

## INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION (CONTEMPORARY VOCABULARY OF THE TEENAGERS)

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**Abstract:** *The article presents a probe carried out in 2008 in the elementary schools on pupils from the fifth class above. The study involves with developmental unusualnesses of the teenagers and maps their vocabulary. It compares the differences between used standard Czech language phrases and the expressions used by the teenagers; it follows the level of understanding of differences found in the control groups of 50, 60, and 70 years old people. It tries to analyze the creation of neologism; it looks for a connection between the area of interest and the vocabulary of the teenagers. It probes language creativity, vividness and remarkable expressivity. It compares a relation of new expressions on the school environment where the survey was carried out.*

**Keywords:** *communication interaction, understanding, self-conception, identification, conformism, vocabulary, expressivity, creativity, teenagers, form dichotomy (standard level vs. non-standard level), functional dichotomy*

The school has been a place of meetings, it is a social environment limited by the building and its surroundings, people and their relationships, common activities. The school environment creates a social situation, i.e. that certain objects and their relationships form closely connected and relatively independent system<sup>1</sup>. The concept of „social situation“ has started to be used as such because it emphasizes the dynamic and interaction character of individuals in the social space. The interaction among people supposes common activities and forming human relationships. The symbolic expression of the interaction has been communication.

The communications has been utterances about how people understand, „see“, and interpret themselves, other people and their relationships. The utterance of a man has always been subjective and always represents both speaking to the others, and the utterance of oneself.<sup>2</sup> Communication has been carried out through symbols, pictures, writing or speaking, gestures, action. In this contribution I focused on the verbal communication of the teenagers.

<sup>1</sup> Rezáč J. Sociální psychologie Brno:Paido 1989 ISBN 80-85931-48-6, p. 20

<sup>2</sup> Rezáč J. Sociální psychologie Brno:Paido 1989 ISBN 80-85931-48-6, p. 107

The period of adolescence does not have unequivocal chronological borders; it comes through rapid development in biologic, physiological area and in a cognitive area from psychological functions. In the first phase of adolescence they do not develop evenly, they lag behind at the personality of emotionally-social aspect of the personality. A teenager is on one hand able to process large amounts of data, but he/she is not able to put them into context or to take into account the data origin context. That is why a problem with unambiguous judgment appears at the adolescents in certain areas, because the input data is often only from one source – which has often been the Internet. The juvenescent harshly justify their own conclusions from unclear premises and they are not willing to discuss. In the personality traits the „black and white sight on reality“ prevails and in the perception of the surrounding world and people there are many perceptual stereotypes. The endeavor to differentiate from the world of the adults has not been new and it mainly represents an external manifestation of the dissimilarity, the tendency of dressing differently than the adults, the tendency of speaking differently, behave differently than the norms state.

The speech of the teenager has been affected by a great development of an active vocabulary, but also by the functional changes in the area of speech organs. The own vocabulary grows due to spare-time activities and a high number of inputs from the commercial world. In the areas of interest the adolescent has been addressed by the terminology of certain field of technique, sport, games, and music. The adolescent accepts new terms to his normally used general Czech, modifies them and makes his/her verbal display interesting by the means of them. With the development of teaching foreign languages and many foreign firms entering our markets, and with the propagation of foreign products many czechized English and German expressions assert to the colloquial speech of not only the teenagers, but also the adults. It presents a possibility of making interesting for the adolescents, which they willingly and quickly accept, mainly when they find that most parents and grandparents do not understand their speech. They enrich their own verbal expression not only by unusual combinations of nouns and adjectives, but also by emphasizing in the strength and intensity of their display.

The school and the teachers try to use and teach standard Czech to cultivate their personalities, which is almost a utopia these days. The teenagers are influenced by mass news media, TV, radio stations in which many people quite move away the norms of the standard Czech, many moderators and actors in public news have poor pronunciation or speech impediment. This process we now look at within the survey has not been a new phenomenon in the development of the Czech language or inter-generation communication, however the faster the data spreads in the whole country, the faster it is.

The standard language as a basic national language formation has been a bearer of the nationally-representative function. There is a constant tension between a standard language and non-standard units to forming an obvious dichotomy. The non-standard units are traditional territorial dialect and the general language.

The dichotomy concerned first the realization difference between a written and a spoken speech. The interface was very rapid. The dichotomy started to appear distinctly in the 13th century, when even the written speech was carried out through the home language. A characteristic feature of dichotomy was the antique dictum „The written word remains,“ and the popular epigram about speaking plain language and its paradox „To speak like a book.“

The school system has been gradually democratized in the second half of the nineteenth century and the systems of extra-curricular education of the adults started to appear. Thus the dichotomy of standard - non-standard started to change its functional content, it serves for expressing the public against the private, intimate.

The former dichotomy function starts to disappear, new, non-transitional areas between written and spoken speech appear - the mother's messages to the family on the piece of paper, political documents, weather forecasts, official documents or the speech of the young generation.

In the areas of communication boundary from the point of view of the public – intimacy (in the discussions, news) a preference of general language, professional speech and slang can be seen, which has been a consequence of the phrasing connected with working environment.

The language which is improvised, natural has been connected with non-standard language. It concerns everyday common matters, is carried out among the speakers who are equal in position, age, sex or in particular life situations.

The consistent standard level of Czech is connected with so called model language, and is used in situations when the addressee should have an aesthetical impression, in professional or negotiating style (exams using the tests, filling requests, messages, writing the CV, professional, working or personal assessments, encoding the data for computing technique).

The complicated communication situation is connected with the coincidence of more communication models that are partly supported, partly overthrown. Thus the model of intimacy, emotional involvement, and solidarity brings the elements that are professionally, slangy as well as territorially conditioned. A multilayered model is used in the expressions of journalism style. The professional style gets close to the model of rationality and impersonality. The popularizing professional style partly accepted the intention of the single-mindedness of the recipient's display.<sup>3</sup>

Our ordinary everyday Czech is mainly a spoken speech, spoken spontaneously without any preparation with all the attributes and characteristics of unprepared expression. The speaker corrects himself/herself in the spontaneous speech, he/she uses pauses, and the sentences do not have a fix structure. Most of us use general Czech in common speech. There are differences in the phonic form of o-vo; í/ý-ě, in the syntax (easier syntax, short sentences, frequent parentheses). For general Czech the expressions of expressive nature are typical (shift it, make off). At present we do not hold on with the evaluation of the speech on the scale of standard-non-standard language, of higher importance there is a criterion of politeness.<sup>4</sup>

In general speech in the population at individual age groups, individual groups of interest, individual professional groups we meet strange names or expressions that an uninitiated people do not understand. „Slang is a collection of words and expressions bound on certain social environment. The word „slang“ comes from English, where it was created using the ending of „s“ that is used for forming the possessive case, and the fist syllable of the word language.”<sup>5</sup> Slang is not a special language unit like e.g. dialect,

<sup>3</sup> Chloupek J. Stylistika češtiny p. 21–27, SPN, Praha 1991 ISBN 80-04233-02-3

<sup>4</sup> the collective of bohemists of ČSAV FF UK. Čeština za školou, Praha: Panorama 1979 ISBN 11-075-79

<sup>5</sup> the collective of bohemists of ČSAV FF UK. Čeština za školou, Praha: Panorama 1979 ISBN 11-075-79 p. 74

it does not have grammatical strangeness, phonic differences, form differences. In slang there is a whole phraseology – *he kept on going in the tobacco, etc.*. Slang has also its similes – *slíznul kouli jako Brno (He got an F like Brno)*. Of similar meaning like the English „slang“ there are the words „jargon“ and „patois“ (from French). There are two types of slang: professional (lingo), and of interests. There are quite great differences in these two types as far as the character of individual expressions is concerned.

In the lingo there are the means of communication among employees during the work process. The slang expressions were formed long time ago and unlike the phrases of many words they usually comprise of only one word.

The interests slang expresses also the attitude of the speaker: joy of performance, joy of meeting, relationship to the teacher, duties, punishment. The interests slang pile up many appellations (synonyms for the school marks), they contain also the names created from acronyms. Also the derived words are deformed or restored in various ways in slang, various suffixes are used, harmonic words are used, there is mechanical shortening, whole parts of words are removed etc. Also transposing of the meaning and their usage in common function is used. Some metaphorical names are stable, others occasional. The similarity can be functional: the school head teacher is called sheriff etc. The source of the slang vocabulary is taken from foreign languages – German, English, but also exotic languages: e.g., the word „*potlach*“ comes from Indian.

## The first survey phase

I gathered the current vocabulary from the research sample in spring 2008 from the pupils of the 8th and 9th classes of the Brno primary school in the form of anonymous questionnaire from 160 respondents (the vocabulary exceeds the scope of this article, therefore only few examples are used).

Example. aliens => pensioners

Fucklaf => Wenceslas (hip hop slang)

gape as a germ to the pharmacy => wonder at st

webmasturbator => web administrator

u2 => you too

fosils => grandparents

PSko => play station

PSPčko => play station portable

I have made a formal analysis on the vocabulary in its written form, but during the data collection phase the verbal display of the adolescents cannot be detached. The different attitude to word weighting is given by the exuberance by social norms, conventions. The dissimilarity expresses itself in the audible aspect of the display, in the voice tone, in the sentence cadence. A noticeable phenomenon is careless pronunciation, discharging parts of the words, swallowing whole vocal groups, but also prolonging the vocals. Typical for expressing contemporary teenagers is removing the sound part of the sentence, the difference between interrogative and indicative mood has been removed. The other frequent phenomenon of the teenager's speech is exaggeration. The strong emotional display has been accompanied by particular word and is used for evaluat-

ing both positive, and negative reality. The adjectives can represent both positive, and negative characteristics of a term, the original meaning of the adjective goes to the background and only the extent is expressed both in the positive, and in the negative senses (fantastic nitwit, frightful, terrible, and dreadful). The exaggeration in the teenager’s display using the emotionally discolored, socially unbearable words, taboo words and swearwords begs the critical attitude of the adults to the teenagers. However, the teenagers express their attitude without restraint because of their monochrome view on the world reality.

The dialectologists treat the slang used by the adolescents as a set of certain lexical means bound on particular age group, it is specially varied language conditioned by the age and generation, and it is not only interest or professional slang.

## Understanding the vocabulary

The second survey phase consisted of understanding the vocabulary at different age groups. We have presented the teenager vocabulary gathered through the questionnaire to the population of people with university education in the age of 40, 50, 60, and 70 years. We were interested in the number of liaisons in the text understanding, in the level of understanding to presented expressions that were evaluated in %. I presented the expressions also to the teenagers just for interest.

Respondents‘ age	Number of words understood from the vocabulary (385)	% of understanding
40 years	300 – 310	78-81%
50 years	250 – 280	65 – 73%
60 years	100 – 120	26 – 31%
70 years	10 – 25	3 – 7 %
teenagers	380 – and more	99%

## Conclusion

Based on studying the literature and the survey carried out in spring 2008 I have found a great difference between using the non-standard expressions – slang of the adolescents at the contemporary teenagers. It cannot be said that this is a phenomenon that has not been recognized before, we only can say that the frequency of non-standard expressions is much higher than at the past generations. The means of expression are less influenced by the jargon, more by the foreign expressions from the world of informational technologies, computing and contemporary music production. The emerging expressions that are probably to be partly diminished from the verbal display of further generations are interesting in their origin (syntax, derivation, taking, association, shortening).

The aim of the survey was to get close to contemporary generation of teenagers, to understand and accept the terms that moves the generation of adults from teenagers, that disrupts the communication between the teacher and a pupil. During carrying out the survey many discussion topics appeared. The adolescents had and have their own verbal style that connects them in the age and enables them their own fight for autonomy.

Is it therefore necessary to accept the vocabulary of the teenagers?  
Will we pass the role of pedagogues when we do not know what the teenagers discuss,  
what they laugh at?  
Should we deal with the vocabulary of our children?  
Is there any point of leading children and pupils to the standard Czech?

## **MEZIGENERAČNÍ KOMUNIKACE (SOUČASNÝ SLOVNÍK TEENAGERŮ)**

**Abstrakt:** Článek je sondou do komunikace žáků 2. st. ZŠ v Brně-střed, která se realizovala na jaře roku 2008. Práce se zabývá vývojovými zvláštnostmi -náctiletých, mapuje jejich slovní zásobu. Porovnává odlišnosti užívaných výrazů spisovné češtiny od výrazů ve slovníku teenagerů; sleduje míru porozumění zjištěných odlišností u kontrolních skupin 50-ti letých, 60-ti letých, 70-ti letých. Snaží se analyzovat tvorbu novotvarů, hledá spojení mezi zájmovou sférou a slovníkem -náctiletých. Prozkoumává jazykovou tvořivost, plastičnost a pozoruhodnou expresivitu. Porovnává vazbu nových výrazů na prostředí školy, ve kterém byl výzkum proveden.

**Klíčová slova:** interakce komunikace, porozumění, sebepojetí, identifikace, konformismus, slovník, expresivita, tvořivost, teenageři, dichotomie formy (spisovnost-nespisovnost), dichotomie funkční