Abstract

The presented study focuses on the processes involved in the formation of words in contemporary English slang. The aim of the study is to determine which patterns of word building are the most frequent, also compared to the general word stock of contemporary English, based on the analysis of a representative sample of contemporary slang expressions. In addition, the study attempts to determine if there are any phenomena that have been given little or no attention so far.

The study consists of two parts. The theoretical part describes the phenomena that are relevant to the scope of the research and the study in general. The first section of the theoretical part includes a description of slang, also pointing out the differences in the treatment of slang between the English-speaking and Czech linguistic tradition. The second section contains a description of the source of the data used in the research, namely, the open Internet repository of slang expressions Urban Dictionary, which is one of the most widely used slang dictionaries on the Internet. The third section provides an overview of word-formation processes that are productive in contemporary English and relevant to the source material of slang lexemes. They include affixation, compounding, conversion, shortening, semantic change, borrowing or blending.

The research part of the study contains two sections. The first represents the methodology, while the second contains a description and analysis of the research results. The sample data comprise 200 contemporary slang expressions that were collected using two different types of search on Urban Dictionary; one of them was a simple random search, while the other aimed to emphasize slang neologisms.

The research showed that in English, slang shows much higher diversity in the means of creating new words than the general vocabulary. The most common word-formation process in contemporary English slang is semantic change, identified in 113 out of 200 items, which constitutes 56.5 %. Compounding and allusion come next, with the incidence of 41 % and 36.5%, respectively. As opposed to the general lexicon, both derivation and conversion do not occur very often. By contrast, the phenomena such as allusion, onomatopoeia and corruption seem to be particularly characteristic of slang. The study also examined the co-occurrence of two or more different word-formation processes in one lexeme, with the combination composition + semantic change identified in 57 cases out of 200.

**Keywords:** word formation, word-formation processes, semantic change, slang, slang dictionaries, sociolinguistics