

PARADIGMATIC AND SYNTAGMATIC FEATURES OF STUDENTS' SLANG USAGE IN ENGLISH, RUSSIAN AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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ANNOTATION: This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the paradigmatic and syntagmatic features of students' slang usage in English, Russian, and Uzbek languages. It investigates how slang operates through lexical variation, semantic innovation, and syntactic structuring in informal student communication. Special attention is given to paradigmatic relations, such as synonymic substitutions and metaphorical extensions, alongside syntagmatic patterns that reveal the creativity of word combinations. By comparing these features across three languages, the study uncovers both universal tendencies and culturally specific expressions of youth identity. The findings demonstrate that slang functions not only as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a marker of social belonging, cultural adaptation, and interpersonal solidarity. This research contributes to understanding the role of slang in shaping multilingual youth discourse and contemporary communication practices.

Keywords: students' slang, paradigmatic features, syntagmatic features, English, Russian, Uzbek, multilingual discourse, youth language, lexical variation, cultural identity, linguistic innovation.

Language is not only a tool for communication but also a reflection of social identity, cultural belonging, and generational values. Among university students, slang plays a particularly significant role in shaping informal interaction, building solidarity, and expressing creativity. In multilingual contexts, such as English, Russian, and Uzbek, slang becomes a dynamic phenomenon that demonstrates both universal and culture-specific features. This study focuses on the paradigmatic and syntagmatic aspects of slang, exploring how lexical choices, semantic shifts, and syntactic patterns contribute to the uniqueness of student communication. Paradigmatic features illustrate the variety of words and meanings that students can select to express similar ideas, while syntagmatic features highlight the ways these elements are combined into innovative and often playful structures. By analyzing and comparing students' slang across three languages, the research seeks to uncover underlying linguistic mechanisms and shed light on broader sociolinguistic tendencies in contemporary youth discourse.

Theoretical Framework of Slang Studies. Slang, as a dynamic and constantly evolving layer of language, has long attracted the attention of linguists, sociologists, and cultural researchers. It is commonly defined as informal vocabulary used by specific social groups to create solidarity, establish identity, and differentiate themselves from mainstream norms. According to Eble (1996), slang serves both as a marker of group belonging and a tool for linguistic innovation. Paradigmatic and syntagmatic perspectives provide a useful framework for analyzing slang: paradigmatic relations highlight the variety of word choices available for a single concept, while syntagmatic relations emphasize how words are combined into novel expressions [3;85].

In the context of English, Russian, and Uzbek, student slang reflects both universal tendencies of youth culture and language-specific creativity. My research indicates that Uzbek students often blend traditional idiomatic expressions with modern abbreviations, while English slang tends to borrow from popular culture and technology. Russian student slang, meanwhile, shows strong ties to both colloquial speech and Internet-based neologisms. These observations support the idea proposed by Allan and Burridge (2006) that slang functions not only as a linguistic category but also as a social phenomenon influenced by cultural and digital environments. Mattiello (2008)

further emphasizes the importance of analyzing slang through its structural and functional aspects, which is crucial for understanding multilingual student discourse [4;34].

Paradigmatic Features of Students' Slang. Paradigmatic features of slang refer to the range of lexical alternatives available to speakers for expressing similar meanings, where choice itself becomes a marker of social identity and creativity. Slang thrives on synonymic substitutions, metaphorical extensions, borrowings, and abbreviations, all of which enrich the vocabulary of youth communities. Pesina et al. (2020) argue that student slang develops through processes such as antonomasia, metaphorization, and borrowing from foreign languages, allowing young speakers to constantly refresh their linguistic repertoire [5,8]. This aspect of choice not only highlights creativity but also sets slang apart from standard language norms. In English, the word money can be replaced with bucks, cash, bread, or dough, each choice carrying a slightly different social or cultural nuance. Russian students, similarly, may substitute деньги with бабки or лавэ, while Uzbek students employ playful forms such as pulcha or adopt borrowed expressions like so'mcha. Sitohang and Ristia (2022) note that semantic change, including pejoration, amelioration, and metaphorical extension, plays a significant role in how Gen Z forms slang across digital platforms.[6,18] Such mechanisms are also visible in Uzbek student slang, where code-mixing with Russian or English, e.g., like qildim (“I liked it”) or hangout bo‘ldik (“we hung out”)—creates hybrid forms that reflect globalization and digital influence.

From my observations, paradigmatic substitutions among Uzbek students often demonstrate a playful distancing from formal speech. By choosing non-standard lexical items, students signal in-group membership and cultural awareness. As Thorne (2014) emphasizes, slang is not random innovation but a systematic response to social, cultural, and technological change [7,102]. Therefore, paradigmatic features in student slang exemplify both linguistic innovation and the construction of group identity.

Syntagmatic Structures in Multilingual Contexts. Syntagmatic structures in student slang reveal how words from different languages are creatively combined into new sequences, often diverging from standard grammar. Unlike paradigmatic features, which emphasize lexical alternatives, syntagmatic aspects focus on the ordering and hybridization of linguistic elements. As Crystal (2008) observes, youth slang frequently manipulates syntax and phrase-building to achieve humorous, playful, or identity-marking effects [2,45].

For this study, I conducted a small-scale field observation among 50 undergraduate students at the Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages, aged 18-23. Data were collected through informal conversations, short interviews, and analysis of everyday group chats. The findings demonstrate that students frequently merge Uzbek verbs with English or Russian nouns, or insert Russian discourse markers into English-Uzbek sentences. These combinations often do not follow strict grammatical norms but are understood and accepted within the peer group. Examples include project qildim (“I did the project”), where the English noun is paired with the Uzbek verb, and chill qilamiz (“we will relax”), blending English with Uzbek morphology. Another common form is ok, ya skazal hangout bo‘lamiz, which mixes Russian, English, and Uzbek in a single utterance. Such constructions confirm Androutsopoulos’s (2015) claim that multilingual youth discourse is characterized by hybridity and flexible syntax [1;185].

Standard Expression (Neutral)	Student Slang Expression (Hybrid Form)	Languages Mixed	Explanation / Function
“We worked on the project”	Project qildik	English+Uzbek	English noun combined with Uzbek verb; concise and trendy.
“He is always showing off”	Har doim prikol qiladi	Russian + Uzbek	Russian slang prikol used with Uzbek

			verb, meaning “jokes or shows off.”
“Let’s prepare for the exam together”	Examga tayyor bo‘lamiz team bilan	English + Uzbek	English academic term + Uzbek syntax + English group word (team).
“Hello girls”	Hi qizlar!	English + Uzbek	Greeting with English word Hi + Uzbek plural noun; casual and trendy.
“I did my make-up”	Make up qildim	English + Uzbek	English noun phrase treated as a verb with Uzbek auxiliary; popular among girls.

Overall, the results show that syntagmatic structures in student slang function as markers of social belonging and cultural awareness. They allow students not only to communicate efficiently but also to signal modernity, creativity, and alignment with global youth culture.

Comparative Analysis: English, Russian, and Uzbek. Student slang in English, Russian, and Uzbek demonstrates how young people creatively reshape language for everyday communication. In English, university students often use short and casual expressions such as cram (to study hard before an exam), chill (to relax), or profs (professors). These forms show the student lifestyle and highlight academic as well as social contexts. Russian student slang has both playful and ironic tones. Common expressions include халыва (getting something without effort, e.g., passing an exam), ботан (nerd), and зачет (a pass or a cool thing). These words reflect both the academic setting and peer evaluation, making them essential in student interaction.

Uzbek student slang combines local creativity with borrowed elements. For instance, phrases like make up qildim (I put on make-up), like bosdim (I liked it), or sessiyani yiqildim (I failed the exam) are widely used among students. Uzbek youth often mix Uzbek grammar with English or Russian roots, forming unique hybrid expressions. Comparing these languages shows that all student communities share the need for brevity, humor, and identity-marking through slang. Yet, each group adapts slang to its own cultural and academic realities.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the paradigmatic and syntagmatic features of students’ slang in English, Russian, and Uzbek, with a focus on university students at the Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages. The paradigmatic analysis revealed that students often select lexical alternatives creatively, using synonyms, borrowings, and metaphorical extensions to express humor, identity, and group belonging. Syntagmatic analysis demonstrated how words from different languages are combined into hybrid structures, frequently blending Uzbek, Russian, and English elements in a single utterance. Comparative analysis showed that English student slang relies on brevity and informal academic or social expressions, Russian slang combines tradition with playful innovation, and Uzbek slang creatively integrates foreign words into native grammar. Field observations from 50 students indicated that hybrid forms—such as make up qildim, like bosdim, or prikol qiladi—are widely used to establish peer solidarity, show modernity, and navigate digital communication.

Overall, student slang functions not merely as informal language but as a social and cultural tool. It reflects youth creativity, multilingual adaptability, and the influence of global and local cultural trends. This research highlights the importance of analyzing both paradigmatic choices and syntagmatic combinations to understand how contemporary students negotiate identity, community, and communication in multilingual contexts.

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