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AGE DIFFERENTIATION OF AMERICANS AS A FACTOR OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEXICAL SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT
ВІКОВА ДИФЕРЕНЦІАЦІЯ АМЕРИКАНЦІВ ЯК ФАКТОР РОЗВИТКУ ЛЕКСИЧНОЇ СИСТЕМИ СУЧАСНОЇ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ

Wieler G. O. / Вілер Г.О.*senior lecturer/ старший викладач*

ORCHID: 0000-0002-5042-1220

Dmyterko Y.V./Дмитерко Є.В.*lecturer / викладач*

ORCHID:0000-0002-0530-2249

Zaporizhzhia State Medical University,

Zaporizhzhia, Mayakovskogo Pr. 26, 69035

Запорізький державний медичний університет,

Запоріжжя, пр. Маяковського 26, 69035

Abstract. The article deals with social aspects of lexical innovations in modern English. Age differentiation of Americans is analyzed through the prism of their influence on the development of the lexical system of the English language. Neologisms which denote different age groups are put in the spotlight of socio-linguistic research.

Key words: neologisms; age differentiation, lexical system, socio-linguistics.

Анотація. В статті розглядаються соціальні аспекти лексичних інновацій сучасної англійської мови. Вікова диференціація американців представників американського суспільства розглядається крізь призму її впливу на розвиток лексичної системи англійської мови. Неологізми на позначення різних вікових груп представлено в світлі соціолінгвістичного дослідження.

Ключові слова: неологізми, вікова диференціація; лексична система, соціальна лінгвістика.

Introduction.

Socio-linguistic aspects of the English language development, its enrichment with neologisms, have recently appeared to be in the spotlight of researchers' attention. At the same time new words which denote age differentiation have not been under special study yet.

Main text.

It is worth stating that age differentiation of Americans is among the factors that have quite a significant influence on the English language lexical system development. We would like to trace the way different age groups find their new nomination in English.

Young generation has always played a central role in any society, which is attributed to its potential role as well as to the everlasting generation gap problem. More and more new coinages appear in English to denote the generation of young American people. At the end of the XXth century the most common name to describe youth was the word *twentysomething*, which specifies young people who were 20 plus years old at the end of the 90s: *The Netflix reality series Twentysomethings: Austin follows eight cast members who are navigating their early adulthood years...* [1] Another word – *yuppie* (*young urban professional*) – denoted young people, who were a symbol of that generation: *Two middle-aged yuppies got bored of their chosen*



careers, looked into Wicca and now fancy themselves to be witches. [2]. The end of the XXth century saw one more neologism – *Generation X*, which describes youngsters who were not properly understood by the adults: *However, when that jargon is in use as often and frequently as the phrases “Gen X” or “Baby Boomer”, it seems especially important...* [3]

Another generation, which received the name *Generation Y*, arrived after the *Generation X*. The logic of such nomination follows the order of letters in the alphabet: letter *Y* goes after letter *X*: *Marketers know them and love them as Generation Y or the Echo Boom, a cohort that is more than 50 percent larger than the 45 million strong Generation X.* [4] The newest generation of Americans, representatives of which were born from 1997 to 2012 is called *Gen Z*. This generation is followed by *Generation Alpha*. These American teenagers and children were born in 2012 or after: *Gen Z will soon become the largest cohort of consumers who want a piece of this opportunity.* [5]

In the time of technological breakthrough there appeared several other new words which denote young people who are adept at using computers, internet and digital technology. Respectively, such neologisms are: *PC Generation, Net Generation, Generation D*. Those youngsters who are not working, who are in school or in a training program are called *NEET* (“Not in employment, education or training”): *The 21st century will be a magnificent time to be alive,” he says, a message which deserves to be disseminated far beyond the literary pages, so as to reach every one from Neets and unemployed graduates ...* [6]

As far as the middle-aged generation is concerned, there are several new words to denote its representatives. Firstly, we can name a *sandwich generation*. This neologism is used to specify middle-aged people who take care of their parents and young children at the same time. Metaphor was used in coining this new word. Here, adults are figuratively put in the middle layer of a sandwich, squeezed in between the older and younger generations: *The sandwich generation is being chewed on at both ends,” Novelli said. The boomer generation is struggling to help support aging parents and pay college tuition for their children.* [7] What is more, there are middle-aged Americans who provide physical, moral and financial support and care to several generations of relative at once. They came to be known as a *club-sandwich generation*. Again, metaphor was used in this neologism. Club sandwich has several layers which represent several generations in the family: *We talk a lot about the sandwich generation, but there are a lot of us in what I call the triple-decker or club-sandwich generation.” These are folks dealing not only with aging parents, but also helping to raise their grandchildren, the fourth generation of their family.*[8]

Many adult Americans strive to look young and take part in different events which are popular with youth. Lexical system of the English language responded accordingly by introducing new words denoting such an adult. These new words are *kidult* and *babydult* and they are practically synonymous. They were created with the help of telescoping. We can clearly see parts of two words here: “kid” and “adult” as well as “baby” and “adult”. It is worth noting that telescoping has been one of the most productive ways of new words coining in modern English: *“Adult toys” may sound like a risque phrase, but it is also used to describe the playthings that ‘kidults’ (those*



of us who never quite grew up) have been buying in increasing numbers. [9] Victoria Jackson of Saturday Night Live, and 40-year-old babydult Heather Locklear, who was recently observed wheeling Barbie luggage through the L.A. airport. Given Locklear's strong physical resemblance to the doll, the vision must have been like Airport Barbie come to life. [10]

There exists another synonym to describe a person who is infatuated with the youth culture and lifestyle – *adultscent*. This neologism was also coined with the help of telescoping, where we find such two words inside: “adult” and “adolescent”: *It's micro-scooters and Wheatus CDs ago-go for the "adultescents", or "kidults" — those whose clothes, activities and interests are exactly the same as those of youth culture.* [11]

A certain amount of new words which denote senior people have been coined under the influence of pragmatic and linguistic factor of political correctness. These neologisms are: *golden ager, golden oldie, senior citizen, September people, chronologically disadvantaged, and ageful: Old? Deaf? Snapped the voice. Ageful, we prefer. I'm ageful myself and this is a hearing-assisted telephone so if you would speak slowly and loudly* [15]

Summary and conclusions.

Summing up we can state that our research proves the fact that social factors have caused a more specific age differentiation of American society representatives. Age differentiation in its own turn has led to innovative processes in the lexical system of the English language, leading to its active enrichment. What is more, polynomination is observed which has come to exist as a result of synonyms attraction.

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