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**THE LEXICON OF THE GAMING COMMUNITY MEMBERS AS
A YOUTH SLANG COMPONENT**

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the analysis of the gaming community members' glossary. The neologisms are considered to be the lexical units, serving to renew the gamers' language and being the source of the research material. To identify the basic models of the formation of neologisms in the language of the German gaming community members, academic literature analysis, description and classification methods, methods of structural and functional analysis, continuous sampling technique methods have been used. The basic models of neologism formation in the language of German speaking gamers are reviewed. The authors come up to the conclusion, that the lexicon of gamers comprises not only the lexical units of online computer terminology, but also slangisms, formed in the process of the gaming community members' communication. Gamers eagerly use reduced forms in their speech, reflecting not only the tendency of saving language funds, but also the desire not to be understood. The number of neologisms in the language of the gaming community members is large enough; the number of neologisms including Anglicisms is huge. The most productive ways to form the gamers' neologisms are blending, word composition, suffixation and reduction. The language of computer users is gradually becoming the common language.

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1. Introduction

Language and society, culture and language – the link between these phenomena is obvious to anyone whose area of interest lies in the sphere of current linguistic research. Lately, this connection has become even more evident: society is developing, and the language of young people is constantly changing.

Slang is permanently used among the youth representatives of any educational institution, district or particular more or less closed reference group, for example, gamers, as a way to conceal the meaning of what is pronounced by surrounding people. According to statistics, the average age of an ordinary gamer is 23 years old. That's why the language of gamers is a component of youth slang.

In order to keep up with the times, "being advanced," young people start using words and word combinations, differentiating from the ones, belonging to the normal class of speech. Abbreviations, foreign words are widely used, and neologisms are created to identify new devices, processes, phenomena.

2. Problem Statement

The lexicon of the gaming community members is steadily fulfilled with neologisms. This area is becoming more popular, swiftly developing and renewing the language with terms. The creation of new, previously non-existent online games, their characters, game strategies ensure the appearance of a great amount of neologisms. At the same time, a special experience is formed for the development of neologisms, which are not only terminological units related to online games, but also slang forms of the language created during the gamers' communication.

3. Research Questions

Several tasks should be accomplished in order to carry out a thorough analysis:

- i. to clear up the core principles of neologism formation;
- ii. to analyze the features of the influence of the gamers' lexicon on the common language;
- iii. to define functions of slangisms in the gaming community members' communication.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to review the basic models of neologism formation in the glossary of German speaking gamers.

5. Research Methods

Description and classification methods, methods of structural and functional analysis, sampling technique methods have been used to pursue the objective of the research.

6. Findings

The works of many Russian and foreign linguists, such as Alekseeva, 2012; Grankova, 2008; Hoberg, 2000; Herberg, 2004; Neuland, 2008; Pellikh, 2008; Pasechnaya & Shcherbina, 2020; Polekhina, 2012; Shcherbina, 2018; Zharkova, 2021) served as the basis for the study of youth slang as a linguistic phenomenon.

6.1. Basic models of neologism formation in the language of German-speaking gamers.

Let's review the basic models of neologism formation in the language of German-speaking gamers.

Gamers actively use shortened forms in their speech, reflecting not only the tendency of saving language funds, but also the eagerness not to be understood.

6.2. Abbreviation

Rofl is an abbreviation for English rolling on (the) laughing floor – to roll with laughter, an analogue of the runetovsky "patstalom." Rofl is used in games and chats to express an inextinguishable fit of laughter. This word gradually shifted from a virtual-written to a real-oral communication. That's why, if your interlocutor adoringly cries rofl, der war gut, it doesn't mean that he has some problems with articulation, but just laughs at some joke (Das neue Wörterbuch der Szenensprachen, 2009).

LARP is English abbreviation referred to live action role playing meaning a live role-playing game. German speakers use the term Liverollenspiel. It's a mix of the English and German words. LARP is a free form role-playing where the participants physically portray their characters. LARPs may be played in a public or private area, so anyone who sees two people in a shopping mall who suddenly pounce on each other and dig into their necks, he may be a witness of a live-action role-playing game. There are groups of LARP players in some big cities, who physically perform the roles of vampires. Like any role-playing game, a live-action game is based on the fact that administrators are acting out a situation (to see the result), and players want to participate in this situation as one of the characters. But unlike a computer video game, a live-action game uses a significantly minimum of conditionality and it's as close to real life as possible. All actions performed by players are perceived as the actions of their characters. Often players have to overcome many obstacles and challenges, complete tasks, and destroy opponents. They fully get used to the role, change into appropriate costumes, apply makeup, speak and behave like their character according to the game scenario.

MMORPG is formed from the English abbreviation MMRPG – massive multiplayer online roleplaying game. It is a global multiplayer online role-playing video game in which a very large number of people participate simultaneously. As in role-playing games, the player assumes the role of a character, often in a fantasy world and takes control over many of that character's actions. The first fictional heroes of role-playing games moved with hand-drawn cards and cubes in science-fiction world. Currently, role-playing games, such as, for example, "World of Warcraft", can be played sitting at home at the computer. MMORPGs are played worldwide, thousands of characters can simultaneously move in three-

dimensional space. But primary goal remains the same: completing quests, destroying opponents and collecting items.

LAN-Party is a social event based around local area network where participants engage in computer activities such as multiplayer gaming. This neologism is formed from the abbreviation LAN (local area network) and English noun “Party”. A local area network can connect a series of computers to one another to play games on them simultaneously. Such LAN parties are popular among gaming community and computer scientists.

Several laptops and computers are connected to each other so that they can actively play computer games with each other or against each other all evening or even all weekend. Along with private marathons of online games with friends, official LAN parties are organized on the local network, but gamers should pay a small fee to participate. At the same time, organizers must provide the participants with Internet access, electricity, hospitality facilities and catered meals.

6.3. Word reduction

Gamers eagerly use reduced word forms in their colloquial speech.

Progs is short for the word Programme – (computer) programs. Each laptop is already equipped with a basic text, video, and photo processing software. If it is necessary to equip a laptop with a supplementary software unit, these programs (Progies) can be downloaded from the Internet.

Char is short for the English “character”. In the gamers’ language, this word is used to denote a personal character of a gamer with all his abilities.

Reggen is a clipped version of the verb registrieren – register. Anyone who surfs the Internet must specify the nick, password, email address on many web pages or social networks in order to use the proposed content to the full. That is, you need to register – reggen.

Atten is a clipped version of the verb attackieren – attack. The communication among gamers is “short and clear.” An experienced gamer knows: in case someone is distracted by chats, the enemy can attack him by surprise. For safe communication, “coded” slang forms are created, which are based on abbreviations and anglicisms. So the modified word “atten” (Das neue Wörterbuch der Szenensprachen, 2009) appeared.

Tekki – trekkers/trackers, comes from the English “trekkers” and means fans of the science fiction universe “Star Trek.” Nowadays, trekkers represent a big movement. The word “trekker” directly comes from the English word “trek” in the title of the series. The word “tekki” is a derivative and means a devout fan of something, a follower. Around the world, trackers are united in Star Trek fan clubs. As a result of such a great popularity of the series, its version appeared in the format of an online game (Das neue Wörterbuch der Szenensprachen, 2009).

Bot – bot, is a popular abbreviation for the English “robot” = Germ. “roboter”, is used in reference to computer programs, automatically carrying out routine actions. Usually, bots are determined to fulfill a monotonous and repetitive work, with the maximum permissible speed much higher than the capabilities of a person.

There are two types of robots in comics and films: kind heroes, helpful assistants, and evil disrupters who seek to destroy all humanity. Bots in this regard are like robots. If small, automatically

working programs are “good,” then searching machines, such as Google, send them to surf the Internet pages and evaluate their content. If they are “evil,” then they help to play foul in online games, select email addresses for spammers, infect computers.

Bots are also used in cases when better feedback is required in comparison with human capabilities, such as game bots, or, less commonly, to simulate human actions, so called bots for chat rooms (Das neue Wörterbuch der Szenensprachen, 2009).

6.4. Blending

Contamination, or blending, is another method of creating neologisms. This is a method, based on the emergence of one part of the word with the part of another one to form a single word, or with an entire word. Young people really like such words, words that can't be looked up in any dictionary, but which can be identified by reference to two original words.

Screenager – screenwriter, is a blend from the English words “screen” – display and “teenager” – adolescent. A generation of children and teenagers who consider boring and unworthy of everything that occurs off-screen is getting younger. Teenagers spend much time in front of a television, computer or tablet and thereby form a group of so called screeners. Parents criticize this distance from the outside world and do not understand how the new soccer game on the console is more interesting than real football on the grass.

Netizen is an interman, a netzen is a blend from the words “net” (Internet) and the English word “citizen” (Bürger, Bewohner – resident). Interment are “inhabitants of the world wide web.” They live mostly online. They assimilate the Internet as a community, the part of which they have become and are to follow its rules and norms (Das neue Wörterbuch der Szenensprachen, 2009).

Chatlag is a mix of the English words “Chat” – a friendly, informal conversation, and “Jetlag” – a condition that is characterized by various physiological effects (such as fatigue) and probably disruption of circadian rhythms in the human body. Chatlag is a phenomenon associated with the process when a user opens too many chat windows at once and cannot communicate with everyone at the same time, or chat communication happens so quickly that while writing an answer to a question, the next message on a completely different topic appears on the computer screen, which makes the answer to the previous question simply unnecessary. Users, who constantly communicate in ICQ, Skype or Facebook simultaneously and receive messages in parallel from several friends, have to masterfully come up with questions and answers. Numerous chat partners have to wait for an answer for a long time. It is so called “a virtual betrayal” when you are engaged in multiple web-chats and have each correspondent ignorant about the others. It is often denoted by the verb *chatcheaten* that comes from English “to cheat” meaning to behave in a way that is not honest or fair (Das neue Wörterbuch der Szenensprachen, 2009).

Webciety is a blend formed from words “Web” and “society”. It means a web space, a virtual community. Social networks are becoming increasingly important. Gradually, communication and interpersonal communication are moving to the Network. Online community was given the official name *Webciety* at the *Cebit* trade show in Hanover, which took place in 2009 (Das neue Wörterbuch der Szenensprachen, 2009).

Webnapping is a blend formed from words “*Web*” and “*Kidnapping*”. It obviously refers to the process when webmasters offer other webmasters to “steal” their content. Commercial web pages and online game developers are very interested in encouraging as many users as possible to click on links advertising their products, including new video games. Therefore, bright banners and logos are placed on the webpages to attract and entice Internet users. Clicking once, the user suddenly finds him on a page that initially did not interest him. So the process when you surf on Internet to look for one particular thing and end up staying locked looking at random stuff is called *Webnapping* (Das neue Wörterbuch der Szenensprachen, 2009).

The **leetspeak** is a word reduction formed from word “elite” which was shortened to *leet* and written *l337* in leetspeak. Leetspeak can be difficult to read and was used as a secret code of certain groupings in gaming community. It is also called as a non-verbal pseudo language of hackers (h4Xor), and other computer scientists. It’s a style of typing that replaces English letters with similar-looking numbers or symbols, and that’s why it’s closely connected with hacking and gaming culture.

This language was first used in Bulletin Board System in 1990. So it’s only natural that some BBSes users focused on illegal activities, like file sharing and early forms of hacking. They were sometimes called leet boards and they created an “elite” computer subculture, but later it migrated to the mainstream.

6.5. Word composition

One more numerous group of neologisms is considered to be neoplasms that formed on the basis of productive patterns of word formation.

Having analyzed corpus examples, so, it becomes obvious that all neologisms are based on Anglicisms. Most of the neologisms come from the English language.

A good example of a German neologism is the word **Browserspiel**. It comes from the English word “*Browser*” that means a computer program that allows looking at pages on the Internet and German “*Spiel*” that means a game; as a result we have a browser game, a free online game. The Wikimedia Foundation says that German enterprises spend approximately 50 billion euros a year on the Internet used by employees for personal purposes. One can doubt how accurate this figure is, but one thing is for sure: free online games are a favorite form of everyday office workers’ pastime activity during working hours (Das neue Wörterbuch der Szenensprachen, 2009).

The term “**Splitscreen**” consists of the words “*split*” and “*screen*”. It means a video technique in which the frame is divided into discrete non overlapping images. In some video games, the screen is divided into several game modes depending on the number of characters. No matter how useful this function is, it can spoil all the fun of the game process for gamers: video game figures and some details of the game are not clearly visible enough even on the biggest screen. In addition, not every game requires the opponent to know where he is at the moment. A split screen is much more useful not for video gamers, but for moviegoers who cannot choose among several films and watch them at the same time (Das neue Wörterbuch der Szenensprachen, 2009).

Case-modding comes from the English words “case” (carcase) and “modding” (modification). The case modification is a personal computer tuning. At the same time hardware is updated with

plexiglass, LEDs, stickers and natural materials. The insides of the computer are made visible with windows or while placing outside. The case modification, when the computer is embedded in another hardware environment, for example, in a microwave or bamboo jacket, is also popular. But it should naturally function, being creatively modified.

Add-on comes from the English word “extension”, “add”. Having released the Simpsons, software manufacturers figured out that it is relatively simply possible to earn a large amount of money with a package of extensions. Such extensions are usually cheaper than the main program, which is supplemented with new levels, characters or items, being used only in combination with it. However, add-ons should not pursue only commercial gain. Firefox users have a large selection of free extensions that complement the browser with useful features such as an ad blocker. The extension can also be analogue and simply represent something to decorate an existing object with. An elegant little button on the bag over the shoulder is, for example, a fashionable addition that can help to update the entire look.

Gameplay is a game progress. Neologism is formed from the English words “game” – the game and “to play” – play. The outdated term of “Spielmechanik – game mechanics,” which means all the rules, actions and entourage in the process of video games, no longer adequately describes the whole scope of meanings, which, meanwhile, has acquired the English equivalent. The heading “Gameplay” offers detailed information about games and their characteristics in thematic magazines on video games. In addition, in the gamers’ language, “Gameplay” has the same meaning as handicap – a handicap in golf, that is, an indicator of a player's abilities. If you're a professional (eng. “skiller”), then you possess it, if not, you are a bad player, nub (eng. “noob”).

6.6. Suffixation

One more productive way to form neologisms is suffixing or prefixing. Many verbs appeared in German youth slang, denoting to various game operations, by adding the suffix-en to an Anglicism-stem.

The word “**Fraggen**” is formed from the English abbreviation frag (Das neue Wörterbuch der Szenensprachen, 2009). The full word is fragmentation grenade – a hand grenade has been known since the Vietnam War. In the language of gaming, “to frag” means “to kill someone virtually”. Meanwhile, the word gradually has expanded its meaning. Frags began to be called online rivals in a game, then a point for their defeat was called a frag and, consequently, achieving a new status in a game is called a frag.

The lexical unit **Pwnen** comes from English, used in the gaming culture. It originated from a spelling error during a computer game – ‘owned’ was mistakenly typed as ‘pwned’. There is an opinion that it is a blend of the English words “power” meaning strength or force and “owner” meaning someone who legally owns something. The term implies “to defeat or to destroy somebody”. “Pwnen” is an important term in the gaming community and ultimate goal in most computer games.

Skillen – comes from English “skill” that means the ability to do an activity well, especially because you have practiced it. The term implies “to upgrade or to develop skills development of a game character”. Gamers are constantly improving their game characters. As in real life, it is possible only due to constant video game training.

Boosten – comes from English “to boost” – that means to activate or to strengthen but in most video games boosting means the act of increasing someone’s rank, or winning position through unfair,

faked and intentional ways. To do this, gamers lose video games intentionally, so the video game player gets necessary number of points and benefits for their account. This forbidden method helps to improve positioning in a video game and game characters' abilities.

Studeln comes from the name of the German social networking platform for students *StudiVZ*. It means to poke around or to snoop around. Social networking platforms *StudiVZ* and *SchülerVZ*, the target group of which are students and schoolchildren, are maliciously called *STASIVZ* (from German Staatsicherheit – state security services in the former German Democratic Republic, GDR), so because students can perfectly spy on old acquaintances in this social networking. To do it, you just need to click on the nickname of a person you are interested in and thus you are able to find out which group memberships one belongs to, which games one plays, how many friends one has and what photos one exposes. So you can understand whether it is worth inviting this person as a friend to your personal page, whether there are common interests with him or not. All actions denoted by the verb *Studeln* mean a harmless form of cyber threat hunting and favorite pastime of many students and schoolchildren (Das neue Wörterbuch der Szenensprachen, 2009).

7. Conclusion

The language of gamers has already turned from a fashionable trend into a new style of communication on websites, blogs and chats. The proportion of neologisms in the language of gamers is large enough; the proportion of neologisms including Anglicisms is huge. The most productive ways to form them are word reduction, blending, word composition and suffixation. Most neologisms related to the gamers' glossary are based on Anglicisms.

The language of gamers, as a part of youth slang, makes the language peculiar. The language primarily used by young Internet and computer users, is gradually becoming the common language.

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