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# Slang in the Turkish Language as a Social, Linguistic, and Semiotic Phenomenon

# Bir Sosyal, Dilbilimsel ve Semiyotik Fenomen Olarak Türkçede Argo

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**Abstract**

The topic of the article is the phenomenon of slang in the Turkish language. An examination of the phenomenon and its place in contemporary Turkish culture is followed by a description of slang from a semiotic point of view. Particular attention is given to the morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels of slang.

**Keywords**: Turkish, slang, sociolinguistics, subculture, semiotics, metaphor.

**Özet**

Argo çok yönlü bir dilsel fenomendir. Dilbilimsel antropoloji ile toplum dilbilimin bugünkü yaklaşımları argoyu konuşma diline özgü olan ve çoğunlukla alt kültürü ifade eden bir söz varlığı olarak tanımlarlar. Yazınsal ve standart dil ile zıtlık içinde bir dilsel fenomen olan argo, dilin, toplumsal kesimler arasında derinleşen ayrımlaşmanın sonucu olarak oluşan ve toplumun bir alt kültürüne ait düşünce, anlamlar ile değerler sistemini ifade eden bir parçasıdır.

Türk argosuna dair ilk örnekler karşımıza 11. yüzyılda Kaşgarlı Mahmud'un "Divanü Lûgat-it-Türk" adlı eserinde çıkmıştır. Fakat bu fenomene karşı büyük bir bilimsel ilgi ancak 20. yüzyılın ortasında duyulmuş; bu ilginin bir sonucu Ferit Devellioğlu "Türk Argosu. İnceleme ve Sözlük" adlı eserini kaleme almıştır. Son zamanlarda argo üzerine çok sayıda kitap yayımlanmıştır: Halil Ersoylu, Mehmet Arslan, Ali Püsküllüoğlu, Hulki Aktunç ve Filiz Bingölçe'nin çalışmaları; ayrıca 2003 yılında Prof. Dr. Emine Gürsoy Naskali ve Doç. Dr. Gülden Sağol editörlüklerinde çıkan 'Türk Kültüründe Argo' adlı derleme de argo fenomeninin incelenmesine önemli bir katkı sağlamıştır.

Argo fenomeni çeşitli metot ve yaklaşımlar vasıtasıyla incelenebilir. Bu makalenin amacı, argoyu semiyotik bakış açısıyla anlatmak ve argonun yapıbilimsel, sözdizimsel, semantik ve pragmatik düzeylerini göstermektir. Ayrıca, makalede argonun çağdaş Türk kültüründeki yeri de tartışılmaktadır.

Argo, belirli bir alt kültürü ifade etmemekle birlikte çeşitli sosyal sınıfların ve farklı yaş, cins ve meslek gruplarının dillerinde de yaygın kullanım bulmaktadır. Makalede

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argo terimi en geniş anlamıyla ele alınmış; argo sözcük örnekleri arasında gençlik dilinden, hırsız dilinden, uyuşturucu müptelalarının dilinden argo örnekleri verilmiştir.

## Introduction

Slang is a very multifarious language phenomenon. Current approaches in linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics define slang as an informal and usually stigmatized vocabulary that often serves the purpose to mark out a subculture. Slang is a language phenomenon opposed to literary, standard[2] language; it is a part of language that expresses the system of ideas, meanings, and values created by social differentiation.

Slang does not mark any particular subculture: it can be found in a language of different social classes, age, gender, and professional groups. Despite the fact that the term "slang" can be used to define particularly the language of young people, here we prefer to use it in its very general meaning for criminal argot or cant, occupational jargon, language of adolescents, students, and drug addicts.

First references to Turkish slang were made in the 11th century by Mahmud al-Kasgari in his "Divan Lugat At-Turk". According to the records, the appropriation by some of the words a new meaning and the emergence of a secret language are of a very old tradition[3]. However, a real interest towards the phenomenon of slang emerged only in the middle of the 20th century, with a book of a Turkish linguist Ferit Devellioğlu "Turkish Slang"[4], in which the author gave a general analysis of the phenomenon and a dictionary of Turkish slang. More recent works on Turkish slang lexicon were made by Halil Ersoylu[5] and Mehmet Arslan[6]; comprehensive Turkish slang dictionaries were composed by Ali Püsküllüoğlu[7], Hulki Aktunç[8], and Filiz Bingölçe[9]; and in 2003, a collection of articles "Slang in Turkish

[2] Which is learned and accepted as correct across a community or set of communities in which others are also used (Matthews 1997, "Standard").

[3] Özkan 2003: 25. For a list of Turkic slang words mentioned in Divan Lugat At-Turk, see Aktunç 2002: 16-9.

[4] Available in Turkish as „Türk Argosu. İnceleme ve Sözlük".

[5] See Ersoylu, Halil (2004), Türk Argosu, Istanbul: LM Yayıncılık.

[6] See Arslan, Mehmet (2004), Argo Kitabı, Istanbul: Kitabevi 234.

[7] See Püsküllüoğlu, Ali (2004), Türkçenin argo sözlüğü, Ankara: Arkadaş Yayınları.

[8] See Aktunç, Hulki (2002), Türkçenin Büyük Argo Sözlüğü, Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları.

[9] See Bingölçe, Filiz (2001), Kadın Argosu Sözlüğü, Istanbul: Metis Yayınları and Bingölçe, Filiz (2005), Kadın Argosu Sözlüğü-2, Ankara: Alt-Üst Yayınları.

Culture"[10] was published. Still, the phenomenon of slang is possible to discuss by means of very different methods and approaches. In the following article, we will describe Turkish slang from the semiotic point of view, with a particular attention on its morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels.

It has to be mentioned that in Turkish there is no clear distinction between the terms "argot", "jargon", and "slang". All the words and phrases that are considered to be outside the literary language may be occasionally included into the group of slang[11], irrespective of their being a part of obscene language or a slang of different occupational groups[12]. Sometimes we also find colloquialisms marked as "slang" in Turkish dictionaries[13].

## The phenomenon of Slang and its Place in Present-day Turkish Culture

Slang is very difficult to define. It is a very wide term described by certain dictionaries as "unconventional words or phrases that express either something new or something old in a new way[14]" or "some expressions that are used by some groups of people and not by other groups and are not a part of the standard language[15]". Slang, which is undoubtedly a vocabulary specific, e.g., to a particular generation of younger speakers[16], is said to be found in any country and in any language to serve the purpose of assuring understanding within different social groups[17]. Formed by giving special meanings to words of the standard language, making changes in some of them, using words from dialects, archaic language, foreign language forms, and metaphors, slang consists of vocabulary understood by a limited number of people and may occasionally include rude language[18]. Thus, we

[10] See „Türk Kültüründe Argo", edited by Emine Gürsoy – Naskali and Gülden Sağol. Türkistan ve Azerbaycan Araştırma Merkezi Yayını (Publications of Turkistan and Anzerbaijan Reseach Centre), Haarlem 2003.

[11] Turkish " argo"

[12] Çifçi 2006: 298.

[13] E.g., Türkçe sözlük (1998), Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları.

[14] "Slang", *Encyclopaedia Britannica* from http://www.search.eb.com/eb/article-9108462 (accessed 20.02.2009)

[15] Macaulay 2006: 221

[16] Matthews 1997, "Slang"

[17] Aksan 1995: 89

[18] Korkmaz 1992: 13

can say that slang is a special means of communication for a group of people that for certain reasons wants to keep itself private[19]. The slang's strong connection with the society and social changes makes it possible to look at the phenomenon from the point of sociolinguistics and the theory of subcultures.

Language is a guide to "social reality"; it is a symbolic guide to culture[20]. Language arises within our cultural, social, and physiological environment and defines the way we understand the world around us. Any word is a sign the people agree upon to signify a particular idea, thought, object, or concept. Any new phenomenon brings a new word, which becomes obsolete when the phenomenon disappears.

Fast development of information technologies and means of communication brought a lot of new concepts and new words to the Turkish language; on the other hand, some old words were re-examined and got their new meanings in the lexicon of slang. Therefore, some of the words that were very common during the time of the Ottoman Empire (connected with the religious or governmental institutions, etc.) were reconsidered in the 20th century and transformed in the framework of the new Turkish culture. Such transformation influenced all the strata of the language vocabulary, including its non-literary elements. We can see that some of the words, especially those connected with religion, have taken a very new meaning in the lexicon of slang:

*şeriat* – (rel. the Sharia) – "code of thieves' law";
*cami* (rel. mosque) – "crowded place";
*gavur* (rel. unfaithful) – "butcher";
*reis* (rel. head, chief) – "mate who is able to do anything";
*imanım* (my faith) – "Hey, man!" (a friendly greeting)[21];
*Adem baba* (*Adem* – Adam, *baba* – father) - 1) "tramp", 2) "prisoner who is completely penniless", 3) "hippy" or "shabby-looking tourist", 4) "opium addict".

Language instantly follows changes in the life of society, what inevitably results in the emergence of new lexical items. For example, it is possible to trace the transformation of the Turkish society according to its relations with other nations, communities, and languages and adoption of foreign words. Different historical periods have brought different loanwords into both literary and slang forms of the

[19] According to Nevzat Özkan, the reasons for secrecy are: 1) hiding a crime, 2) keeping a commercial secret, 3) concealing one's religious secrets, 4) hiding expressions and behaviour considered to be obscene (Özkan 2003: 27-8).

[20] Sapir 1966: 68, 70. Edward Sapir sees the role of language to be the key towards understanding the particular culture, civilization: "In a sense, the network of cultural patterns of a civilization is indexed in the language which expresses that civilization" (Sapir 1966: 68).

[21] The words like *şeriat, cami, gavur, reis,* and *iman* have an Arabic origin and are connected with the religion of Islam.

Turkish language. The first Arabic loanwords appeared in Turkish with the spread of the Islamic faith and became widespread in Turkish slang as "a satire on the sacred" in the further periods[22]: e.g., *Allah* – "superior", "boss", *ezan* (the azan) – "cockcrow", *camici*[23] (from *cami* – mosque) – "thief working in mosques", etc. Persian was the language of art and literature in the Ottoman Empire; hence, we can find many Persian loanwords as in the literary Turkish language as in its slang form: e.g., *derviş* (lit. dervish, from Persian *deryûş*) – "frequenter of a drug den", *gül* (lit. rose, from Persian *gul*) – "amphetamine", *parça* (lit. piece, fragment, from Persian *pârçe*) – "pretty woman", etc. Loanwords from the languages of the Ottoman Christian minorities – Greek and Armenian – are also widely found in Turkish slang: e.g., *aftos* (from Greek *autos* – herself) – "lover", "mistress", *palamari çözmek*[24] (from Greek *palamari* – rope, Turkish *çözmek* – to untie) - "to leave", *ahbar* (from Armenian *yeğpayr* – brother) – "brother" (form to address to a man), *cacık*[25] (from Armenian *cacıg*) – "fool", "naïve", etc. French loanwords appeared in Turkish in the second part of the 18th century and immediately covered the slang territory: *afiş* (lit. poster, placard, from French *l'affiche*) – "trick", "deception", "fabrication", *artist* (lit. actor, from French *artiste*) – "liar", "pretender", *fos* (from French *fausser* – to distort) – "useless", "worthless", "false", etc. In the last years, due to the process of globalization, many English words found their reflection in the Turkish slang: e.g., *antifriz* (from English *antifreeze*) – "alcoholic beverage", caz (from English *jazz*) – "twaddle", *coynt* (from English *joint*) – a "hashish cigarette", etc[26].

The brightest examples of influence of the technical progress on language can be found in computer jargon and in the slang of the youngest generation. Internet-related situations, operations, and activities have produced the need for a large number of words and phrases that extend well beyond the computer-mediated communication,[27] and the youngest generation is most likely to use the innovation in language forms along with the innovations in computer technologies. The characteristic feature of such neologisms in Turkish is the use of English loanwords either as part of a word or as part of a compound:

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[22] Özkan 2003: 25

[23] An affix –ci is added to the noun *cami* – "mosque".

[24] Used in a slang of seamen.

[25] a cold soup made of yogurt, cucumber and garlic.

[26] Along with the loanwords mentioned above, there are also borrowings from Hebrew, Kurdish, Gypsy, Italian, Spanish, German, Russian, and other languages.

[27] Crystal 2001: 81-2.

*çetleşmek*[28] – "to chat";
*resetlemek*[29] – "to reset";
*instol etmek*[30] – "to install a new programme";
*apgreyd etmek*[31] – "to upgrade one's computer";
*caddeci teenler*[32] - "teenagers roaming the streets of Istanbul".

The development of society constantly changes the language. We have to remember that language "is never unitary." Actual social life and historical development create within an abstractly unitary national language a multitude of concrete words, a multitude of bounded verbal-ideological and social belief and systems. All words have the "taste" of a profession, a tendency, a particular work, a generation, an age group, the age day and hour.[33] Within the language, there are differences that obviously depend upon the density of community: different economic classes differ in speech. Further, there are differences in education, in the way of both family traditions and schooling. These differences are further exacerbated by less important divisions of occupations; sports and hobbies also have their own vocabulary.[34] The social stratification is thus an important precondition for the emergence and popularization of slang terms. However, it would be rather unjust to treat slang as a linguistic phenomenon limited to lower classes of society. Despite the fact that in general the phenomenon of slang comes into being within the lower social strata, its vocabulary is often enriched by educated and intelligent groups[35].

Slang is a very good example of "anti-language". The principle used in its formation is that of the same grammar and different vocabulary; but the vocabulary differs only in certain areas, typically those that are central to the activities of the subculture and that set it off most sharply from the established society[36]. For example, the slang expressions of students often refer to activities that may meet with social disapproval: drinking, taking drugs, sexual relations[37].

[28] Being derived from the English verb "to chat", this example of a slang of young people is formed with the help of a verbal affix *–laş.*

[29] From the English verb "reset", a verbal affix *–le* is used.

[30] The verb „*etmek*" („to make") is very widely used in a formation of compound verbs.

[31] Compounds like *instol etmek* or *apgreyd etmek* may also have a variation used in written language: *install etmek*, *upgrade etmek*.

[32] *Cadde* means "street"; the affix *–ci* is added to indicate a person. *Teenler* is derived from the English *teenager*; affix *–ler* is added to indicate a plural form.

[33] Bakhtin 2000: 274-5

[34] Bloomfield 2000 :264-5

[35] Aksan 1995: 89

[36] Halliday 1976: 571

[37] Macaulay 2006: 87

As any subculture can be understood in terms of a combination of values, behaviour, and language knowledge,[38] the practice of slang can be considered to be one of the indicators of participation in a deviant subculture. Slang becomes a language of a sub-cultural community and consists of expressions used as a kind of in-group language by some speakers to identify themselves with other speakers and to distance themselves from speakers who do not use these forms[39]. For example, if we take a look at a community of Istanbul hip-hoppers, we will see that for them "the subcultural capital"[40] constructed via the underground is not just about status within their community, it is also simultaneously about the construction of boundaries within the community, defining who is in and who is out[41].

Thus, slang has its own environment that defines the specifics of the language used by the people belonging to the environment. Connected with a way of life and values of a particular group, it can be used as an in-group language by different occupational groups, be it criminals, sportsmen or musicians, or by the young generation.

**Slang Words in the Semiotic Frames**

Words and language are the products of social necessity; they are needed for proper communication. A word does not have any meaning without a definition. Thus, a word and its definition become a pair of signifiers of a real object, idea, or activity.

Lexical items belonging to slang, as the most of the vocabulary in a language[42], refer to the group of conventional signs. Generally, there is nothing in common

[38] Lerman 1967: 210

[39] Macaulay 2006: 87

[40] "means by which young people negotiate and accumulate status within their own social worlds" (Thornton, S. *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital,* 1996: 163) - In Solomon 2005: 3

[41] Solomon 2005: 3

[42]Except onomatopoeic words and verbs derivated from them. They belong to a group of unconventional/iconic signs. Among the examples are such Turkish verbs as zıngırdamak („to tremble", „to rattle", „to chatter") and *zıngırdatmak* (impelling form from

between their form or vocal expression and semantic content, signifier and signified. However, we can find some examples of slang words derived from onomatopoeic words that find themselves beyond the scope of the group of conventional signs and belong to the group of iconic signs – a mode in which the signifier is perceives as resembling or imitating the signified[43]:

*gıcık* – tickle in the throat; *gıcık gıcık* – sound of tickling
↓
*gıcık* –" irritating, tiresome person"

*cız* – sizzling or hissing sound
↓
*cızdam or cızlam* – 1) "disappearance", "slipping away", 2) "death"

*gıcırtı* – squeaking sound;
↓
*kapı gıcırtısı* (door creak) – "western classical music"

The second group of the slang words belonging to the group of iconic signs consists of metaphors created by a principle of association:

*albatros* (albatross) – "tall and broad-shouldered man";
*ağaç* (tree) – "watchman";
*el freni* (hand brake) – "zipper";
*ampul* (light bulb) – "bald" (person);
*deve* (camel) – "lanky", "gangling" (person).

Metaphors compose the largest group of the Turkish slang words[44]. Therefore, the most of the slang words find their expression in the connotative meaning of a sign[45] (opposed to the denotative meaning), what means that all the cultural components are re-examined. Lakoff and Johnson argue that "the essence of metaphor is undertaking and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another[46]". In semiotic terms, a metaphor involves one signified acting as a signifier referring to a different signified[47]:

*fasulye* (bean) – "girl";

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*zıngırdamak*). These two verbs are derived from the onomatopoetic word *zıngır (zangır): zıngır zıngır* – "sounds of trembling, rattling, chattering, shaking".

[43] Chandler 2007: 37

[44] Devellioglu 1945: 15

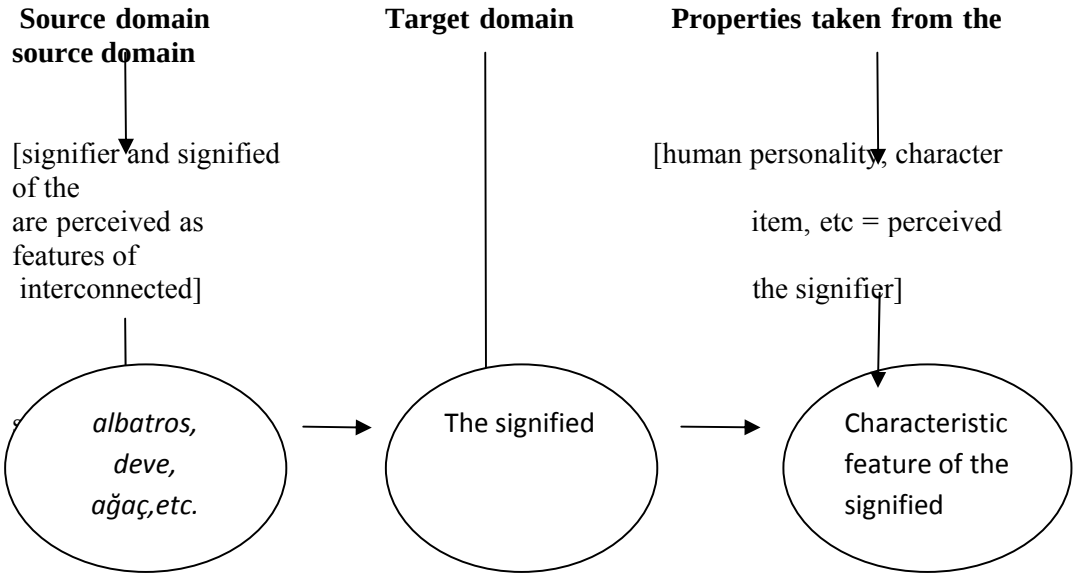
[45] Chandler 2007: 137-141

[46] Lakoff and Johnson 1980:5

[47] Chandler 2007: 127

*hastane* (hospital) – "stadium";
*çuval* (sack) – "goalkeeper who constantly misses goals";
*minareci* (minaret + affix *-ci*) – "tall footballer";
*kafes* (cage, coop) – "prison";
*tetik* (trigger) – "hired killer";
*çiftdikiş* (double seam) – "student who repeats a year";
*camekan* (display window) – "glasses".

The slang lexical items belonging to the group of metaphors are the examples of comparison; the metaphor here is chosen according to 1) a similarity of appearance (e.g. *albatros*, *deve, ampul*, etc), 2) a similarity of a characteristic feature (e.g. *çuval*, *tetik*), or 3) a similarity of function (e.g. *kafes*, *camekan*, etc.). The properties taken from the source domain reflect here the characteristics of the target domain; each different selection from the source domain provides a different connotative depiction of the specific feature to be evaluated[48]:




Thus, we see that many slang lexical items were derived from standard, literal language but obtained a new metaphorical meaning due to ironic and imaginative interpretation of the word.

[48] Danesi 1999: 68. Marcel Danesi shows metaphors using the formula "the examples of human personality = perceived physical features of the animals": "The [human personality = perceived physical features of the animals] metaform is one of the conceptual strategies used for understanding notions such as slyness, betrayal, aggressiveness, kindness, etc." We use the scheme presented by Danesi in order to show the connection between a signifier and a signified in all the varieties of metaphorical interpretations.

Naturally, the phenomenon of metaphor itself is not a feature of slang. Much of everyday language is metaphorical in origin, though the origins are often forgotten or unknown. What distinguishes slang is that it is itself a metaphorical entity and hence metaphorical modes of expression are the norm; we should expect metaphorical compounding, metatheses, rhyming alternations, and the like to be among its regular patterns of realization.[49]

**Morphology and Syntax of Turkish Slang**

Slang lexical items, as any other words of language, follow strict morphological and syntactical rules. Because the feature of slang cannot be considered an independent language but is only a part of the language, it would be completely wrong to treat its word-formation pattern as something appropriate only for this particular phenomenon.

The main way of formation of new lexical items in the modern Turkish language is affixation: one affix or several affixes[50] follow the root of the word. The affixation is also widely used in the formation of slang words:

*İntiharlardayım* – "I am bored"

| *intihar* | + | *lar* | + | *da* | + | *yım* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| "suicide" | | plural | | the locative case | | personal affix |

*Fenalardayım* – "I am sick (of)"

| *fena* | + | *lar* | + | *da* | + | *yım* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| "bad, ill, sick" | | plural | | the locative case | | personal affix |

*Patladım* – "I failed"

| *patlamak* | + | *dı* | + | *m* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| "to burst, to explode" | | -di-past affix [51] | | personal affix |

*Ortamcı* – "party-goer"

| *ortam* | + | *cı* |
|---|---|---|
| "surroundings" | | -ci affix[52] |

[49] Halliday 1976: 579

[50] Lewis specifies the type of Turkish affixes giving them a name of suffixes. However, considering the fact that prefixes are not normally used in Turkish, we prefer more general grammatical name that is also widely used by Turkish authors.

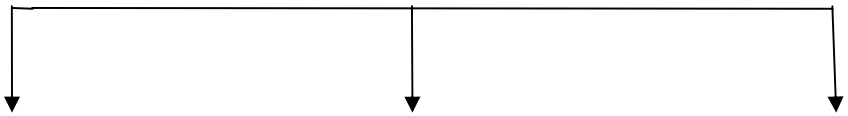
[51] The affix used to indicate the past tense (Lewis 1967: 128).

[52] The affix *-ci* is added to the singular of nouns and occasionally to adjectives and adverbs to denote persons who are professionally or habitually concerned with, or devoted to, the object, person, or quality denoted by the basic verb (Lewis 1967: 59).

*Dünyalı* – "civilian(s)"
dünya + lı
"the world" –li affix[53]

Sometimes, it is possible to distinguish a chain of slang lexical items formed by the help of affixes:

*kaparoz* ("loot", "illegal income")



*kaparozcu* ("thief") *kaparozculuk*[54] ("theft") *kaparozlama* ("the process of stealing")

*kaparozlamak*[55] ("to steal")

Besides the affixation means, Turkish slang words can also be formed by the help of other words or parts of other words. These elements play here a role of affixes:

*azmanyak* (*azmak* – get wild, *manyak* – crazy, wild) – "furious, crazy person";
*çaykolik* (*çay* – tea, *alkolik* – an alcoholic) – "tea addict";
*zilyoner* (*zil* – lit. doorbell, slang famished, *milyoner* – millionaire) – "poor person".

However, this type of derivation is not very common in Turkish.

On the syntactic level, two groups of compounds are found:

1. noun + verb

*duman olmak* (*duman* – lit. smoke or fog, slang hopeless (about a state or condition), *olmak* to be) – "to lose one's fortune";
*kantin atmak* (*kantin* – canteen, *atmak* – to throw) – "to tell lies";
*kek pişirmek* (*kek* – cake, *pişirmek* – cook) – "to deceive";
*gaz vermek* (*gaz* – gas, *vermek* – to give) – "to encourage".

[53] The affix *-li* is added to the singular of nouns to make nouns or adjectives which denote: a) possessing the object or quality indicated by the basic word (e.g. şeker – şekerli, dikkat – dikkatli); b) possessing the object or quality in a high degree (e.g. hız – hızlı, sevgi – sevgili); c) belonging to a place or institution (e.g. köy – köylü, İstanbul – İstanbullu) (Lewis 1967: 60-1).

[54] The affix *-luk (-lik)* is added to nouns or adjectives and makes abstract nouns (Lewis 1967: 62).

[55] Verbal affix *–la* (Lewis 1967: 227).

2. adjective / noun in the function of adjective + noun

*çürük elma* (rotten apple) – 1) "player who had sold out a match", 2) "corrupted referee";
*canlı bomba* (*canlı* – living, vivid, strong, *bomba* – bomb) – "footballer who constantly scores goals";
*yeşil kundura* (green shoes) – "soldier's shoes";
*aşk efekti* (effect of love or passion) – "kiss";
*bahçe salatası* (garden salad) – "softhead".

**Turkish Slang Words in the Frames of Semantics**

A language grows by the number of its words as the societies that use it create new entities that have to be named[56]. Because of its nature, slang is especially in need of constant lexical renewal. The motivation for it is to maintain the secrecy or novelty of the language[57].

Slang words have a significative type of semantics: their form is based not on attributes of material denotants but is defined by the interpretation of the phenomenon or subject by members of a certain language community. In the formation of semantics of these language units, the main role is to keep background knowledge, importance of the subject according to a system of values of a concrete group of people.

Slang, being a phenomenon of alternative language, reflects a value system accepted by a certain group. The function of alternative language is to create alternative reality[58]. Thus, for example, some of the metaphors like *keyif* – "feeling of joy", *ot* – "grass" or "herb", *beyaz* – "white", *kar* – "snow", *pudra* – "powder", *elmas* – "diamond", *kristal* – "crystal", *yakut* – "ruby", *kuş* – "bird", *mavi rüya* – "blue dream", *çay* – "tea", *nefes* – "breath" used in a meaning of "drug" or verbs and verbal phrases like *temizlemek* - "to clean", *adresini değiştirmek* – "to change one's address", *eşek cennetine göndermek* – "to send [someone] to donkey's paradise", *imamın kayığına bindirmek* – "to help [someone] to get into an imam's boat", *temize havale etmek* – "to send [someone] to the fresh air" in a meaning of "to kill someone" have an euphemistic character. Such euphemisms are used to avoid unpleasant connotations[59]. Here the system of meanings of the words confronts the general values of the human society reflected in a lexicon of any standard language.

The source for the semantic formation of slang lexical items is not limited to any

[56] Bolinger 1975: 384

[57] Hoch 1996: 312-3

[58] Halliday 1976: 581

[59] Hock 1996: 230

concrete field, but covers all the diversity of the world around us. The freedom of means makes it possible to use an image of the highest expressiveness. In the formation of Turkish slang words, the following noun groups may be used:

1) fauna:
*inek* (cow) – "overly hardworking student";
*koyun* (sheep) – "simpleton";
*ördek* (duck) – "passenger" (used among drivers);
*balina* (whale) – "fat", "obese" (person);
*ev tavuğu* (*ev* – house or home, *tavuk* - hen) – "married woman";
*otel faresi* (*otel* – hotel, *fare* – rat) – "hotel thief".

2) flora:
*karpuz* (watermelon) – "simpleton";
*ananas* (pineapple) or *sek ananas* (*sek* – straight, distilled liquor) – "stupid", "stupidly naïve";
*soğan* (onion) or *soğan erkeği* (*erkek* – man) – "coward", "unprincipled" (about a man);
*maydanoz* (parsley) – "interfering in everything", "meddler";
*maydanoz olmak* (*maydanoz* – parsley, *olmak* – to be) – "to interfere in other people's affairs";
*badem şekeri* (sugared almond) – 1) "pistol bullet", 2) "young navy officer".

3) names of nature phenomena or natural substances:
*toz* (dust) – "heroin";
*toprak* (earth, soil) – "drug of poor quality";
*dalgada olmak* (be on a wave) – "to be high on drugs";
*ateş* (fire, fever) – "money";
*ateş almak* (*ateş* – fire, fever; *almak* – to take) – "to fall in love";
*ateşe nal koymak* (to throw a horseshoe into a fire) – "to charm someone";
*çamur* (mud) – "troublesome", "unreliable", "twofaced", "wicked" (person).

4) names of human body parts:
*ayak* (leg, foot) – "trick", "pose", "playing a role";
*ayak çıkmak* (to go out), *ayak koşmak* (to run) or *ayak yapmak* (to make) – "to swindle", "to pretend";
*diş* (tooth) – 1) "puff at one's cigarette", 2) "influence", "power".

5) names of musical instruments:

*düdük* (whistle, pipe) – "simpleton", "fool";
*zurna* (a reed instrument resembling an oboe) – "very drunk";
*davul* (drum) – "the one who wags his tongue".

Considering the examples above, it can be concluded that the semantic word-formation finds very intensive practice in the modern Turkish slang. A rich vocabulary of the standard Turkish language and the variety of language means give inexhaustible potential for the semantic word-formation in standard as well as non-standard types of language.

**Turkish Slang From the Point of Pragmatics**

A useful framework for defining slang within the frames of pragmatics is the system of speech functions outlined by Roman Jakobson. Of particular importance, here are the referential ("denotative", "cognitive") function, indicating orientation toward the topic of the message and the emotive ("expressive") speech function, indicating focus on the addresser (speaker), their attitudes, and emotions, regardless of whether a certain emotion is true or feigned[60].

Slang lexical items contain both referential meaning and expressive meaning: the referential or denotative function stresses the topic, and the emotive or expressive function stresses the speaker:

*Duyunca patlayacaksın!* (from teenagers' slang)
"You'll explode when you hear it!" (*patlamak* – to explode)

*Partide en gaz ve baba parçalar çalacak!* (from the slang of hip-hop musicians)
"The hottest (*gas* – "gas") and the best (*baba* – "father") music will be played at the party!"

*O yaz Kadıköy'de badem şekerlerinden geçilmiyordu.* (from women's slang)
"That summer Kadiköy[61] was so full of young navy officers (*badem şekeri)* you couldn't get through".

Slang is primarily a type of spoken language, the speech of intimate and expressive conversation[62]. The purely emotive stratum in language is presented by the interjections[63]. Undoubtedly, such highly expressive language as Turkish offers a rich variety in the field of informal sayings:

*eyvallah* – Thanks! Thanks a lot! Good bye! So be it, if you say so;

[60] Jakobson 1960: 353-4

[61] the district of Istanbul on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus.

[62] Lerman 1967: 213

[63] Jakobson 1960:354

*helal olsun* (*helal* – rel. canonically lawful) – It is all yours! Bravo!
*idare eder* (*idare etmek* – to manage) – It's OK.

As we have already mentioned in the chapters above, slang serves the aim of promoting solidarity among the members of the group. This may be seen as an extension of Jakobson's contact ("phatic") function, which focuses on the contact between speakers, serving to establish, to prolong, or to discontinue communication, to check whether the channel works, to attract attention of the interlocutor or to confirm their continued attention[64]. Such words as *hacı* (hadji), *ağa* (master), *baba* (father), *abi* (contracted from *ağabey* – older brother), *amca* (uncle) have obtained a new meaning and are used by young people in order to address their peers:

*N'aber hacı?* } How are you? /
*Abi nassın?* [65] } What's up, mate?

Connative function with its orientation towards the addressee and expression in the vocative and imperative[66] can be shown by such examples as:
*salla başından* (*sallamak* – put off, *başından* – from your head) – "don't mind";
*cool ol* } "take it easy", "relax".
*relax ol* }

Thus, we may define slang as a language phenomenon that is used as an expressive speech device in all the varieties of the speech functions by a certain group of people. The speakers present the style and different pragmatic expressions to manage interpersonal relations between a speaker and a listener and achieve understanding between members of a certain community, be it social or professional group.

[64] Jakobson 1960: 355

[65] Lit. 'ne haber?' and 'nasılsın?'

[66] Jakobson 1960:355

## Conclusion

Slang is a highly expressive and metaphorical part of the language used by members of different social or professional groups. We can distinguish a slang of adolescents, an occupational jargon of musicians, footballers, or computer experts, a cant of thieves, etc. The boundaries between all the slang types are not always clear and we can find some technical words in the language or teenagers, or cant words in the language of different professional groups. Moreover, slang words frequently become a part of everyday vocabulary and colloquial speech.

Summarizing all the characteristics of slang, we can say the following:

- Slang is one of the most common innovative language phenomenon: the use of its lexical items is in a constant dependence of social and cultural environment;

- Slang is used by people belonging to the same social or occupational group in order to keep private from the other part of the society, playing thus a role of a significant marker of "in-groupness" and defining ideas and values of a certain sub-culture;

- Slang lexical items transmit the connotative meaning of a sign, slang becomes thus a highly metaphorical language that shows ironic interpretation of literal words;

- Slang exists within the national language, it uses the forms of the standard language in order to create its own lexical items; as a result, we see a different meaning of the word, although there is no difference in morphological or syntactic patters of word/phrase formation;

- Slang lexical items express a significative type of semantics; basic meaning is transferred into derived meaning according to interpretation of a certain phenomenon or subject by a concrete sub-cultural community;

- Slang finds its use in all the speech functions transmitting emotive significance of the speech and providing understanding among the members of the group.

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