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# SPECIFICITY AND SOCIAL MANIFESTATIONS OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE IN THE SPEECH OF YOUNG PEOPLE

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### Abstract:

This article analyzes the functioning of the French language among young people and its social manifestations. Particular attention is paid to such phenomena as verlan, slang, borrowings, and the influence of digital communication. Based on sociolinguistic and contextual analysis, the mechanisms of the formation of the youth linguistic space are identified. The results of the study demonstrate that youth speech is a dynamic system reflecting the processes of globalization, mediatization, and sociocultural identification.

**Keywords:** French, youth language, verlan, slang, sociolinguistics, borrowings, digital communication.

### Introduction

Language development is inextricably linked to social transformations, cultural change, and technological progress. Within the sociolinguistic approach, language is viewed as a reflection of social processes and mechanisms of interaction within society (Calvet, 2020). In this context, young people act as the

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primary agents of linguistic innovation, shaping new lexical, semantic, and pragmatic structures.

Modern globalization and digitalization are accelerating the dynamics of linguistic change, which is particularly noticeable in the speech of the younger generation. Young people are actively mastering new forms of communication, adapting language to the demands of the digital environment. This is leading to the emergence of new linguistic models that are characterized by brevity, expressiveness, and a high degree of variability.

Despite its normative stability and controllability, the French language exhibits significant variability among young people. As F. Gadet notes, colloquial forms of the language are an important part of the linguistic system and reflect real communicative practices (Gadet, 2017). Young people's speech is shaped by the intersection of social, cultural, and technological factors, making it a subject of particular interest for sociolinguistic research.

One of the key features of French youth language is *verlan*—a unique method of word formation based on syllable rearrangement. Examples such as *femme* → *meuf*, *bizarre* → *zarbi* demonstrate not only structural changes but also the socially marked nature of these forms. *Verlan* serves as both a means of language play and a tool of social differentiation. It allows young people to create their own code of communication, which functions to include "us" and exclude "them."

Furthermore, *Verlan* is characterized by a high degree of productivity and flexibility. Many words can undergo multiple transformations, demonstrating the creative potential of youth speech. This phenomenon is also associated with a tendency toward linguistic economy and a desire for originality.

Slang plays a significant role in youth speech, characterized by a high degree of expressiveness and emotional intensity. Lexical units like "kiffer" and "chelou" reflect a tendency toward simplification and emotionalization of speech. Slang serves not only a communicative function but also a self-expression function, allowing speakers to convey their attitudes toward current events.

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As H. Boyer notes, slang is an important element of sociolinguistic variation and reflects the social stratification of society (Boyer, 2018). It contributes to the formation of an informal style of communication and plays a key role in youth culture.

Globalization processes have a significant impact on the French language, facilitating the active penetration of Anglicisms. The use of words such as "cool," "challenge," and "story" testifies to the influence of English-language culture, media, and the internet. Borrowing is becoming not only a linguistic but also a cultural phenomenon, reflecting processes of internationalization.

According to D. Crystal, the internet is a key factor in language change, accelerating the processes of borrowing and transforming linguistic norms (Crystal, 2011). This results in the formation of a hybrid language, combining elements of different linguistic systems.

Of particular importance is the influence of digital communication, which is transforming traditional forms of linguistic interaction. Social media are creating new communicative practices characterized by brevity, speed, and multimodality. Abbreviations such as "mdr" and "ptdr" allow for the effective expression of emotions and the conservation of linguistic resources.

Furthermore, digital communication is blurring the boundaries between oral and written language. Written language is becoming more colloquial, leading to a shift in traditional linguistic norms. As Androutsopoulos notes, the mediatization of language has a significant impact on its structure and functioning (Androutsopoulos, 2014).

From a sociolinguistic perspective, youth language serves a number of important functions. First and foremost, it serves an identity function, allowing young people to indicate their belonging to a particular social group. Furthermore, it serves a communicative function, facilitating rapid and effective interaction.

The creative function of youth language manifests itself in the constant creation of new words, expressions, and forms. This demonstrates the high level of

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linguistic activity among young people. The social function is expressed in the reflection of cultural, technological, and globalization processes.

It is important to note that youth language also plays a role in shaping cultural identity. It reflects the values, norms, and worldview of the younger generation. Through language, young people express their attitudes toward society, culture, and social processes.

Despite criticism from proponents of language norms, modern research emphasizes that changes in youth language are a natural stage of language development. Language always adapts to new conditions and communicative needs.

Therefore, youth speech does not destroy language, but rather contributes to its renewal and development. It expands its expressive potential and makes it more flexible and adaptive.

An analysis of the specifics and social manifestations of the French language among young people reveals that it is a complex and multidimensional system. Its key characteristics—*verlan*, slang, borrowings, and the influence of digital communication—are shaped by social, cultural, and technological factors.

In conclusion, it should be noted that youth speech plays a key role in the development of the modern French language. It reflects the dynamics of social change and cultural processes occurring in society. Prospects for further research lie in the study of digital discourse, as well as a comparative analysis of youth languages across different cultures.

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