

Features of Modern Spanish Youth Language (On Material of Serial Discourse)

By

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Abstract

This work is written within two actively developing areas of linguistics: sociolinguistics and media linguistics (term by T.G. Dobroklonskaya) (Доброклонская, 2008). The article is devoted to the study of a complex linguistic and sociocultural phenomenon – the modern Spanish youth language. The youth language is considered in this work as one of the social dialects, which generally corresponds to the concepts and approaches of modern linguists. The "youth language" is interpreted by the authors of the article as a concept that includes not only linguistic phenomena, but also a number of sociological, ideological, semiotic aspects of youth communication (Yakubova et al., 2016). The work uses the concept of "youth language" (equated to the Spanish terms *argot juvenil*, *jerga juvenil* and *lenguaje juvenil*) to denote the linguistic aspects of communication, namely speech manifestations and language codes inherent in the youth environment. The article attempts to conduct a multifaceted study of the modern language of Spanish youth on the basis of the television series "El desorden que dejas" (2020). Within this study, serial discourse is considered as a type of media discourse (Макаров, 2003), which assumes a systematic approach to language learning. The plot of the television series is set in high school, thus, the reference group for the study is young people aged 13 to 25 years. The theoretical provisions of the scientific work are accompanied by relevant examples and linguistic commentary by the authors. The research material and theoretical

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conclusions also have a practical application and can be used in the preparation of courses in the Spanish language (Noskova et al., 2019; Kolabinova & Palutina, 2014).

Key words: sociolinguistics, media linguistics, discourse, youth language, Spanish language.

1. Introduction

In introductions to sociolinguistics the variable “age” is generally mentioned as relevant to linguistic variation. Among the different “age groups”, “adolescents” undoubtedly represent the group that has created the idiomatic form that attracts the most attention.

However, the theme has been considered, unfairly, rather as marginal. This is obviously due to the fact that the social group that speaks these varieties is considered marginal: firstly, because youth do not represent any factor of power in society due to their social status, that is, they are legally less old and economically dependent; secondly, because youth language is considered to be very short-lived, that is, the characteristic elements of such jargon change very quickly. The two factors must be criticized.

As a scientific discipline, linguistics has first and foremost goals of its own. One of them is the description of the existing idiomatic varieties and the elucidation of the relationship of these varieties with each other, as well as the search for explanations about the repeated creation of new linguistic varieties. So, research on youth language is necessary because it simply represents one of the varieties within a historically developed system of varieties.

Gemma Hererro, in her book “El lenguaje de los jóvenes”, describes youth language as follows: “The term youth language refers to a set of language features present in the language manifestations of young people, expressed orally (or in writing, as a reflection of the oral), in informal conversational situations. Consequently, youth language must be characterized mainly according to the two types of variation it presents, social or diastric, related to the social characteristics of the user, in particular age, and situation or diaphasicity, depending on use the context in which this happens” (Herrero, 1989). In addition, she emphasizes that the youth language is a social variety of language, where the age factor was very important, but it must be borne in mind that it cannot be said that there is a completely homogeneous youth language, since the age factor is mixed with other specific and abbreviated varieties, such as the language of female youth, the language of rural youth, the language of imprisoned youth, the language of chic youth and others.

In order to detect the specific features of the youth language, in general the vision of the language given by the codified grammar, that is, the standard language, is used as a point of comparison. The German linguist Helmut Henne says: “youth language presupposes standard language, transforms it creatively and makes it stereotypical at the same time” (Hernández Alonso, 1991). The reality is different. The results of live observations show that the youth variety has been created based on the respective diastratic and diatopic variety of adults in the oral form in which they perform it.

It should be remembered that youth language has been criticized for being linguistically very poor. Today these discussions about the language of young people arouse the interest of linguists and some even speak of a normalization project to define their way of speaking (Rodríguez González, 2002; Ezeonwumelu et al., 2021; Faezi & Alikhademi, 2021).

2. Methods

The source of the research material was the discourse of the modern Spanish-language TV series «El desorden que dejas, » released in 2020. Being a kind of media discourse (Йоргенсен, 2004), serial discourse allows us to reveal the features inherent in the language of modern youth (in this work – Spanish) at all levels of the language system, including phonetic, which is difficult when working with written sources.

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study was the work of domestic and foreign authors on the linguistics of the text (V.G. Kostomarov, E.A. Lazareva, A.P. Bessonov, N.P. Peshkov, S.I., G.A. Weikhman, M. Lotman, M.A.Efremova and others), as well as the works of Spanish-speaking linguists devoted to the study and analysis of the speech of Spanish youth (F. González Rodríguez, G. Herrero, M. Casado Velarde). The selection of material was carried out by the method of continuous sampling. When analyzing the factual material, a descriptive method, component, contextual and quantitative analysis was used.

3. Results and Discussion

Researchers call a specific feature of any youth jargon an attitude to reject linguistic norms, a large number of evaluative and expressive components in speech, obscenities, vulgarisms, dysphemisms and pejoratives, as well as the use of paralinguistic means: an increased tone of conversation and shouting, facial expressions, postures and gestures in the construction of discourse (Федосова, 2021; Dunyasheva et al., 2016).

Another important feature of youth speech is an ironic attitude to reality and the playful nature of behavior, expressed in a play on words, a double meaning, allusions – any means for achieving a comic effect, serving as a sign of complicity, acceptance of the interlocutor's value system. The language of young people is characterized by “modus of expressive alienation” (the term of V.V. Himik) – a view of the surrounding reality, as it were, from the outside, with assessment and often with condemnation (Овчинникова, 2011).

The formation of specific features of the language of young people occurs as a result of the interaction of opposite psychological reactions – the desire to isolate from others and at the same time feel like part of a team with similar characteristics and values.

As an expression of spoken language, created in situations of oral culture, youth varieties carry all the characteristics of spoken language (Andrianova et al., 2019). These 'features' can be located at any level of the linguistic system: lexicon, morphology, syntax, phonetics / phonology, prosody and rhythm of speech, pragmatic rules, textual structuring, gestures and mimic expression, as well as proxemic rules.

So, speaking about the phonetic mechanisms of the formation of youth jargons, one can note an even more relaxed pronunciation of sounds in comparison with colloquial speech in general.

The most characteristic phonetic feature of youth speech can be considered the absence of [d] in the intervocal position in the participles m.g. singular and plural – the process is typical for other forms of colloquial speech: *matao* (*matado*) – *killed*, *pillao* (*pillado*) – *drug addict*, *alucinao* (*alucinado*) – *amazed, stunned*.

In the language of young people, there is a tendency to truncate the word: *Venga, profe* – *Come on, teacher*; *Sacad un boli* – *Get the pen*; *¿Qué tal los chicos del cole?* – *How are the guys at school?* *Eres poli ahora* – *Are you a policeman now?* *Fui a acompañar a una compi* – *I went with one company*. There is also a frequent linking of two words, with the final syllable of the first word dropping out: *¿Tío, pa'qué me traes aquí?* – *Dude, why did you bring me here?* *To'el mundo lo sabe* – *Everybody knows about it*.

At the morphological level, one of the most frequent mechanisms characteristics of the language of young people is morphological inflection. Affixation and suffixation, being the most productive way of word formation in Spanish, help to adjust the linguistic system to the necessary modalities of speech.

The most popular suffix is *-on /-ona*. As an increasing suffix, in the language of young people, it can denote traits of character or appearance, as well as the internal state of a person: *molón* (*molar*) – *handsome, cute*, *colocón* (*colocarse*) – *a state of drug intoxication*. Often in the language of young people such words are associated with the drug and sexual world: *Ya noto el subidón* – *I see you are on a good high*; *Siempre has sido una facilona* – *You have always been easily accessible*.

We also want to note the frequent use of the diminutive suffix *-ito /-ita*: *¿Quieres que se lo cuente a tu amiguito de alma?* – *Do you want me to tell everything to your dear friend?* *Te quería preguntar una cosita* – *I wanted to ask you a little thing*; *Eso es una temita que ya te contaremos* – *There is one little theme that we will tell you about*. The use of other suffixes is not so frequent: *Va a haber musicote y chulazos* – *There will be good music and cool girls*.

Speaking of the lexical level, it seems important to mention the criteria offered by Klaus Zimmermann in his work "Youth language, communication between young people and orality" to distinguish the elements of popular speech in general from the specific elements of youth language (Zimmermann, 1996):

1. The elements that have the function of markers of the youth group.
2. The elements that derive from what we call youth culture, that is, objects, feelings, social structures, etc.
3. Items that are used only by young people.

We will notice that the vocabulary of this variety of "youth language" is basically

limited to the following conceptual fields or spheres: drugs (people, products, effects, related activities), politics, music, *el "rollo"*, money, sex, jail, intellectual pursuits, set phrases, particles, and so on.

More important than the lexicon itself are the resources that are handled in lexical creation. First of all, the impressive number of metaphors that appear is surprising. So, for example, in the lexicon of the drug we find *viaje, hierba –marijuana, caramelo, chocolate, azúcar negro, chicle – good hashish*.

Less frequent are the metonymies and synecdoches, but there are also some: *la blanca – heroin, la fumata, el pico, la papela, la nieve, el polvo – cocaine*. Also we can find some appellatives: *cuerpo y tronco: No te van a ver, tronco – They won't see you, dude*.

According to F. González Rodríguez, young people abandon the euphemism and seek dysphemism – a way of saying that it consists of naming a reality with a pejorative expression or with the intention of downgrading it, as opposed to euphemism – to give a pejorative tone or humorous to communication.

The lexical level of the language of Spanish youth is characterized by the frequent use of obscene language, which allows young people to feel part of a certain group: *Puto perro de mierda; Vete a tomar por culo de aquí; Cago en Dios; Te acojonaste, zorra; Anda, coño*.

The traits of the juvenile variety are often considered to be limited to the linguistic-only level. But these traits are only part of the matter. The youth variety opens up another perspective, that of paralinguistic aspects. In our research, importance is given to communication resources, such as intonation, the alternation of voice force, the alternation of speed. At the same time, it is true that all the registered features taken by themselves: lengthening of vowels, high tonality, whispering voice, imitation of the enunciation of the speakers in direct style, etc., also exist in oral discourse. That is why it would be wrong to take these traits as unique to young people.

So far, we have seen some of the most characteristic features of the youth language, its reasons and its framework. It is evident that the lexical, morphological, syntactic and phonetic variations are framed within the colloquial popular Spanish and do not affect the diasystem of the language.

4. Summary

The speech of young people, being, on the one hand, a unique phenomenon, does not form a fundamentally new language code. The main goal of youth discourse is not the creation and use of certain specific elements, but the maintenance of a single communicative space. The main elements used to create the originality of youth speech are borrowed from the literary language and some sociolects (argos and jargons) and are characterized by expressive-evaluative semantics.

5. Conclusions

Youth language is not only part of the oral style but occurs and is created in specific situations of oral communication, created by youth culture. Youth culture creates a communicative space in which there is a selection that has as one criterion that of age and as another that of being a member of a specific group, many times socially marginalized. In these spaces, interactions are developed derived from the peculiarities of youth culture and with specific purposes that serve to recreate it.

To this is added the paralinguistic field of performance, that is, intonation, the alternation of the volume of the voice, the accentuations, the expressive lengthening, the combination with the gestures and the mimicry.

Thus, the language of youth as a socio-cultural phenomenon and a means of youth communication is a linguistic variety that reflects the main trends in the development of the spoken language.

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