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# Research on non-standard language elements in Slavonic languages

#### Abstract

A characteristic of contemporary Slavonic languages is the increasing influence of non-standard language elements. This brings the issue of the 'substandard' and its exploration back to the centre of attention. During the socialist era, the 'substandard' was seen as a very negative phenomenon and as something that corrupts language culture and restricts the mental faculties of its speakers. As a result, there was insufficient research on 'substandard' Slavonic language varieties during the socialist period. This situation has changed completely with the transforming world since the 1990s. The present article contains information about the latest developments in research on non-standard language elements in Slavonic languages.

**Keywords:** slavonic languages, lexical changes, non-standard, substandard, sociolect, corporate jargon, linguistic parameters of description, East, West and South Slavonic languages, conceptual universals of lexis and phraseology, dictionaries of substandard varieties

# 1. Preliminary notes

Contemporary Slavonic languages exhibit different dynamic processes. This is predominantly manifested in the lexical stock of words. The lexical changes are not just neologisms (mainly borrowings from English), but also lexical elements from the linguistic periphery, which move to the centre of the system.

The increasing influence of non-standard language on standard Slavonic languages has been discussed in a large number of academic publications. However, there are significant differences in the definitions of basic terms provided in these studies. Even the generic term for non-standard language variants is not clearly defined and varies from *non-standard*, *substandard*, to *sociolect* etc. Some authors use these terms in opposition. For instance, Koester-Thoma (1996: 51) wants to divide non-standard linguistic forms of

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the Russian language into sub- and non-standard. Variants that are systematic in characters on all linguistic levels, e.g. dialects or folk languages, belong to the category of substandard; whereas the non-standard includes language formations which cannot be seen as a system and whose distribution is on the lexical and phraseological level (e.g. jargon, slang or argot). This distinction does not seem to be appropriate because the differentiation according to the status of the system is only of secondary importance and can/cannot be codified in the same way as the characteristics. Furthermore, not all varieties have the explicit clarified status of a system. Prostorečie (urban popular language) is present on all linguistic levels, however it is not systematic in character (Zemskaja 1991: 62). Therefore S. Koester-Thoma allocates Prostorečie between the sub- and non-standard (Koester-Thoma 1996: 51).

The terms jargon, argot and slang are used as interchangeable synonyms in the linguistic literature, despite efforts to strictly separate them from each other. Thus, the renowned Polish Encyclopedia of General Linguistics mentions them side by side: żargon (argot, slang), whereas they are additions to the traditional Polish terms język tajny, język specjalny (Polański 1993a: 654). The Slovak linguistic encyclopedia defines the term argot as "a kind of slang, which is used in a specific group of speakers with the aim to make the meaning unclear to members of other social groups". Slang and jargon are accredited to anti-social elements (thieves, drug addicts, inmates) and include technical languages, as well as children's language (EJ 1993: 68, 385). Thereby, the term slang is seen by Slovak linguists, on the one hand, in relation to its variants (e.g. vojenský slang, poľovnický slang, mládežnický slang and so on), on the other to such Slovakian terms as hantírka, sociálne nárečie, profesionálne nárečia, profesionálne žargon, mestský jazyk, vrstvový (skupinový) jazyk, mládež-nický [sociálny] jazyk [vel'ko]mesta and so on (Hochel 1993: 13). The Croatian word for sociolects – *šatrovački govor* is consistent with the English slang and cant, the French argot and langue verte, the German Rotwelsch, Sondersprache, schwarze Sprache, Grüner Spritzer, the Italian gergo, the Spanish germania, the Portuguese calâo and the Polish gwara złodziejska (Sabljak 1981: 5-6; 2001: V). Sabljak underlines the mixed character, which leads to the impossibility of a precise definition of the Croatian šatrovačskog govora's subgroups. The Russian linguistic encyclopedia also notes that the term jargon is determined as "в собственно терминологическом смысле часто заменяют словосочетаниями язык студенчества или терминами арго, сленг" (Arapov 1998a: 151) and slang as "то же, что жаргон (в отечественной литературе преимущественно к англоязычным странам)" (Arapov 1998b: 461).

### 2. Jargon

The term *jargon* (French *jargon*, lit. "incomprehensible muttering" or "twittering", originally onomatopoeic) competes in many studies with the term *argot*, but without diachronic connotations. It is usually understood in a broader sense as a special language by including certain profession, rank and other characterised circles with a special lexicon (jargon) (EJ 1993, 500).

The understanding of jargon is even broader, if language elements of the uneducated population are included, particularly "blemished" speech, which is caused by language interference, such as the Ukrainian суржик or the Belorussian трасянка. The term includes, on the one hand, those lexises that are characterised as argot, for instance жаргон казачества, бурсаков, духовенства, разных профессиональных групп городского населения and, on the other hand, it also characterises those subsystems, such as the Ukrainian and Russian slang of pupils and students (Winnik 2000: 167–168; Horbatsch 2006: 108-164; Walter, Mokienko, Nikitina 2005). Serbian jargon is interpreted similarly. Its understanding "ranges dynamically between the professional language and the language of the street and the borders are changed frequently"; therefore, the Serbian jargon is "outside the Serbian literary language" from time to time (Andrić 1976: VII, IX). Such formulations are trying to draw a line between argot and jargon on the basis of only one implicitly noticeable feature: jargon has, in contrast to argot, an open character and is normally used among larger groups of young speakers, who are connected with each other through joint professional and cultural interests; for example, through their membership of a certain social environment (military service, studies, seasonal work, clubs etc.).

Group or corporate jargon is not primarily created by the necessity to name new specific terms, but by the need of a "second nomination". This means in detail, by an expressive recoding of already known terms and phenomena, as well as their assessment and revaluation. The lexis and phraseology is therefore marked by a nominative "surplus". This is done by the appearance of larger synonym series of stylistic lower lexis and idioms. These are usually not terminological, but lexical-phraseological units with expressive evaluative meaning. For example, the group of the term "prostitute" includes in Russian and other Slavonic languages hundreds of lexical-phraseological units, which form compact semantically motivated series:

1. 'woman' → 'prostitute' (бике, гейгёрл, лёгкая девочка, муська et al.); 2. 'working woman' → 'prostitute' (активистка, общественница, дежурка, раскладушка et al.); 3. 'female first name' → 'prostitute' (Барби, Белоснежка, Маруся, Машка, Наташа, Наташка, Ташка et al.); 4. 'animal names' → 'prostitute' (ночная бабочка, выхухоль, кобра, кобыла, курва, лебедь, хорёк et al.); 5. 'name of mythological beings' → 'prostitute' (лярва, мара, маруха, марьяна et al.); 6. 'container, opening and so on' → 'prostitute' (бикса, лоханка, урна, скважина, клизма et al.); 7. 'object/item' → 'prostitute' (мочалка, клюшка, метла, швабра et al.) etc.

Such an expressive "surplus" is determined by the socio-psychological similarities between the speakers of jargon. These speakers are accredited with a certain maxim and a desire to reflect the ideas about values in life, behavioural norms and others in an unconventional way and to behave linguistically in a peculiar way, as well as to experience the feeling of group life. Thus, jargon becomes one of the most important features of affiliating to a particular social group. The characteristic features of the given subculture are reflected in speech and are accompanied by a process of language individualisation (Nekvapil 1987: 28f). The secondary function of jargon is shown by the fact that it only appears on the lexical-phraseological level.

### 3. Argot

Argot (French argot) is one of the oldest names for sociolects in Europe. This term is often used to characterise particular social or occupational discrepancies from the common language (argot of artists, of musicians, of athletes, of military. et al.); with the same meaning as jargon.

More specifically, argot is the language of the socially underprivileged and the underworld (thieves, beggars, the homeless, fraudsters, brigands, racketeers, professional killers and so on). The terms argot and secret language historically referred to the sublanguages of associations in Europe, including in the Slavic countries, which were developed in the feudal period – travelling merchants, beggars, thieves etc. Argot was created as an instrument of self-protection, to ensure a separation from society and to preserve professional secrets. Hence, it resulted in the "encoding" of the argot's lexis and phraseology. The understanding of the term varies in different Slavonic philologies. Suk emphasises the distinctive feature of argot as being cryptic to the uninitiated, and opines that the number of such language spheres is extremely low in the Czech language. Such spheres mainly include children's language, slogans, highly limited (and ephemeral) conspiratorial words (Suk 1993: 9–10).

The Ukrainian argot, on the other hand, is interpreted in the "feudal" understanding discussed above; this includes for example the speech of the blind folk singers (Kobzars) and of the Lirniki (the so-called лебійска от илепецька, сліпецька мова) and of the wandering traders (furriers, hatters, tanners, potters, shoemakers, dyers and others). These types of argot have much in common with regional and professional characteristics (Winnik 2000: 31). The Russian argot, which contains cant and similar linguistic subsystems of jargon, was often referred to in Soviet linguistics as the "Jargon of outclassed elements" (жаргон деклассированных элементов). The term is marked politically. However, this marking and its (linguistic) placement in an autonomous group of social variants is not accurate, because the sub-standard's characteristic becomes an expression indicating judgement.

According to the Serbian linguist D. Andrić, "if we want to quantify the jargon with the high standards of the literary language our consideration needs to be based on the ancient legal principle of presumption of innocence: it must be considered innocent until the opposite is proven" (Andrić 1976: XVII). Argot and cant are similar lexical-phraseological systems, which are characterised by the conspiratorial function of communication within a particular social group. In such groups the necessity to use a secret language develops from the conscious efforts to distinguish themselves from others or "strangers". The objectives of such conspiracy may be different: from defence (or self-defence) against the state legal system, the preservation of professional secrets, recognition of "allies" and the exclusion of opponents, cryptic conversations in the presence of the uninitiated, to taboo and the euphemizing of imparted information, the accentuated linguistic superiority over those who, for example, do not speak the Russian δηαπημα φeha, the Polish gwara przestępców (złodziejska), the Czech hantýrka or the Croatian šatrovački govor. The conspiracy is achieved by linguistic means: by borrowing, reinterpretation of known vocabulary and by various semantic transformations. Some linguists rightly think that

the conspiratorial feature of argot and jargon is not less important than their "identity formation" feature (Marszk 1999: 629), which derives mainly from the truncated nature of brachylogy sociolects.

A major feature of a secret language is, as well as jargon, its expressivity. This creates not only the strong predominance (more than 70%) of a stylistically lower, coarse and vulgar lexis, but also a vast number of idioms with expressive-evaluative and negative connotations. The ideographic selectivity and the concentrated nature of the lexical-phraseological inventory are characteristic of that group. Concepts such as "money", "arrest and injury", "theft and robbery", "killing", "alcohol and drugs", "female and male genitals", "sexual intercourse", "craziness and irrationality", etc., for example, as described for the Czech argot (van Leeuwen-Turnovcová 2003), are typological dominants for argot systems of all Slavonic and non-Slavonic European languages. The Croatian šatrovački govor forms in quantitative and qualitative aspects an independent group of erotic and sexual lexis and phraseology. This group is partly seen as a linguistic expression of "amorality, cynicism, obstinacy" (Sabljak 2001, XIII–XIV). The universality of these semantic dominants is determined by the extra-linguistic roots of the argot, which help speakers to express protest against traditional moral concepts, aversion to governmental institutions, society, labour, women, general behavioural norms and so on.

# 4. Slang

According to Eric Partridge, the use of slang is conditioned by not less than 15 reasons: exercise for the mind or the imagination, to distinguish oneself from others, to express oneself clearly, to make an impression, to avoid stereotypes, to enrich the language, to make the language concise, to loosen up conversations, to demonstrate confidentiality, to alleviate the interaction with each other, to produce closeness, to show that one belongs, to exclude others, to keep a secret. The integrating feature of slang is, that it is "always used to mark social and linguistic identity" and "by definition, depicts the colloquial deviation from the standard language" (Crystal 1995: 53). Because of the broad understanding of the term slang, all types of substandard languages can actually be included - from secret languages and argot to the Russian Prostorečie and the Czech "obecná čeština". Therefore it is not surprising that an "average American" has a lexicon of 10,000–20,000 units, whereof 10-20% are defined as slang (Wentworth, Flexner 1967: VI). The ratio of slang and general language elements in the speech of an "average Russian", an "average Pole" or an "average Slovene" seems to be similar. M. Czeszewski, the author of one of the newest dictionaries of Polish youth slang, defines slang without using the term or the Polish equivalent gwara młodzieżowa: slang is a bit of everything, "wybuchowa mieszanka językowa" (Czeszewski 2001: VII). From this comes the idea that slang has the status of a general substandard language, which "is an inherent part of the active and passive vocabulary of each speaker of the national language" (Hochel 1993: 17). In an approach like this, the term slang is the lower part of a pyramid in the hierarchy of other kinds of substandards. Hochel sees the argot as formed by non-literary language tools. They are

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supposed to give the expressed information a cryptic character, which permits its use only in closed groups of speakers. In his opinion, jargon is a non-literary linguistic instrument, which obscures the expressed information, while emphasising a certain social status or membership of a social group. Slang includes various non-literary linguistic instruments (territorial-dialects, argot, jargon), which gave up, to a considerable extent, the characteristics of their origin among the speakers of a national language (Hochel 1993: 21).

Czech linguistics has an opposite understanding of slang. Here, *slang* is understood as a characteristic form of speech of certain groups, which are linked by their common interests or by professional contacts with each other. It does not occur in a uniform way, which would have a general-territorial, national or vernacular meaning (Nekvapil 1977: 237). The "dictionary of Slavonic linguistic terms" mentions on the one hand *slang*, *jargon* and *argot* in some languages as synonyms, while in other languages either separately or one term is missing: Russian *apzo*, *c.nehz*; Ukrainian *c.nehz*; Belorussian *жаргон*, *с.nэнz*; Polish *slang*; Czech *slang*; Slovakian *slang*; Upper and Lower Sorbian *slang*; Bulgarian *с.nahz*, *жаргон*; Macedonian *с.nahz*; Serbo-Croatian *с.nehz*, *жаргон*, *арго*; Slovenian *sleng*. Western European equivalents (English *slang*, French *argot* and German *slang*) and a standardised definition complements the series: "Speech of a group of persons sharing a common calling or common interests; it is characterised by specific, usually emotionally coloured, expressions" (Slovnik 1977, vol. 1, 26–27). This "sequence" of the terms we are interested in reflects, in a way, the divergences in the existing terminological system.

The linguistic parameters of the three described types of Slavonic substandard are largely similar. Thus, the lexis of the Slovakian slang appears as: a) reinterpretation of words, so only particular speakers are able to understand them (*oxidovat*' 'wait for a long time', *klasika* 'breakfast'); b) deformations of words (*debko – debil, promiška – propmenáda*); c) formation or borrowings of words and expressions with a greatly increased expressivity (*šprtoš* 'a very good student, someone who swots', *daj si opdich!* 'Back off!', *kupit' opicu – opit' sa*) (EJ: 385).

The ways of formation of Croatian jargon are analogue: a) metathesis, b) word-forming affixes, c) formation of new words, d) shortening of words, e) borrowings (Sabljak 2001: X–XI). Similar slang and jargon formation types are described for the East Slavonic languages, for instance for Ukrainian: a) metathesis, b) reordering of syllables, c) summaries, d) extensions and others (Winnik 2000: 31). The outcome of this is that the terms *argot*, *jargon* and *slang* intersect and interact in the Slavonic traditions, despite the efforts to delineate them from each other. Such an intersection and mutual interaction is reflected most clearly in practical lexicography of the Slavonic substandard.

# 5. Linguistic research of substandard varieties

For some Slavonic standard languages the belief exists that their substandard languages are "weak" or "underdeveloped", for example, the linguistic situation in Belarus, Ukraine, Slovenia, Macedonia. Such diagnosis is subjective and reflects only the limited research of the problem so far. One of the presented arguments is of linguistic and national purism.

Recently, some Slovakicists contended that there is nothing like a Slovakian slang and that the existing elements are of Czech origin. This has been disproved by the arguments of linguists (Hochel 1993: 13). The existence of Ukrainian or Belorussian jargon is likewise disputed and linked with the problematic question of the existence of a "mixed language", the so-called *суржик* от *трасянка*. The "mixed language" resulted from the relevant casual colloquial variants of the national language together with Russian. Recently published dictionaries (e.g. Прикало 1998; Stawicka 2003) and specific studies (Mokienko 2001) also show the subjectivity of such an assessment. While *Bohemian expressions* undoubtedly exist in Slovak slang, and *Russian expressions* in Ukrainian and Belorussian jargon, these languages have their "own" sociolects. The linguistic systems develop polyfunctionally, due to these sociolects.

The interest in the study of sociolects begins with observations of the secret languages (cant) as well as professional languages. Jagić's work "The secret languages of the Slavs" (Jagić 1896) needs to be regarded as a "classic". In his work, the genetic and typological parallels of "cant" of various Slavic peoples are demonstrated.

Unfortunately, this approach of a synthetic analysis of Slavic sociolects has found no consistent continuation to the present day. Contemporary linguistic researchers limit themselves to the historical-etymological interpretation of a specific substandard and juxtapositions with other Slavonic languages – for instance, Polish and Ukrainian (Horbatsch 1993; 2006), Czech (van Leeuwen-Turnovcová 1993; 2003) and Russian (Grachev 1997; Grachev, Mokienko 2000). Rich material that opens up promising perspectives for confrontational inter-Slavonic research on the substandard is contained in many dictionaries.

# 5.1. The East Slavonic languages

The **Russian** substandard varieties of language have been studied extensively and in the most complex way. They were considered in the "Debate about the language" during the Stalinist period and at the time of Marr's theories.

Sociolinguists have produced a great number of scientific and lexicographical results over the past 20 years. This includes work on the language of the urban population which eluded the censorship that was already being practised in the 1920s and early 1930s. Many linguistic aspects have been studied extensively, as summaries of research in Russia and abroad indicate (Elistratov 1994: 592-674; Grachev 1997: 5-17; Fenyvesi 1996: 189-205; Bierich 2000; Walter 2000). (See D. Marszk's informative essay (1999: 622-626) and W. von Timroth's work (1986)). The dominant aspects of such studies are: the thematic and ideographical classification of substandard linguistic units or the structuring of corresponding material according to a social hierarchy (Timroth 1986: 59–87; 107–110; Puig 1999; Bierich 2000; 2002), the origin and specific description of jargon (or slang) according to their "distribution spheres", e.g. argot of the Ofens (Bondaletov 1974), jargon of the hippies and the punks (Fain, Lurie 1992), of drug addicts (Puig 1991; 1991a; Becker 1994; Grachev 1997; Walter 2003), of pupils and students (Кёстер-Тома 1992; Walter, Mokienko, Nikitina 2003), of soldiers (Djachok 1992) etc. More recently, special interest focuses on the vernacular phraseology (Bykov 1999; Mokienko 1994; Walter, Mokienko 2000; Bierich, Matei 2002). Due to the studies of word-forming potencies of jargon,

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new perspectives are opened up (Zemskaja 1999: XVII–XXVII). Works concerning the role of substandard linguistic elements in fictional texts (e.g. Ponomarenko 1992) and the modern folklore of the small genre (Walter, Mokienko 2004) continue. The study of inter-Slavonic and trans-European connections of the Russian vernacular system, deeper historical-etymological research and complex socio-linguistic and regional description, etc., remain a desideratum.

The basis for such a comprehensive study of Russian sociolects was established not less than 200 years ago – with the fixing of the speech of the Ofens in P.S. Pallis's dictionary (end of the 18th century), and by V.I. Dal (1850; 1854–1855), by publishing the vagabond Van'ka Bec's (Бец 1903) dictionary booklet and by the, at that time, pioneering dictionary of V.F. Trachtenberg (Trachtenberg 1908). Sociolinguists have already studied the general principles extensively, the periodisation and the functioning tendencies of Russian jargon. We find evidence in the late 19th and early 20th century works of Baudouin de Courtenay, M. Vasmer, B.A. Larin, A.M. Seliščev, M. Peterson, S.A. Koporskij, V.M. Žirmusnkij, M.M. Friedman, D.S. Lichačev, E.D. Polivanov, V.V. Straten, V. Tonkov, L.V. Uspenskij, R.O. Sors and others. Since the 1960s, both in Russia and abroad, such studies have experienced a second revival after a long "vow of silence". Russian linguistics was condemned to this "vow of silence" in the period of the struggle for a "Marxist linguistics". A list of linguists of the "second wave" would include A. Bierich, D.V. Bondaletov, E.G. Borisova, V.B. Bykov, F. Drejzin, E.S. Elistratov, O.P. Ermakova, N. Fesenko, W. Gierke, M.A. Gračev, O. Horbatsch, H. Jachnov, M.V. Kitajgorodskaja, S. Koester--Thoma, M.M. Kopylenko, K. Koscinskij, O.A. Lapteva, L.T. Lošmanova, V.M. Mokienko, T.G. Nikitina, N.A. Nilsson, F.P. Patton, T. Pristli, R.I. Rozina, E.N. Širjajev, L.I. Skvorcov, W. v. Timroth, B.A. Uspenskij, H. Walter and others.

The **Belorussian** substandard is usually looked at as being in the "shadow" of the Russian substandard. Among Belorussian philologists the view that Belorussian jargon does not exist predominates. These philologists contend that the modern lexis and phraseology used in the Belorussian regional language/city language is merely the result of interference and that the so-called "Trasjanka" reflects an expansion of Russian jargon into the Belorussian language. This perception is difficult to agree on because, over 100 years ago, a number of Yiddish argot words and expressions were fixed, especially in Belarus. These words and expressions entered the Russian language later via the Belorussian language (Winer 1895). Like the Ukrainian argot, the development of substandard linguistic vocabulary in the Belorussian language is often influenced by the Polish substandard. The Polish substandard itself has been enriched by Germanisms.

For some time now, the **Ukrainian** substandard language variants have attracted the attention of linguists. In connection with the general increase of interest in folklore, attention is directed towards the secret languages of beggars (*πεοδραμωκα* or *διδιβεωκα μοβα*), travelling musicians (Lirniki) and the argot of Bursaks (pupils in theological seminars). The songs of Lirniki, prayers and folklore have been recorded since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Wiktorin 1886; 1894; Γнаток 1896 and other). O. Horbatsch has carefully evaluated, lexicographically systematized and subjected this valuable material to a thorough linguistic analysis (Horbatsch 1993: 5–45; 165–177; 178–191). He is the *spiritus movens* of the study of Slavonic

sociolects and shows the close connection of the traditional Ukrainian argot system and the argot of military members (Horbatsch 1993: 66–101), the argot of pupils and students (112–164), the argot of criminals and inmates (102–111; 192–256). With the publications of J.P. Dzendelivskij and L. Stavic'ka, studies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century traditional Ukrainian argot-system continued: арго лирников (Дзенделівський 1977а; Stavic'ka 2005: 72f.), кожевенников (Дзенделівський 1977b), ре- месленников-портных (Дзенделівський 1983; Stavic'ka 2005: 79f.) and арго бурсаков (Дзенделівський 1979, 1988; Stavic'ka 2005: 114f.). The temporal and geographical origin of this material has been described in detail and it has been carefully lexicographically edited.

O. Horbatsch encouraged the juxtaposition of Ukrainian, Russian (Horbatsch 1993: 257–289; 321–346) and Polish (347–359) sociolects, as well as research on the Germanic elements in the Slavonic argot system (290–320). The complete text of his habilitation was published in Lviv (2006). This will certainly strengthen the linguistic interest in Ukrainian sociolects. This interest is particularly important because the Ukrainian argot plays an essential role in the "influence of jargon" of the East Slavonic languages (Mokienko 2001). It is remarkable that in works on the Russian argot, which have an historical-etymological focus, Ukrainian language material is of constantly increasing importance (Grachev 1997; Otin 1999; Grachev, Mokienko 2000 and other). The new dictionary by L. Stavic'ka (Stawicka 2003) provides important approaches for an objective description of contemporary interactions of Ukrainian and Russian jargon. In the preamble of this dictionary, the role of *cypæuk* is not evaluated from a linguistically purist point of view, but as a real fact of linguistic blending, which enforces the national language system (2003: 9–18).

### 5.2. The West Slavonic languages

Polish substandard. West Slavonic sociolects cannot be described without a solid evaluation of Polish research. Important lexicographical essays about secret languages (mowa złodziejska, szwargot wiezienny, żargon złodziejski, blatna muzyka) were published in Poland 100 years ago (Kurka 1896; Estreicher 1903; Ludwikowski; Walczak 1922 and others). Thanks to O. Horbatsch, these books are still accessible today (Horbatsch 1979, 1979a). Those studies are still up to date, as is their systemisation and etymological interpretation of linguistic material. Furthermore, the basic direction of the expansion of sociolects in West and East Slavonic languages is given by showing the strong influence of Yiddish and German on the "cant" and on the development of the secret languages. The publication of research concerning the language of thieves has promoted studies and lexicographical descriptions of corresponding material in Russia. Its influence is visible in the first dictionary of Russian cant, the dictionary by V.F. Trachtenberg (today known to Slavists via reprints and new editions in Germany and the USA respectively [1978; 2002; Kozlovskij 1983], not just in the title of "Блатная музыка" (1908), but also in the commentaries and supplements of Baudouin de Courtenay, in which many links to Polish and Yiddish borrowings can be found. The study of Polish sociolects has not been interrupted. That is why, for example, a detailed description of the travelling grocer's vocabulary can be found in Budziszewska's disquisition "Żargon ochwesnicki" (1957). A detailed analysis of Warsaw slang was given by B. Wieczorkiewicz in 1966 ("Gwara

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warszawska dawniej i dziś"; "Słownik gwary warszawskiej XIX wieku"). In 1951 the first monograph about the Polish language of criminals was published by H. Ułaszyn ("Język złodziejski"). Special attention was given to the question of interaction with the national language in the aftermath of the Second World War. Its answer questions the dynamic function of sociolects in its hierarchy "*język-dialekt-gwara-żargon*" (K. Dejna, S. Urbańczyk, S. Grabias, A. Furdal and others). Due to the general "hush up" of the mentioned problematic, youth jargon was studied less. After political changes, over the last two decades, previously marginalised aspects of sociolinguistics have been considered and described (Kania 1995; Czeszewski 2001; NSGU 2004 and others). Studies dedicated to the specific aspects of youth talk, e.g., jargon phraseology (Nevzorova-Kmieć 2002), in which the complexity of the correlating subculture is shown, were published. These interpretations were only possible with the Polish lexicography of jargon.

Czech substandard. The tradition of research of the substandard is strongly connected with linguistic research in Europe, especially in Germany and the Netherlands. Already in 1821 the brochure "Hantýrka čili jazyk zlodějů" by J. Puchmajer was published, and in the early 20th century the first Czech substandard dictionaries, e.g. "Hantýrka (tajná řeč) zlodějská ze zač. XIX.stol." (Český lid", XV, Praha, 1906, p. 46–48) or "Slovník české hantýrky" Fr. Bredler (Železný Brod, 1914). The first edition of the theoretical linguistic journal "Slovo a slovesnost" (1935) published studies by P. Trost which demonstrated the interest that linguists in Prague had in the social aspects of the linguistic system. In the 1930s F. Oberpfalcer's "Argot a slangy" (1934) was published. This remains a basic text for Czech linguists.

From the 1960s, in response to the issues mentioned above, a series of research projects have been developed. The publications of J. Hubáček considered the onomasiological principle of slang (Hubáček 1971), the slang of railway workers (Hubáček 1974) and Czech slang of different kinds (Hubáček 1979, 1981). He also published a little dictionary of Czech slang (Hubáček 1988). Another Czech linguist writing on modern Czech argot published his own work (Suk 1979), and his book series on professional jargons (military, driver, craftsmen etc.) was only published after he emigrated to Switzerland (Suk 1993). Rich (even though heterogeneous) language material is contained in P. Ouřednik's dictionary (1988, 1992). The first edition appeared abroad due to the censorship in his home country. With the help of Czech linguists, both general and more specific problems of the substandard have been analysed, e.g. the specific development of structural-semantic verb models in youth slang (Nekvapil 1982), regenerations in the slang of tourists (trampský slang) as a special variant of youth slang (Nekvapil 1977) or the quantitative characteristics of Czech sociolects (Klimeš 1972). There are a number of linguists who have contributed to research on the Czech substandard. These include: J.V. Bečka, M. Hübl, R. Krátký, V. Křístek, J. van Leeuwen-Turnovcová, F. Svěrák, Jar. Suk and J. Frolík, Sl. Utěšny et al. Slang and argot were discussed at the regular conferences organised by L. Klimeš and J. Nekvapil of the pedagogic faculty of Plzen University, which were held between 1977 and 1989. These conferences helped to advance research (cf. topic overview of Nekvapil 1984). They were attended by Czech and Slovakian linguists (Š. Krištof, P. Ondruš, A. Habovštiak, B. Hochel, J. Bosák and others), as well as by linguists from other countries, like C. Karastojčeva from Bulgaria. Proceedings from the conferences were published.

**Slovakian substandard.** Slovak linguistics have also dealt with the social aspects of language. Interesting publications about Slovak sociolects were released in the 1940s and 1960s. This includes a book of Slovak student and military slang (Orlovský 1941), an analysis of the "Argot of Slovakian children" by P. Ondruš (1977) – although the authenticity of the material is questioned by multiple Slovakian philologists – essays by J. Švedu on pilot jargon (1946), work by Š. Krištof (1963) and several studies by J. Bosák, Š. Šikra and S. Šoková. Since the 1980s Braňo Hochel has been occupied with Slovakian slang, especially youth language; cf. his programmatic article "What's this slang?", in which he demonstrates the interaction of slang with other layers of non-literary languages (Hochel 1982), and the analysis of the lexis of non-literary language (Hochel 1983). Hochel summarized his research findings and the material of some of his predecessors in a dictionary (Hochel 1993).

#### 5.3. South Slavonic languages

Vuk Karadžić started the research on Serbian substandard. He introduced in the second edition of his dictionary (Wien 1852) different kinds of argot from the speech of Serbian blind beggars, the so-called *gegavički jezik*. According to B. Jagić these are mostly Slavic regenerations and partially Turkic-speaking borrowings (Jagić 1896: 23-24). The professional jargon of bricklayers at the river Drina located between the towns of Rača and Ljubovija, which has been gathered by M. Gj. Milićević, is counted among the Serbian secret languages by Jagič. The majority of expressions are of Albanian origin and there are a series of correlations with the argot of bricklayers from the Rhodope Mountains (Jagič 1896: 25-27). The tradition of regarding Serbian sociolects as a kind of secret language is retained in modern interpretations as well. D. Andrić characterises jargon as a substandard linguistic complex which shows the following characteristics: associativity, non-disclosure, a two-layered form and content, pejorativity, irony and sarcasm, surreal connections, nonsense, canorousness, sculptability (creation of new units based on existing models), contrastivity, hyperbole (Andrić 1976: XIII–XV). He emphasises the powerful "predisposition" of the modern Serbian jargon, which he gathers from the professional languages and the urban vernacular.

The traditional interpretation of the jargon as a mixed form of substandard language elements (especially of the urban koine) is just as characteristic for the description of youth jargon (or slang), for example, in his definition of the speech of the "underprivileged" of Belgrade (Imamij 2000), and of the common language structure of Serbia's capital (Gerzić 2000). The mixed character of Serbian sociolects becomes especially clear in a lexicographical comparison with the specialised and differentiated Anglo-American slang (Gerzić 2000). This general problem is going to be looked at more precisely later.

**Croatian substandard.** An independent sociolect, the so-called *šatrovački govor* or *šatra*, developed from the spoken language in Zagreb and has its roots, as do the majority

of the Slovak sociolects, in the secret languages of the 19th century. Over the last 40 years it evolved, under the conditions of the metropolis of Zagreb, on one hand into a substandard and on the other hand into a special language of various social groups (of railway workers, of show business, of bank clerks, of jazz musicians, of commercial shippers, of drug addicts, of pilots, of boxers, of emigrants and others) (Sabljak 2001: VII–VIII; XXIII–XXIV). It is interesting that Sabljak used the national term *šatrovački govor* in the first edition of his book in 1981(Sabljek 1981), but 20 years later chose a more "European" title – "Rečnik hrvatskoga žargona" (Sabljak 2001). Because of that, the general and the interregional character, as well as the stronger internationalisation, are emphasized. The younger generation has become the dominant group of speakers of that jargon. This is also the case in other Slavonic languages. This has resulted in increased academic and lexicographical interest in sociolinguistic subjects. The special descriptions of territory (e.g. in Split – Vidović 1990), professional youth slang (e.g. of tailors – Antonić 1998) or the speech of drug addicts (Nazor 1997) are evidence of that.

Slovenian substandard. The origin of the Slovenian sociolect can be traced to the secret languages as well, the so-called rokovnjak or the plintovska špraha (the second term is explained by Jagič as a Germanism with the meaning of "Language of the blind, of the blind beggars"). This lexis was fragmentary, determined in the 19th century and etymologically described (K. Štrekelj, J. Benković), and was partially included in dictionaries (M. Pleteršnik, F. Miklošić). The importance of the material for Slavonic studies is demonstrated by the fact that Jagić grants a lot of space to the study of Slavonic secret languages and even provides a little alphabetical dictionary with historical-etymological commentaries (Jagić 1986, 27–36). Recognition of the high number of Germanisms, Italianisms and partially Croatianisms remains important in discussion of Slovenian secret languages. The concrete representation of the connection between the German cant and the Slovenian plintovska *špraha* is significant. The tradition of the fixing and description of Slovenian sociolects continues, especially in lexicographical works. Linguists who are dealing with the substandard will find rich material in, for example, the multiple volumes of the academic dictionary of the Slovenian language. However, a comprehensive specific description of the Slovenian sociolects is non-existent at this time, even though in some Slovenists' works, e.g. by Jože Toporišič, these questions are addressed in combination with the general language use and borrowings. The interest of young students in these problems is noticeable.

Bulgarian substandard. According to Bulgarists, the Bulgarian sociolects have been studied insufficiently. Only two minor publications ("Тарикатско-български речник" with an introduction by P. Vojnkov in the magazine "Родна реч" in 1930, and an article in G. Armjanov's monograph "Жаргонът, без който (не) можем" in 1989) preceded the first modern dictionary, the "Речник на българския жаргон" (Armianov 1993). In addition, there are also some smaller publications on youth slang (Karastojčeva 1978a; Karastojčeva 1978b; Karastojčeva 1979). The reason for ignoring the jargon is due to the fact that it was regarded as an expression of vulgarity and cynicism for a long time. It was

seen as something that ruins the language culture and restricts the intellectual abilities of its speakers. "Doubtful inflow of words that are condemned to a niche existence", "Reflection of a declining bourgeois ideology of an individualistic, restricted, degenerated and amoral awareness", "linguistic decay" – these are only a few characteristics of jargon in socialist Bulgaria (Armianov 1993: 3). The second reason for the resistance is based on the fact that perceptions claim the jargon to be scientifically unreliable. Actually, the jargon contains many ironic words and expressions which originated in the popular "culture of laughter". However, this is only a testimony of its increased expressivity and not of linguistic "inferiority" (Armianov 1993: 5). Such symbiosis between jargon and humour is also characteristic for Russian (Walter, Mokienko 2004), Serbian (Andrić 1976, IX) and other Slavonic sociolects. A certain tabooing of Bulgarian sociolects is also reflected in theoretical interpretations. Thus, the term *jargon* is understood in Bulgarian philology in a broad sense and includes almost the entire lexis and phraseology of the Bulgarian language. Expressivity is considered to be the main categorical feature: "Jargon is a social dialect of such persons who are united by a certain closeness in profession, education, interests, lifestyles etc.. Their vocabulary and phraseology are seen as being different from the literary language, dialects and foreign words because they are created by the speakers themselves and are identified by the high expressivity, free use and imperfection of grammatical construction (Armianov 1993: 4). To some extent this definition differentiates the jargon from the secret languages, from cant and from the professional languages, which fulfil other functions, but also from the urban vernacular and the dialects. However, on one hand, it is known that many words are borrowed especially from the "classical" argot and that they quickly acquire an increased expressivity. On the other hand, it is difficult to distinguish jargon from vulgarisms and swear words with this kind of definition. It is generally known that these are entering the jargon only to a lesser extent.

# 6. Summary and perspectives

The overview of research work in the field of Slavonic substandard shows that Slavonic sociolects have developed dynamically over the past century and a half. General trend lines are visible – from the secret languages and the argot to the jargon of the youth. Nowadays, youth jargon becomes the essential resource for the renewal of speech and of the literary language. While in some regions the sociolects have been researched almost entirely, some theoretical and practical issues remain, including issues raised more than 100 years ago by V. Jagič. In particular, the provision of a historical-etymological analysis against a broad European background is required. A beginning was made on the basis of Russian material submitted by B.A. Larin (1931), and this was only continued half century later (Bondaletov 1990; Grachev, Mokienko 2000; Horbatsch 1993; van Leeuwen-Turnovcová 1993; Otin 1999). It is impossible to study the pan-European roots of Slavonic sociolects systematically without first juxtaposing them. There already exists a comprehensive material basis to do this. For example, Russian-Ukrainian-Polish or Croatian-Slovenian-Czech-German interlingual links between sociolectal areas can

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be identified by comparison, and the ways of traditional Slavonic cant and of modern jargon can be pursued on the European map. In addition, such juxtaposition permits the determination of the relationship between "self" and "alien" objectively in the system of Slavonic sociolects, and allows the description of the spatial and chronological hierarchy, as well as the anticipation of future developments.

As previous experiences demonstrate, a complex study of substandard linguistic varieties of the Slavonic languages is impossible if it is done at the level of etyma or merely of single "guide words". Juxtaposition/confrontation is appropriate in such an approach. The description of individual sociolects does not apply the same criteria. The *tertium comparationis* can be found in the *semantic typology* of the Slavonic argot and jargon. Working out the dominant ideographic blocks (or structural-semantic models) will help to create the basis for interlingual confrontation to demonstrate the conceptual universals of the lexis and phrase-ology and thus to reconstruct a specific "sociolectal world view" for individual systems.

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#### Streszczenie

#### Badania substandardu w językach słowiańskich

Dla współczesnych języków słowiańskich charakterystyczny jest rosnący wpływ nietypowych elementów językowych. Sprowadza to niską jakość i eksplorację do centrum uwagi. W epoce socjalizmu nieprzestrzeganie norm językowych było postrzegane jako zjawisko bardzo negatywne, coś, co niszczy kulturę językową i ogranicza zdolności mentalne jej mówców. Jest to również powód niewystarczających badań i tabu w przypadku niskiej jakości odmian językowych w języku słowiańskim. Ta sytuacja uległa całkowitej zmianie, począwszy od lat 90. XX wieku. Artykuł zawiera informacje o najnowszych osiągnięciach w zakresie badań niestandardowych odmianek języków w Slavii.

**Słowa kluczowe:** języki słowiańskie, zmiany leksykalne, niestandardowe, substandardowe, socjolekt, żargon korporacyjny, językowe parametry opisu, języki wschodniosłowiańskie, zachodnie i południowe, konceptualne uniwersalia leksyki i frazeologii, słowniki nienormatywne