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LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND WORLD-VIEW

SUBCULTURES AND THEIR CHARACTERISTIC LINGUISTIC PROPERTIES

M.R. TKACHIVSKA

Abstract. The article deals with subcultures and their characteristic linguistic properties. Subculture is characterized by a number of designations that serve as a code for communication between “themselves”, as a means of isolating and creating opposition, for self-expression, etc. As most subcultures are represented by young people, youth language absorbs lexical units peculiar for subcultures. Despite the fact that lexicon of subcultures as well as the youth language in general is influenced by the flow of time and changes, it is mostly recorded in the dictionaries, some of it goes into the spoken language, which is used not only by young, but middle and older generation, especially when it comes to notions which emerged at the time of their youth (for example, certain designations in music). Based on the study of German scientists who distinguish the main characteristics of subcultures and inherent for them groups of the most used lexical units, one can observe both coincidence and divergence of lexical units meaning recorded in the dictionaries. Besides specific notions indicating certain characteristics of one or another subgroup (related to music, fashion etc.), subcultures mainly use the youth and spoken language and if necessary a literary one. In the language of subcultures the intensifiers such as, *voll*, *total*, *echt*, *tierisch*, *unheimlich*, *irre* etc are used to reinforce the quality. In the Ukrainian writers’ translations into German one can notice a number of analyzed lexical units typical for the language of subcultures as well as for the youth language in general.

Keywords: subcultures, outliers’ community, obscene language, slang, translation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The modern society is not a homogeneous structure with strictly defined frames of behaviour and morals. In spite of existing rules and norms in the society, there are always certain alternative views on the culture and lifestyle that lead to social multi-layers. The concept of social inequality, destruction of stereotypes and unwillingness to adapt to the established rules of the society – these all lead to the latter’s differentiation and formation of unions of likeminded people. Whatever we call one or the other “growth of alternative culture”: “society in society”, “culture in culture”, they have the right to exist, if they are not put under a taboo in the environment in which they exist (in particular cases they exist with the status of secrecy). Such unions have their own cultural elements, certain behaviour patterns, including attitude to “strangers”, they differ from others in their interests, thoughts, appearance, always with attribute that is characteristic for them etc. Usually they have their own values, traditions and norms, certain peculiarities of communication with appropriate lexicon. There are many different

symbols of such unions depending on their direction. Mainly, the issue concerns a turn of development of the society, where there is a need of separation from the crowd, a human wish to be different, to cast down the gage to the society or escape from certain obligations or problems, responsibility and public pressure, disorientation and deadlocks, to fit among the others, to be “at home” among “natives” etc. The issue is about subcultures which are one of the important and moving layers of society.

The phenomenon ‘subculture’ calls attention not only of the society, but the scholars as well. Different aspects of this problem were studied by J. Androutsopoulos, W. Proisinger, A. Starzinger, J. Clarke, S. Frit, R. Bahl, R. Lindner, D. Baacke, J. Sparschuh, G. Schulze and others.

The term “subculture” has its own history, which goes back almost to the middle of the 20th century. T. Shchepetskaia points out “even though appearance of the term “subculture” is dated back to 30s of the 20th century in the scientific literature, but it was actually spread in the 1960-70s due to studies of the youth movements. At first, the prefix “sub” appears that denotes secret unofficial cultural layers that are the back of the “original ground” of the mainstream culture. This notion is used along with such as subterranean culture and underground” [6]. During 70-90s there existed the name “System”, which denoted the countercultural movement based on the hippie and punk styles. In both Ukrainian and Russian there is a general name for representatives of different subcultures – “неформали” (inf. ніфери). In German there is a term *Szene/Scene* (from English *Scene* [si:n] f.; -; for youth = *Szene* that denotes environment, surroundings, sphere in which something is performed (music, politics etc.) for denotation of subcultures.

As Starzinger states it is significant for ‘Scene’ to deviate from the existing culture to some extent, to characterize itself as a subculture, and that is how it differs from the notion of ‘Clique’ [19, p. 65]. The notion ‘subculture’, popular in the 60s – 70s, is mostly substituted nowadays with the term ‘partial culture’ (*Teilkultur*). Under *Teilkulturen* (‘partial cultures’) R. Sutherland understands ‘... relative coherent cultural systems, which create world for themselves inside the common national system’ [19, p. 65].

Subcultures may accumulate the already existing experience of other groups, be alternative, or put up opposition to them. Considering the interpreting of ‘alternativ’ and ‘Scene’, W. Proisinger explains in his dictionary ‘*Scene-Sprache. Das rabenstarke Lexikon*’ that *alternativ*, derived from Lat. *alter* – other, had this very meaning before the 70s of the previous century, and then acquired the meaning ‘the same’, not ‘other’. Thus, everyone who speaks the same language, go to the same ‘knaipa’ (Ger. *Kneipe* – pub), wears similar clothes, thinks in the same way belongs to the ‘alternative’. Those, who act differently, do not belong to the alternatives (*Alternativ*) [17, p. 7]. We could distinguish the English equivalent of the German subculture marker ‘Scene’ –outliers community/ free spirit community – and we will further use these terms in our research as ‘Scene’ equivalents.

There exist different types of subcultures: they can be popular, famous (connected with the world of music, politics, fashion etc. in the first place), as well as surprising ones, which cause people’s astonishment. For example, outliers community, the members of which call themselves ‘evil’ and occupy empty apartments [16, p. 293]. Despite the fact that the language of each subculture has its peculiarities (primarily, lexical ones), which make it different from other subcultures, they have much in common. Since subcultures to a greater extent consist of young people, who speak youth language, they certainly influence it. It results in absorbing a significant part of the outliers community lexicon by the youth language. It should be noted that there exist outliers communities not only for young people but also for different age groups, being a part of which compensates for social family deficit, education etc. It means that the outliers community attract concerned people as well as those who do not have a clear life position or aim. Besides, outliers community can be the means of escaping from the most different life problems etc. [19, p. 66].

There is a whole number more reasons which determine the need of a certain group of people or an individual to join the subculture and to function actively in it. These reasons include the protest against the outside world, leaving aside the already-formed stereotypes and cultural traditions of previous generations, self-expression need, the vision of oneself in a special ranking of society and also the need for entertainment, freedom, limitlessness, desire to risk and “walk on the edge”, where spectators do

not only have a look at side-scenes, but simultaneously are actors. Hence the concept of "Risikogesellschaft", "Erlebnisgesellschaft" comes into existence.

'The unity of entertainment and performance' has its own position concerning the attitude to the surrounding and it may evoke people's dissatisfaction and resentment which is also their aim of existence. Apart from the manifestation of their view of life identity, presence of characteristic features of appearance, symbols, behavior, interests, such groups of people have their own 'verbal code'. They have the status of subcultures and are perceived by the society in a different way.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The peculiarities of subcultures' language are influenced by preferences of their members, their lifestyle, behaviour etc. Consequently, among the primarily widespread lexical units there always have been ones denoting musical instruments and dance styles. So, at first young people absorb lexical units of the congenial subcultures, and it is a natural phenomenon. When speaking about music and dance, some of those units are used by individuals of different generations.

Easy life is one of the main principles of the outliers community, and it partially explains frequent usage of the lexeme 'Easy' by the subcultures representatives. W. Prossinger states that lexeme 'Easy' for the outliers community is a super-word possessing three important features: 1) the ending *-i* is typical of the youth language; 2) it is the English loan word; 3) it means 'not difficult', and everything that is 'not difficult' characterizes the outliers community (everything in their life must be easy). If something causes difficulties for the outliers community, or is *nicht easy (=heavy)*, it is considered to be bad. Lexeme *der Normalo* is used by the outliers community to denote a person that looks in a different way, has another mode of dress and so on, and must be fought. However, *der Normalo* is useful for the subcultures representatives because they know who they do not want to be. *Der Hirni* does harm to the outliers community, keeps aloof, must perceive everything critically and or discuss it, at the very least [17].

Whereas the outliers community perceive the world in an emotional and extra sensitive way, exaggerating the feelings positively as well as negatively, the common intensifier of their language 'very' is replaced by 'stronger intensifiers' such as *total*, *voll*, *echt*, *unheimlich*, *ire*, *tierisch* and so on (for example, *Leute, ich bin echt total am Arsch*). They are typical of the youth language in a whole, and it can be observed both in spoken language and writing (in online chat, in the first place). Hehl notes in his dictionary of the youth slang that the word *geil* as well as the words *echt*, *total* and *voll* belong to the most used units in spoken language.

Analyzing German translations of modern Ukrainian writers, we notice the translators' usage of the considered above lexical units, which are characteristic for subcultures. We speak primarily of intensifiers, which intensify the features of an object and are organized in the interpretation formula 'dyzhe', 'strashenno', 'bezperechno', 'odnoznachno', 'neabyiak'. For example: *echt* (Ukr.: 'Тут всі почали обговорювати спершу пацанів, які в натурі безбашені...' – Ger.: 'Sofort begannen alle über die echt abgefahrenen Jungs zu sprechen...' (Lubko Deresh 'The Intention')); *total* (kitsch; 'chystoyi vody kitsch' – totaler Kitsch (Ukr.: 'чистої води кіч' – Ger.: 'Totaler Kitsch' (Tania Maliarchuk 'To Speak')); *totaler Stuss* (Ukr.: 'Сказав, що вся ця затія з твоїми танками – маячня') – Ger.: 'Die ganze Geschichte mit deinen Panzern sei totaler Stuss' (Serhiy Zhadan 'Voroshilovograd'); *tierisch* (Ukr.: 'Що ти грузиш? – нервується чувак, очевидно Гоша' – Ger.: 'Was laberst du für ein Zeug? – Ger.: 'Der Typ, offensichtlich Goscha, regt sich tierisch auf' (Seriy Zhadan 'Depeche Mode')); *unheimlich* (Ukr.: 'А ось я страшенно перся' – Ger.: 'Aber ich war unheimlich stolz' (Serhiy Zhadan 'Voroshilovograd')); Ukr.: '...все це йому неабияк подобається, бо він такей до данцу бистрий що йой' – Ger.: '...als ob ihm das alles unheimlich gut gefalle, ist er nicht ein fixer Dänzer, oijoi' (Yuriy Andrukhovych 'Twelve Circles')). In the latter example, apart from the lexeme *neabyiak* rendered with the help of the lexeme *unheimlich*, Hutsul dialectal unit 'scho yoy', which is rendered with the help of phonetic assimilation, is an intensifier of quality, which means 'dyzhe' (Eng. 'very').

Certain peculiarities of the subculture speech are also seen in requests, for which the pronoun 'Du' is characteristic. Similar sentence formation is characteristic for the youth language as well. We find it in the German translations. For example, Ukr.: 'Глуна ти, глуна, я ж тебе люблю!' – Ger.: 'Du Dummerchen, du, ich liebe dich doch!' (Oksana Zabuzhko 'Fieldwork in Ukrainian Sex').

It is important for outliers community to create certain atmosphere, scenes and situations where its members are spectators and, at the same time, organizers. In order to put into action such situations where the outliers find themselves among other outliers, certain lexical codes are necessary to differentiate between the community members and those who do not belong to them. W. Prosinger considers lexeme *der Typ* to be one of them that denotes 'the result of helplessness' in the subculture [17, p. 60]. In the Ukrainian language, there exists the equivalent to the German lexeme *der Typ – mun* that has a number of meanings. The following meanings can be found in the Ukrainian language dictionary: 1) the category of people united in particular features (social, national, professional etcetera) as well as its leading representative; 2) a person that differs from others in special characteristic features (appearance, behaviour, way of thinking etcetera) // *spoken* – someone, unknown person, *individ.// disrespect.*: A person with weird or negative characteristics [2, p. 116]. Hehl's dictionary of the youth slang registers that the meaning of the lexeme *der Typ* is synonymous to *der Junge* and does not denote helplessness "...aber ich denke, sie sind ganz nette Typen!", "Das ist ein ganz schön ausgekochter Typ" (intelligent), "Echt voll cool, der Typ da drüben!", "Geht mir echt auf den Wecker, wie der Typ prallt!", "Ich hab' da einen süßen Typ gespottet!" [14]. Analyzing the German translations of the works of the modern Ukrainian writers we can find a wide range of Ukrainian equivalents interpreted with the help of the lexeme *der Typ*. Some of them denote helplessness, though many of them have negative connotation, are frequently used as slang, argot, or neutral words. For example: 1) *hlopets* (Ukr.: 'Джон Вінстон Леннон, непоганий, зрештою, хлопець...' – Ger.: '...John Winston Lennon, kein übler Typ eigentlich...' (Serhiy Zhadan 'Big Mac')); Ukr.: 'Я зауважив одного хлопця, трохи старшого за мене, який стояв на горді, широко розставивши ноги та стискаючи руками мотику' (Lubko Deresh 'The Worship Lizzard') – Ger.: 'Ich bemerkte einen Typ, etwas älter als ich, der im Gemüsegarten stand, die Beine gespreizt und in den Händen eine Hacke'); 2) *hlopchak* (Ukr.: '...Із міднобуківської школи до Польщі поїхало двоє хлопчаків...' – Ger.: '...führen zwei Typen aus Midni Buky nach Polen...' (Lubko Deresh 'The Worship Lizzard')); 3) *hlopchyna* (Ukr.: 'Чорноволосий хлопчина, зодягнутий у сіру футболку без рукавів зі шнуровидлом коло шиї, тобто я, змерзлякувато потер руки' – Ger.: 'Ein schwarzhaariger Typ in einem grauen, ärmellosen T-Shirt mit Schnursalat am Hals, also ich, rieb sich fröstelnd die Arme' (Lubko Deresh 'The Worship Lizzard')) 4) *molodyk* (Ukr.: 'Особливо дівуля вкурвила мене, коли я зауважив, як вона вішається на молодика в компанії добре одягнутих очкариків-інтелектуалів' – Ger.: 'Besonders wild wurde ich, als ich bemerkte, wie sich das Mädels an einen jungen Typen aus einer Gruppe gutangezogener Brillenträger hängte' (Lubko Deresh 'The Intention)); 5) *dyadko* (Ukr.: 'Але я не зовсім певний, чи так уже й до кінця поїхав у того дядька дах' – Ger.: 'Aber ich bin mir nicht sicher, ob dieser Typ wirklich restlos übergeschnappt ist' (Lubko Deresh 'The Worship Lizzard')); 6) *muzhuk* (Ukr.: 'Нормально, думаю, хороший мужик, капітан Кобилко...' – Ger.: 'Okay, dachte ich, der Typ, Hauptmann Kobylko...' (Serhiy Zhadan 'Anarchy in the UKR')); 7) *muzhchynka* (Ukr.: 'А що – мужчинки хоть куди!' – Ger.: 'Und das sind scharfe Typen!' (Oksana Zabuzhko 'The Museum of Abandoned Secrets')); 8) *kurdupl* (ein untersetzter Typ) (Ukr.: 'Зустрічає нас такий собі курдупель в танкістському шоломі. Полковник Іванов' – Ger.: 'In Wunnyky haben wir dann die Offiziere getroffen. Oberst Iwanow, ein untersetzter Typ...' (Yuriy Vynnychuk 'Tango of Death')); 9) *halaistra* (Ukr.: «Рівно тридцять, молода гарна жінка, вся ця галайстра навколо міжнародної каси намагалася всіляко липнути до неї» – Ger.: «Genau dreißig, eine junge, hübsche Frau, und die Typen am internationalen Schalter versuchten, sich auf jede nur erdenkliche Weise an sie ranzumachen» (Yurii Andrukhovych 'The Secret. Instead of a Novel')); 10) *mudak* (Ukr.: «...з одним мудаком, який мене дістав» – Ger.: «... mit einem Typen, der mir irrsinnig auf die Eier ging» (Oksana Zabuzhko 'Field Work in Ukrainian Sex')); 11) *fatset* (Ukr.: «Але одного разу, – Дзвінка підняла акуратний пальчик, наголошуючи на тому, наскільки винятковим і неординарним був випадок, так от, одного разу здибав його певний фацет, який саме шукав саксофоніста до свого джез-бенду» – Ger.: «Aber eines Tages, – Dzwinka hob bedeutsam den Finger, um etwas Extraordinäres anzukündigen, – also, eines Tages traf er einen Typen, der einen Saxophonisten für

seine Jazzband suchte» (Lubko Deresh 'The Worship Lizzard'); 12) *bychara* (Ukr.: «...короткошій бичара без вказівного пальця на правій руці і великого на лівій» – Ger.: «...ein bulliger Typ, dem an der linken Hand der Zeigefinger und an der rechten der Mittelfinger fehlte» (Yurii Andrukhovych 'Twelve Rings')); 13) *olihofren* (Ukr.: «Озброєний автоматом олізофрен не погожувався пропустити нас до малої» – Ger.: «ein mit Maschinenpistole bewaffneter Typ wollte uns nicht zu unserer Tochter lassen» (Yurii Andrukhovych 'The Devil's Hiding in the Cheese')); 14) *padliuka* (Ukr.: «...тільки за совденівським підручником виходило, що він падлюка, а чувак був якраз нормальний...» – Ger.: «...aber vielleicht wurde es nur in den Sowje-Lehrbüchern so verkauft, dass er'n mieser Typ ist, vielleicht war das eine ganz normale Reaktion...» (Oksana Zabuzhko 'The Museum of Abandoned Secrets')); 15) *chuvak* (Ukr.: «На реценції сидить чувак з кульчиками в обох вухах, говорить сербською і дивиться футбол» – Ger.: «An der Rezeption sitzt ein Typ mit Ringen in beiden Ohren und schaut Fußball, er spricht Serbisch» (Serhiy Zhadan 'Big Mac')); 16) *shturpak* (Ukr.: «Нагору вибилися різноманітні штурпаки...» – Ger.: «Abschaum schwappte nach oben, Typen...» (Yuriy Vynnychuk 'Tango of Death')); 17) *patsan* (Ukr.: «Напевне, я наймолодший пацан...» – Ger.: «Möglich, daß ich hier der jüngste Typ bin...» (Lubko Deresh 'The Intention')); 18) *paskudnyi typ* (Ukr.: «Дуже, дуже паскудний туп» – Ger.: «Ein sehr, sehr mieser Typ» (Lubko Deresh 'The Worship Lizzard')); 19) *pidozrilyi typ – der verdächtige Typ* (Yuriy Vynnychuk 'Tango of Death').

3. CONCLUSIONS

As a means of communication and one of the most important way of self-expression language reflects the surrounding world of people, their preferences, attitudes towards others, acceptance or rejection of the world, belonging or dissociation from it. There is one or a number of names used to denote a particular object or concept. They often have their own alternative or even opposition denominations peculiar to a certain age, professional or interest groups etc. New words describing both new and existing notions constantly appear in the language. Subculture is characterized by a number of designations that serve as a code for communication between "themselves", as a means of isolating and creating opposition, for self-expression, etc. As most subcultures are represented by young people, youth language absorbs lexical units peculiar for subcultures. Despite the lexicon of subcultures as well as the youth language in general is influenced by the flow of time and changes it is more recorded in the dictionaries, some of it goes into the spoken language, which is used not only by young, but middle and older generation. Especially when it comes to notions emerged at the time of their youth (for example, certain designations in music). Based on the study of German scientists who distinguish the main characteristics of subcultures and inherent for them groups of the most used lexical units, one can observe both coincidence and divergence of lexical units meaning recorded in the dictionaries. Besides the specific notions indicating certain characteristics of one or another subgroup (related to music, fashion etc.), subcultures mainly use the youth and spoken language and if necessary a literary one. In the language of subcultures the intensifiers such as, *voll, total, echt, tierisch, unheimlich, irre* etc are used to reinforce the quality. In the Ukrainian writers' translations into German one can notice a number of analyzed lexical units typical for the language of subcultures as well as for the youth language in general.

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Address: M.R. Tkachivska, Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, 57, Shevchenko Str., Ivano-Frankivsk, 76000, Ukraine.

E-mail: mariatkachivska@gmail.com.

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У статті розглядаються субкультури і їх мовні особливості. Дослідження окреслює низку позначень, характерних для субкультур, що слугують кодом для спілкування поміж «своїми» та засобом виокремлення, самовираження, створення опозиції тощо. Оскільки більшість субкультур представлені молодими людьми, молодіжна мова всмоктує в себе лексичні одиниці, характерні для субкультур. Незважаючи на те, що лексика субкультур, як і молодіжна мова в цілому, піддається плину часу і змінам, вона більшою мірою фіксується у словниках, певна її частина переходить у розмовну мову. Опираючись на дослідження німецьких науковців, які виокремлюють основні особливості, характерні для субкультур та корпус притаманних для них найбільш вживаних лексичних одиниць, дослідження фіксує як збіг, так і розходження значень цих лексичних одиниць, зазначених у словниках. Окрім конкретних понять, які позначають певні особливості тієї чи іншої субгрупи (пов'язані з музикою, модою і т.д.), субкультури використовують загально-молодіжну та розмовну мову, а також поза своїм оточенням при потребі можуть користуватися літературною мовою. У мові субкультур для підсилення якості використовуються інтенсифікатори *voll*, *total*, *echt*, *tierisch*, *unheimlich*, *irre* та ін. У перекладах творів українських письменників на німецьку мову спостерігається використання низки проаналізованих у статті лексичних одиниць, характерних як для мови субкультур, так і для молодіжної мови в цілому.

Ключові слова: субкультура, особливості, молодіжна мова, нецензурна лексика, сленг, переклад.