech to another without formal modification, is also actively used in youth speech. This process contributes to linguistic economy while simultaneously expanding the functional potential of lexical units. For example, the adjective *lost* in youth discourse functions as a noun (*ein kompletter Lost*) (Schlobinski 2002: 12), referring to a person who is confused or socially disoriented (Bushuy, Khayrullaev 2022: 19).

Similarly, the substantivization of adjectives and participles can be observed: *der Cringe* (from English *cringe*) is used as a noun to denote an awkward situation or feeling. In addition, verbalization occurs in forms such as *cringen* (“to feel embarrassed”) and *flexen* (“to show off”), where borrowed or originally non-verbal forms are adapted to the German verbal system.

Another example of conversion is the shift of nouns into verbs: *google* → *googeln*, *DM (Direct Message)* → *dmen* (“to send a direct message”), where the integration of borrowed units into the German morphological paradigm can be observed. In addition, adjectives may function as adverbs without formal modification: *safe* (“definitely, for sure”), *random* (“randomly, without reason”), which enhances their pragmatic versatility.

At the same time, converted forms often acquire new, context-dependent meanings that differ from their original semantics, thereby increasing their expressivity and communicative flexibility. Overall, conversion in Jugendsprache functions not only as a means of linguistic economy but also as a mechanism of creative lexical reprocessing, reflecting a tendency toward functional polysemy and semantic flexibility of linguistic units.

A characteristic feature of word-formation processes in Jugendsprache is their pronounced creativity, manifested in the deliberate violation of linguistic norms, the combination of heterogeneous elements, and the active play with word meanings. In this context, word formation functions not only as a means of nomination but also as an instrument of social identification, enabling speakers to demonstrate their affiliation with a particular group while simultaneously distancing themselves from the normative language standard (Stedje 2013: 14).

Youth language (Jugendsprache) represents not merely a set of specific lexico-grammatical means but also a complex sociolinguistic mechanism that performs a number of significant functions in communication and social interaction. Its functioning is closely linked to processes of group identification, the symbolic construction of social reality, and the differentiation of communicative spaces (Kupper 2014: 125).

First and foremost, Jugendsprache fulfills an identificational function, serving as a marker of an individual’s belonging to a particular social and age group. The use of specific linguistic means enables speakers to signal their involvement in youth culture and their alignment with shared values, norms, and communicative strategies. In this context, language becomes an instrument of symbolic cohesion, fostering a sense of in-group belonging and ensuring internal group solidarity.

The expressive function of youth language is manifested in its ability to convey a wide range of emotional states, evaluations, and subjective attitudes. Lexical units of Jugendsprache typically exhibit a high degree of emotional intensity and pragmatic flexibility, allowing speakers to effectively express and modify their attitudes toward objects and situations.

Expressivity is achieved not only through lexical semantics but also through intonational, contextual, and discourse-related features of usage (Neuland 2008: 126).

No less significant is the delimitative (differentiating) function, which consists in contrasting youth linguistic practices with the normative language of older generations. In this respect, Jugendsprache acts as a means of symbolic distancing, enabling young speakers to delineate their communicative space and emphasize the autonomy of their cultural identity. The use of specific vocabulary and non-standard linguistic forms serves as a kind of “social code” that may be partially or entirely inaccessible to representatives of other age groups.

Taken together, these functions demonstrate that youth language performs not only a communicative but also a socially constructive role. It contributes to the formation and maintenance of group identity, reflects the dynamics of social relations, and serves as an important tool for the interpretation and representation of contemporary cultural reality (Crystal 2011: 23).

In modern society, the digital environment acts as one of the key factors in the transformation of linguistic communication, exerting a direct and multi-level influence on the formation and functioning of youth language (Jugendsprache). Social networks, messaging platforms, and other forms of online interaction create a fundamentally new communicative paradigm characterized by high speed of information exchange, multimodality, and interactivity. Within this paradigm, Jugendsprache not only develops actively but also acquires qualitatively new forms of existence.

Social platforms function as a kind of catalyst for linguistic innovation, ensuring the accelerated dissemination of new lexical units and expressions. Owing to the algorithmic nature of digital media, individual linguistic elements can achieve widespread distribution within a short period of time, transforming into mass communicative practices. At the same time, the processes of lexical diffusion are nonlinear: some units become rapidly established in usage, while others lose relevance just as quickly, which gives Jugendsprache a distinctly ephemeral and fluid character.

In the digital environment, the principle of linguistic economy assumes particular importance, manifesting itself in the tendency to shorten and simplify utterances while maintaining communicative efficiency. This is reflected in the widespread use of abbreviations, acronyms, graphic symbols, and emojis, which become an integral part of youth communication. As a result, a hybrid type of discourse emerges, combining verbal and non-verbal means of information transmission.

Moreover, the digital environment contributes to the intensification of intertextuality and the memetic nature of language. New words and expressions often emerge within specific internet contexts (memes, viral videos, trends) and function as elements of a collective cultural code. Their meanings frequently extend beyond direct nomination, acquiring additional connotative and pragmatic nuances that are accessible primarily to participants of the corresponding discourse community (Faleeva 2024: 28).

Thus, the influence of the digital environment on Jugendsprache is systemic in nature: it not only accelerates processes of linguistic change but also transforms the very mechanisms of their emergence, dissemination, and stabilization. In this context, youth language can be regarded as a product of digital communication, reflecting new forms of linguistic behavior and the representation of social reality in a mediatized society.

Discussion. The results obtained in the course of the study make it possible to assert that youth language (Jugendsprache) constitutes an integral and structurally significant component of contemporary German, functioning not at the periphery but within a zone of active

interaction with its normative core. Its development closely correlates with key sociocultural processes of modernity, such as globalization, digitalization, and the mediatization of communication, which accounts for the high degree of susceptibility of Jugendsprache to external influences and innovations.

Youth language serves both as a reflection and as an instrument for representing current cultural and social transformations. It embodies new forms of social identity, evolving communicative practices, and the value orientations of the younger generation. A particularly important role in this process is played by the digital environment, within which the accelerated formation, dissemination, and modification of linguistic units take place, imparting to Jugendsprache a character of high dynamism and variability.

On the one hand, Jugendsprache performs an important innovative function, contributing to the renewal of the lexical system of the German language and its adaptation to new realities. Through the active incorporation of neologisms, borrowings, and creative word-formation models, the nominative potential of the language is expanded, while its expressive capacity and communicative flexibility are enhanced. In this sense, youth language can be regarded as a kind of “laboratory of linguistic change,” in which new forms and meanings are tested and developed.

The excessive expansion of slang elements and their uncontrolled penetration into various spheres of communication may lead to certain destabilizing effects. In particular, there is a reduction in the level of linguistic normativity, a blurring of boundaries between functional styles, and the emergence of communicative barriers in intergenerational interaction (Bushuy 2023: 24). For speakers not involved in youth cultural environments, such linguistic innovations may pose difficulties in interpretation and comprehension, thereby reducing the level of mutual understanding.

At the same time, it should be emphasized that a significant portion of elements of Jugendsprache eventually undergo a process of institutionalization, transitioning from marginal or subcultural units into the domain of general usage (Faleeva 2022: 62). This process is accompanied by their codification in lexicographic sources and their consolidation within standard language practice. Thus, youth language performs not only a function of renewal but also that of transmitting linguistic innovations into the system of standard German, ensuring its evolutionary development and adaptation to changing communicative conditions.

Conclusion. Youth language (Jugendsprache) within contemporary German should be regarded not as a marginal or peripheral phenomenon, but as a systemically significant and functionally loaded component of linguistic dynamics with a high innovative potential. Its development reflects the complex interaction of internal linguistic mechanisms and external sociocultural factors, including processes of globalization, digitalization, and the mediatization of communication.

The analysis conducted allows for several theoretically significant conclusions. Firstly, Jugendsprache acts as a productive source of lexical innovation, ensuring the renewal of the vocabulary through neologization, borrowing, and semantic derivation. In this context, youth language functions as a generator of new nominative models that contribute to the expansion of the expressive and cognitive capacities of the linguistic system.

Secondly, word-formation processes in Jugendsprache demonstrate a tendency toward increased creativity and hybridization, indicating the transformation of traditional derivational models and their adaptation to the conditions of contemporary communication. This makes it possible to speak of the emergence of new word-formation strategies oriented not only toward nomination but also toward the expressive-pragmatic marking of utterances.

Thirdly, youth language performs an important sociolinguistic function, serving as an instrument for constructing group identity and symbolically delineating social spaces. Its use reflects not only age-based differentiation but also broader processes of social stratification and cultural self-identification in a post-industrial society.

Moreover, the influence of the digital environment radically transforms the mechanisms of Jugendsprache functioning, accelerating the processes of emergence, dissemination, and obsolescence of linguistic units. This makes it possible to consider youth language as part of a broader system of digital discourse characterized by a high degree of variability, intertextuality, and multimodality.

Finally, it should be emphasized that Jugendsprache plays the role of an intermediary between innovation and norm: a significant portion of its elements eventually undergoes institutionalization, becoming integrated into standard German. Thus, youth language ensures the evolutionary continuity of the linguistic system, acting as a link between current communicative practices and codified linguistic norms.

Overall, the study of Jugendsprache opens up prospects for a deeper understanding of the patterns of language change in the context of contemporary sociocultural reality and allows language to be viewed as a dynamic, adaptive system responding to the challenges of a globalized and digital world.

References:

1. Androutsopoulos J. *Jugendsprache: Untersuchungen zu ihrer Struktur und Funktion.* – Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1998. – 350 p.
2. Bushuy T. A. Phraseological Equivalentation as a Problem of Contrastive Lexicography // *Contrastive Linguistics.* – 1996. – No. 1. – P. 30–35.
3. Bushuy T. A. Contextual Actualization of Phraseology in English Expressions // *Scientific Enquiry in the Contemporary World: Theoretical Basics and Innovative Approach.* Philology. – 2015. – No. 3. – P. 81–84.
4. Bushuy T. A. The Emergence of Language Multitude // *Scientific Reports of Bukhara State University.* – 2018. – Vol. 1, No. 3. – P. 62–67.
5. Bushuy T., Khayrullaev K. Life of Word during Coronavirus // *Eurasian Journal of Social Sciences, Philosophy and Culture.* – 2022. – Vol. 2, No. 8. – P. 19–28.
6. Bushuy T. A. Neolexicography: Problems and Prospectives // *International Journal of Language, Education, Translation.* – 2022. – Vol. 3, No. 3. – P. 7–15.
7. Bushuy T. A. Language in Modern Linguistics // *Miasto Przyszłości.* – 2023. – No. 39. – P. 23–26.
8. Bushuy T. A. Features of Representation of Some Word Forms and Meanings of Phraseological Units in Contrastive Lexicographical Sources // *International Journal of Language, Education, Translation.* – 2023. – Vol. 4, No. 2. – P. 7–16.
9. Bushuy T. A. Grammar of Idiomatic Language in Contrastive Dictionary // *International Scientific Review of the Problems and Prospects of Modern Science and Education.* – 2024. – P. 24–26.
10. Crystal D. *Language and the Internet.* – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. – 272 p.
11. Dudenredaktion. *Duden. Die deutsche Rechtschreibung.* – Mannheim: Dudenverlag, 2020. – 1312 S.
12. Ehmann H. *Jugendsprache und Dialekt.* – Heidelberg: Winter, 2001. – 220 S.
13. Faleeva A. V. Investigation of the Colloquial Formation of Modern English // *International Journal of Language, Education, Translation.* – 2022. – Vol. 3, No. 2. – P. 59–67.



14. Faleeva A. V. Hidden Meaning in Colloquial Expressions with a Gender Component // International Scientific Review of the Problems and Prospects of Modern Science and Education. – 2024. – P. 27–29.
15. Kupper H. Wörterbuch der deutschen Umgangssprache. – Hamburg: Claassen, 2014. – 960 S.
16. Neuland E. Jugendsprache: Eine Einführung. – Tübingen: Francke, 2008. – 200 S.
17. Schlobinski P. Jugendsprache und Jugendkultur. – Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2002. – 180 S.
18. Stedje A. Deutsche Sprache gestern und heute. – München: Fink, 2013. – 250 S.