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ÚSTAV ANGLICKÉHO JAZYKA A DIDAKTIKY

Slovotvorné procesy v současném anglickém slangu

Word-Formation Processes in Contemporary English Slang

DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

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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 define 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 the slang word formation includes 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*. 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 displays a 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

Abstrakt

Předkládaná diplomová práce se zabývá slovotvornými procesy, které se podílejí na tvoření slov v rámci současného anglického slangu. Cílem práce je na základě analýzy aktuálního reprezentativního vzorku slangových slov stanovit, o jaké procesy se jedná a které z nich se vyskytují nejčastěji, mimo jiné i ve srovnání se situací v obecné slovní zásobě současné angličtiny. Vedle toho se studie pokouší určit, zda mezi nimi jsou jevy dosud málo popsané nebo dokonce zcela opomíjené.

Studie sestává ze dvou částí. V teoretické části jsou popsány jevy a procesy, které jsou relevantní pro předmět výzkumu a téma práce. První sekce teoretické části se soustředí na popis slangu, přičemž zmiňuje rozdíly v přístupu k této oblasti lexika mezi anglosaskou a českou lingvistickou teorií. Druhá sekce obsahuje popis zdroje dat použitých ve výzkumu, otevřeného internetového slovníku slangu *Urban Dictionary*. Třetí sekce přináší přehled slovotvorných procesů, které jsou produktivní v současné angličtině a relevantní vzhledem ke zdrojovému materiálu. Postupně jsou představeny derivace (odvozování), kompozice (skládání), konverze, zkracování, sémantické změny, přejímání slov, mísení (*blending*) aj.

Výzkumná část studie se skládá ze dvou sekcí: první z nich představuje metodologii práce, zatímco druhá obsahuje popis a analýzu výsledků výzkumu. Vzorek dat sestává z 200 aktuálních slangových výrazů, které byly shromážděny pomocí dvou různých typů vyhledávání na *Urban Dictionary*, z nichž jedním bylo prosté náhodné vyhledávání a druhé mělo za cíl akcentovat slangové neologismy.

Z výzkumu vyplynulo, že slang v angličtině vykazuje mnohem větší různorodost ve způsobech tvoření slov než obecná slovní zásoba. Nejrozšířenějším slovotvorným procesem v současném anglickém slangu jsou sémantické změny, které se byly identifikovány u 113 z 200 položek, což představuje 56,5 %. Následují kompozice a aluze (analogie), s výskytem 41, respektive 36,5 %. Oproti obecné slovní zásobě se daleko méně vyskytuje derivace a také konverze. Naopak mezi jevy, které se zdají být specifické pro slang, lze vedle aluzí zařadit procesy opírající se o zvukovou podobnost slov či jejich komolení. Studie také zkoumala kombinace dvou nebo více různých procesů tvoření slov u jednoho lexému, přičemž nejobvyklejší spojení představuje kompozice + sémantické změny, která byla zjištěna v 57 případech z 200.

Klíčová slova: tvoření slov, slovotvorné procesy, sémantické změny, slang, slangové slovníky, sociolingvistika

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List of abbreviations

CF = combining form

New-WOTD = New-Word of the Day search, one of the two methods performed to obtain the
sample of slang expressions

UD = Urban Dictionary

WOTD = Word of the Day, referring to the Urban Word of the Day feature on Urban
Dictionary

WFP(s) = word-formation process(es)

1. Introduction

The presented study focuses on word formation in contemporary English slang. The aim of this study is to determine which patterns of word building are the most productive in this part of the English lexicon, pointing out possible reasons for their prominence. Also, it will attempt to explore if they include any processes that have been given little or no attention so far. Any differences in the word-formation tendencies between slang and the general lexicon will be pointed out as well.

The study consists of two parts, one providing the theoretical background for the relevant topics and the other presenting the research conducted within the study. The theoretical part is divided into three sections. The first of them features an outline of slang, emphasizing the difference in the approaches of the English-speaking and Czech linguistic theory. The second section provides a description of the source of the lexical material used in the research, the open online dictionary of slang *Urban Dictionary*. The third section comprises an overview of the word-formation processes which are productive in Present-day English and relevant to the source material of slang lexemes.

The research part first describes the process of selection of the relevant slang items from *Urban Dictionary*, and then comments upon the results of the research, using tables. The analysis is conducted on the sample of 200 slang expressions, collected via two different types of search, one of them being a simple random search, while the other emphasizing the newest additions to the dictionary. The results are discussed both overall for the entire sample and individually for either search. They are also analysed for each individual word-formation process occurring in the sample.

2. Theoretical part

2.1 Slang: an outline

The first section of the theoretical part of the study will outline the concept of slang. The discrepancy between the Czech and English-speaking linguistic theory in the treatment of slang and related phenomena will also be discussed, but the main focus of the chapters will remain within the English-speaking field and its notion of slang. First, the Czech concept of slang will be set out.

2.1.1 Slang in the Czech linguistic theory

The Czech linguistic theory traditionally views slang as part of a lexicon which is used in a specific informal work-related or interest-related environment. It usually includes expressions referring to concepts that are special and typical for a work or interest group.

Hubáček (2002: 405) thus distinguishes two types of slang according to the nature of the environment: 1) ‘occupational slang’ (‘profesionální slang’, ‘profesionalismy’) and 2) ‘interest-group slang’ (‘skupinový slang’, ‘zájmový slang’, that is, slang used in groups which are not defined by a shared occupation). The occupational slang type is characterized by clarity of expression and meaning and brevity, with the purpose to make the work-related communication easier. By contrast, the ‘interest-group slang’ is motivated by a specific, often affective relation to the named object or phenomenon, sometimes using language play. Accordingly, slang as treated in Czech linguistics would include both a) colloquial lexicon relying on connotations and metaphor and used in informal situations in familiar environments, and b) professional, technical jargon which is terminological in its nature and stands at the boundary with formal lexis in some cases¹.

Given the contrasting nature of these two types of vocabulary, the Czech understanding of the term slang does not seem very uniform. Rather contradictory lexemes are treated on the same level, such as *křídlovka* “text. cvirnovací, sdužovací stroj” or *krytí* “mysl. připouštění feny” (both Hubáček 2003: 103), which are purely technical, and *krimoš* “isl. člověk s nakrátko ostříhanými vlasy” or *krvák* “isl. neumělecká próza n. film se senzačním dějem, v němž se uplatňuje násilí” (both Hubáček 2003: 102), which, using metaphor, hyperbole or embellished clipping (-oš) show language play and also more general,

¹ For instance, Czech IT and computer terminology emerging in the 1990s may initially have been felt as substandard, but during the years it has evolved into a rightful technical terminology.

colloquial usage. Hubáček (2003: 4) admits there is certain overlap between the two types, as the differences in the modern-day society between a fixed work-related group that is supposed to use occupational slang and a looser social group centred around a common interest are diminishing. In many cases indeed, it is not possible to draw a clear line between a job activity and a leisure one.

The main distinction between these two contradictory groups classified under one concept in Czech linguistics appears to be the presence or absence of modernity. Namely, there is on the one hand the up-to-date feeling with some of the interest-group slang items, motivated by the need to name the newly coming phenomena and stemming from the fact that the denoted activities are fashionable at the time. On the other hand, some of the occupational group slang items are rather obsolete, which is caused by the gradual decline of certain traditional professions, whose vocabulary might already be considered part of language history.

Most importantly, the fact that Hubáček in *Výběrový slovník českých slangů* (2003) distinguishes 99 individual slangs, as pointed out by Táborský (2006: 152) shows that Czech theory treats the term ‘slang’ as corresponding to a great degree to ‘jargon’ in the English understanding of the term (or Czech ‘pracovní hantýrka’). However, it needs to be pointed out that although the above-discussed is the official view, as presented in Hubáček (2002: 405-6), there might be varying opinions among Czech linguists on what is to be qualified as slang.

2.1.2 Slang in the English-speaking linguistic theory

First of all, it has to be pointed out that there is no uniform definition in Anglophone linguistics of what exactly slang is, for slang is particularly characteristic of its unstable, volatile nature. Of the various definitions, Eble’s (1996:11) view seems quite fitting: “Slang is an ever changing set of colloquial words and phrases that speakers use to establish or reinforce social identity or cohesiveness within a group or with a trend or fashion in society at large.” It is possible to outline certain features that many or most slang lexemes share. That being said, it does not mean that these features hold as prerequisites for an item to be considered slang; rather, they are more or less consistent tendencies in which slang could operate. They include:

- 1) ephemerality
- 2) innovation
- 3) group identification

- 4) vagueness and polysemy
- 5) oral communication, colloquial language
- 6) informal contexts and situations

As for (1) and (2), the notions of ephemerality and innovation are interrelated, as a constant supply of new words requires the rapid change. This way, most slang words fall out of fashion and become disused very quickly, replaced by new words for the same concepts. That means, slang lexicon is extremely up-to-date, being constantly refreshed, as ‘old’ slang words are replaced by new ones which feel more fashionable at the moment.

Slang innovation is thus closely related to short life and subsequent death of slang lexemes. The disappearance of slang words results either from excessive use that usually causes an item to enter the standard language or more typically, from limited circulation.

A number of slang expressions make their way into the informal registers of the language, and then possibly further towards the standard language. In this way, “the slang of yesterday becomes the literary language of the next generation” (de Klerk 2006: 408). Such is the case of words like *jazz* or *clever*, which were both formerly slang words, and now are accepted as standard. Slang words typically enter the colloquial layer when they become as widely recognized that they lose their limited distribution and connotations.

As regards group identification, slang is often used as an internal language of a social group, where its usage is motivated by the social functions of the language, creating and strengthening social bonds. Namely, “those words act as badges of membership, and are used in much the same way as fashions in clothing and hairstyles” (de Klerk 2006: 407). As Crystal (1987: 53) puts it, “the chief use of slang is to show that you’re one of the gang”. This ‘gang’ membership is also relevant outwards. Slang contains many words, often derogatory, that refer to outsiders, ‘the others’, intending to offend them or merely to emphasize that they are not wanted within the group. In order to exclude the others from the group, slang might be deliberately misunderstood, using special words that are only known to its members.

This extreme perception of ‘us vs. them’ may lead to bullying, using pejorative and abusive language. Although such social pressures are common with adults, too, they are instrumental in child and teenage groups, which may bring about the assumption that slang and swearwords are particularly attractive to teenagers.

Moreover, it is common that the rebellious attitude against the majority gradually disappears with age, and people accept both their place in the society and the more standard varieties of language that serve better to express their needs.

Regarding (4), slang words are rather vague and polysemous in their nature, and thus unstable in meaning. Being often more metaphorical, their meanings are not as strictly set as in the units of the standard lexicon. In slang, the denotative meaning is not as important as the connotations the particular word has or the concepts it addresses via allusions. An example of a vague meaning based on connotations may be words like *cool* or *awesome*, which may express an attitude of slightly different kinds in various situations. As a result, slang lexemes are often hard to define, etymologically opaque, and different people may provide varying definitions of the same word. Accordingly, one lexeme can have several meanings, like for example *rip* (1. ‘inhale marijuana smoke’, 2. ‘extract the data on a CD or DVD to a hard disk’, 3. ‘steal or cheat’, 4. ‘fart’, 5. ‘die’)².

Also, there is a high level of synonymy in slang, as the most frequent semantic concepts are represented by numerous expressions, typically ‘a socially outcast person’, ‘an attractive girl’ etc. In addition, slang is also prone to various user idiosyncrasies, most of which never become known by a larger number of users.

Concerning (5) and (6), slang expressions are typical of “colloquial, informal aspects of human interaction” (de Klerk 2006: 407). They are very inappropriate in standard speech, let alone writing. Being informal, they are mostly used when speaking to people one knows well, and hardly used in communication with strangers. Furthermore, slang is spoken in relaxed contexts, not dealing with serious or important matters. It rarely occurs in unfamiliar surroundings or on important occasions. Here, language is liberated from all conventions that are connected with formal registers. Moreover, as slang words often express some evaluation or attitude, they tend to be impolite or refer to taboo aspects or concepts, such as sexual and scatological terms and vulgarisms.

2.1.3 Contrasting the Czech and English view of slang

Many words that are considered slang in the English-speaking linguistic theory would probably be treated in the Czech linguistic theory as ‘mere’ colloquialisms, as they do not fit into the definition of slang as a lexicon specific to certain occupation- or interest-based group.

Chapman (1986: xii) comes up with an internal subdivision of slang into two categories based on their group-delimiting function; namely, ‘primary slang’, “the pristine

² Urban Dictionary, “rip” (<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=rip>), accessed 21 April 2011. From here on, all definitions of UD items or examples of their example usage stated in the text are adopted from the respective entries on the UD website.

speech of subculture members”, and ‘secondary slang’, which is “a matter of stylistic choice rather than true identification”. This subdivision confirms that slang in the English-speaking linguistics involves a wider range of lexis compared to the Czech point of view, as the ‘secondary slang’ is not taken into account in the Czech treatment of slang at all.

As opposed to slang as understood in Czech, the Anglophone approach sees it as a phenomenon typical for spoken, colloquial, informal aspects of human communication. Accordingly, it corresponds in many ways to colloquial Czech. Conversely, the Czech notion of occupational slang is to be identified with the English treatment of jargon. Besides that, Anglophone linguistics views slang as much more closely connected with argot. It is perhaps due to the rich tradition of cant dictionaries of English in the 17-19th century, with slang possibly seen as a successor of argot³.

To sum up, slang in the English-speaking linguistic tradition comprises a wide scope of lexical units which are primarily colloquial, used in informal environments, typically when speaking to people one knows well. It differs from colloquialisms in that slang words convey certain fashionability; they are usually more up-to-date, as lexical innovation operates almost incessantly here. Accordingly, slang lexicon is ever-changing, while colloquial word stock may be more likely to prevail over generations. Slang expressions are also stigmatizing in their degree of evaluation, expressing attitude or at least some emotional relation to the denoted phenomenon. As a result, slang includes many swearwords and indulges in social taboo. This way, it may often serve as a means of opposition to authority. Last but not least, it strengthens social bonds within a particular group, often defining it against the outsiders, referring to activities and secrets only familiar to the members.

2.2 Description of the source material: *Urban Dictionary*

2.2.1 General

Urban Dictionary (UD) is an open online dictionary of slang expressions of English. It was founded in 1999 by then university student Aaron Peckham. The motto of UD manifested on the homepage is “the dictionary you wrote; define your world”; it suggests that users can submit their own definitions, which is a crucial characteristic of this dictionary. UD does not declare any specific focus on the slang lexicon; the possible range of lexical units is rather

³ The terms slang, cant and argot were virtually interchangeable at that time.

broad. Yet it is widely recognized as a dictionary of slang and colloquial items in the first place, which is also confirmed by its name ('Urban').

Yahoo! bills *Urban Dictionary* as the most popular slang dictionary on the Web, as noted by Pack (2006: 41). The dictionary contains more than 1 million lexemes as reported by *Time Magazine*⁴ and more than 5.7 million single definitions as of 24 April 2011 (as displayed on the UD homepage), since one lexeme may be defined again and again and the Internet medium allows unlimited contribution. An average of 2000 new entries was submitted every day as of April 2009, and the number may have even increased since then. At the same time, the site received approximately 15 million unique visitors per month, with 80% of users being younger than 25.⁵ In addition, as Cotter and Damaso (2007: 2) point out, "it ranks consistently in the top 1500 websites visited each day" and the number of UD page views is about 30 times higher than on a similar collaboratively authored project *Wiktionary*.

2.2.2 Word-adding process

In accordance with UD's democratic principles, anyone can add a definition, simply using the respective function of the same name on the homepage. Submissions are then regulated by volunteer editors and rated by the users, that is, anyone who visits the website.

Words or expressions included on *Urban Dictionary* are in most cases part of slang lexicon or can be referred to as colloquial, and are often used or known by a narrow, limited group of people. The entries are added by the site users, who can both add and define new terms or simply add their own definitions to already existing headwords. In many cases, the definitions are of humorous nature rather than informative; in addition, they may reflect the author's subjective views, opinions etc. This might partly disqualify *Urban Dictionary* from being a source of relevant lexicographic information.

As mentioned above, any user is allowed to insert new entries, using a short form in which it is necessary to fill in the definition of the word, an example of its usage and associated lexemes (tags). The newly inserted entries or definitions are then either approved or rejected by the editors, who are registered users of the site. Namely, they assess the

⁴ A. Hamilton, "50 Best Websites 2008". *TIME* (http://www.time.com/time/podcast/2008/50_best_websites/), accessed 25 March 2011

⁵ V. Heffernan, "Street Smart: Urban Dictionary". *New York Times* (http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/05/magazine/05FOB-medium-t.html?_r=1), published 1 July 2009, accessed 25 March 2011

definitions using ‘like’ or ‘dislike’ votes. If the differential is high enough in favour of the ‘like’ votes, the definition appears on UD; otherwise it is ‘scrapped’.

In addition, the evaluation process also exists in the entries already published on UD, as any visitor of the site may give them his approving (‘Thumbs Up’), or disapproving (‘Thumbs Down’) votes. The individual entries of one lexeme are then arranged in the order of this user evaluation; that is, in the case of terms with many definitions, the definition that has received the highest ratio of thumbs up/down votes appears first on the list. This process is referred to by Cotter and Damaso (2007: 1) as ‘collaborative codification’.

2.2.3 UD entries

Regarding the layout of the entries, they all share the same structure, given by the definition form, which is the only way how to post a definition on UD. Therefore, the UD entries all include the headword, its definition, usage example, tags plus the nickname of the author and the date of addition on UD. Subsequently, they also display the number of thumbs-up and thumbs-down votes from the users.

Apart from that, UD avoids much of the standard dictionary apparatus. That means, a great number of the entries do not provide any information about word classes, etymologies or standard spellings. Neither do they display spelling variants, pronunciations, syllabification or function labels and style/usage notes. All this can be added as part of the definition, yet this option is rarely used by their authors.

As for the types of lexemes defined on UD, alongside the majority of slang or ‘urban’ expressions, there are many non-slang items, particularly vogue words (words related to modern, fashionable concepts or hinting at contemporary events), words of common lexical stock or, to a smaller extent, special terminologies. Furthermore, UD may be considered an encyclopaedic type of dictionary, as it includes various proper names, including celebrity names or place and institution names.

Moreover, an entry is often likely to be an ad-hoc neologism, invented just for this dictionary. Many contributors, then, do not define existing terms but rather suggest a new word. The user community then evaluates them, often according to the degree of humorousness or wordplay. It is possible that some of these neologisms convey certain kinds of experience shared by the users, thus becoming a shorthand to designate them. According to

Aaron Peckham, “*Urban Dictionary*’s best definitions describe things we all experience — they give a name to common phenomena that might not have had a name before.”⁶

Another group of words that occur frequently on UD are various vulgarisms, often coined terms for weird sexual practices, instances of (sexual) violence, libel etc, although they are formally banned by the Guidelines for editors⁷. Nevertheless, they are in fact only recommendations, as there is no authority behind UD that would block certain words single-handedly.

2.2.4 UD evaluation and deficiencies

In order to assess UD in terms of its content, the emphasis will be put on its negative features, as some of them represent the main drawbacks to the reliability of UD as a source of slang lexemes, which is the aspect of the dictionary that is crucial for this study.

It seems that most shortcomings of UD inevitably result from its democratic approach to lexicography, that is, ‘submissions without any editorial intervention’ (Coleman 2009: 335). It was stated that there is no declared focus of UD to be a slang dictionary. The above-mentioned guidelines for editors can only help to decide whether an expression should be accepted, but none of them states the ‘slang’ nature as a condition.

There are three groups of both form- and content-based deficiencies to be found on UD: a) the word list includes many irrelevant expressions (= headwords), b) there is some failure in the definitions (= descriptions of the headword) and c) there is little or no descriptive apparatus within the entries. The deficiency (a) includes non-slang words, redundant entries, idiosyncratic items, non-existing words, even nonsensical; the (b) type refers to instances of subjective, jocular or sarcastic definitions, redundant or irrelevant or too broad ones, those containing racist or sexist terms and/or describing offensive, violent practices etc.⁸; (c) refers to the lack of spelling variants, pronunciation, syllabification, word class, etymologies, function labels or style/usage notes⁹. The (a) and (b) types, which are more related to the content and nature of the entries/definitions, were further expanded,

⁶ “Aaron Peckham Q&A”. *Chattanooga Times Free Press* (<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2008/jan/23/aaron-peckham-q/>), accessed 21 March 2011

⁷ see <http://www.urbandictionary.com/editor>

⁸ There are also many cases when a definition is missing completely.

⁹ Furthermore, in many cases the word class is inconsistent with the word, often also with its example usage. Also, spelling mistakes abound both in definitions and in the headwords, and there are variant spellings, punctuations and capitalizations fairly often.

making up a list of the so-called UD failures, which were subsequently done away with in the selection stage of the research (see 3.1).

All in all, UD is arguably one of the first, the most popular and the most cited online slang dictionaries. What is more, it boasts the highest number of definitions and lexemes, and possibly also users (thus potential contributors). This makes the lexical material included in the dictionary more trustworthy. However, the user-based approach to its content presents certain difficulties, residing most of all in the fact that the words and their definitions have virtually no boundaries. This ‘boundlessness’ is best exemplified by the excessive occurrence of proper names, particularly names of real people, celebrities but also users’ friends and/or schoolmates etc. Instances of (sexual) violence, vulgarisms or user idiosyncrasies and nonsensical terms are also quite common.

Nevertheless, it has to be emphasized that although UD might not be fully authoritative as a slang dictionary due to its far too liberal editorial practices, it is still arguably the most representative lexicographic project of its kind, for the number of slang ‘words’ and single definitions, as well as its popularity. For more than a decade of its existence, UD has acquired the status of an authority in contemporary slang and trendy vocabulary in general.

It is, however, not within the scope of this study to explore the sociological aspects of the phenomenon of UD; its aim is to determine how slang expressions come into being. In the following section, an overview of word-formation processes productive in modern English, that is, not only slang, is presented.

2.3 Word-formation processes productive in Present-day English

Word formation stands for the various ways how words in English may be constituted. In the first place, it refers to morphological variation, but in a wider sense, it includes not only changes in the form of the word, but also its meaning (connotations, usage specifics). Below is an overview of the word-formation processes productive in Present-day English and relevant to the sample of slang words used in this study.

2.3.1 Affixation

The process of affixation consists in adding a bound form, an affix, to a free form, a base. Affixation is of two types, according to the position in the word; namely, prefixes,

which are added to the base word-initially, and suffixes, which are added after the base. The main difference between suffixes and prefixes is higher syntactic functionality of the former; using suffixes, one can change word class (not with all suffixes, though), while prefixes mostly do not offer this option, as they rather modify meaning within a word class. It is also essential to point out that there is both a high degree of homonymy as well as polysemy in the affixes; various affixes can express the same meaning, and conversely, one affix can convey multiple meanings.

1) Suffixation

Suffixes come at the end of the word, and their functions are that they can signal word class membership or a change within a word class, with the accompanying shift in meaning. There are two ways how to classify suffixes, one being according to their word class (morphological classification) and the other according to the meaning they convey (semantic classification). See the former below:

a) nominal

- (i) noun-to-noun: *-age, -dom, -eer, -er, -ese, -ess, -ette, -ful, -hood, -ing, -ism, -ist, -ship* etc.
- (ii) verb-to-noun: *-al, -ance/-ence, -ant, -ary, -ee, -er/-or, -ing, -ment, -(a)tion, -ure* etc.
- (iii) adjective-to-noun: *-ce, -cy, -dom, -hood, -ity, -ness* etc.

b) adjectival

- (i) noun-to-adjective: *-ary, -ate, -ed, -ese, -ful, -ic(al), -ish, -less, -like, -ly, -(i)ous* etc.
- (ii) verb-to-adjective: *-able, -ant/-ent, -atory, -ive* etc.
- (iii) adjective-to-adjective: *-fold, -ly, -ward(s), -wise* etc.

c) verbal (*-ify, -ize, -ate, -en* etc.)

d) adverbial (*-fold, -ly, -ward(s), -way(s), -wise*)

The semantic classification would then include several categories of meaning such as ‘activity, process’ (*-al, -ation, -ment*), ‘agent’ (*-er, -ant*), ‘quality’ (*-hood, -ity*) or ‘state’ (*-dom, -ness*); special suffixes exist in English for the categories of patient (*-ee*), feminine nouns (*-ess, -ette*), collective nouns (*-age, -ery*) or diminutives (*-kin, -let, -ie*), among others.

2) Prefixation

As mentioned above, prefixes are attached to bases word-initially. They are less productive than suffixes: not many of them are used to create new words, perhaps with the exception of negative prefixes, which are still needed, particularly *un-*. As they rarely change word class, it is more suitable to opt for a semantic classification, (after Bauer and Huddleston 2002), see below:

- a) negative (*a-*, *dis-*, *in-/il-/im-/ir-*, *non-*, *un-*)
- b) reversative/privative (*de-*, *dis-*, *un-*)
- c) pejorative (*dys-*, *mal-*, *mis-*, *pseudo-*)
- d) size/degree (*arch-*, *co-*, *hyper-*, *mini-*, *out-*, *hypo-*, *over-*, *sub-*, *super-*, *ultra-*, *under-*)
- e) orientation/attitude (*anti-*, *contra-*, *counter-*, *pro-*)
- f) locative (*fore-*, *inter-*, *sub-*, *super-*, *trans-*)
- g) temporal (*ex-*, *post-*, *pre-*, *re-*)

English has a wide range of suffixes and prefixes, adopted from the various languages that have played an instrumental role in the history of the language. As a result, English comprises domestic affixes (*-ness*, *-ish*, *-en*, *un-*, *out-*, *fore-*), Romance affixes from French and Latin (*-ment*, *-able*, *-ify*, *non-*, *co-*, *inter-*) and also several affixes from Greek (*a-*, *pseudo-*, *hyper-*). Prefixes display far more foreign forms than suffixes, where the domestic forms still prevail over the Romance or Greek ones. Many prefixes are thus restricted to a very narrow, often terminological use in specialized scientific and technical registers. Etymologically, most prefixes are related to Latin or Greek particles or quantifiers.

2.3.2 Compounding

Compounding is the most frequent source of new words in contemporary English, accounting for 40 % of all words (Pyles and Algeo 1993) and is still very productive. One of the reasons might be that it does not require any addition or loss of lexical or phonological material and no alterations in the form of the source words. Nevertheless, since many times the compound is a juxtaposition of two nouns, it is often hard to determine whether the target expression is a proper compound, or a mere syntactic combination of two words.

There are several possible classifications of compounds. The basic one follows the word class of the head element. Other classifications are based on syntactic or semantic criteria, with the latter distinguishing idiomatic and semantically regular compounds. Some special types of compounding are also discussed in this section, including combining form compounds, phonologically motivated compounds or string compounds.

1) Word-class classification

a) nominal compounds

Starting with nominal compounds, that is, those whose head is a noun, they may be further divided into three subtypes.

i. noun + noun compounds

This first type is “by far the most productive kind of compounding in English, and indeed the most productive kind of word-formation” (Bauer and Huddleston 2002: 1647). It displays a very wide range of semantic relationships between the two nominal elements. Besides the prevalent **subordinative compounds**, where one element modifies the head, this class includes **coordinative compounds** as well; these are compounds where the two bases have equal status (*Hewlett-Packard*, *singer-songwriter*, *German-Czech dictionary*, for instance).

ii. verb + noun compounds

Besides the most **hyponymic compounds** of this type, there are also a few **non-hyponymic** ones, such as *copycat*, which is not a kind of cat, but a person. They may tend to be more idiomatic and also specialized in their meaning, compare also *call-girl*, *plaything*. Many verb + noun compounds are verb-centred (compare *cutthroat*); they are sometimes referred to as **Romance** or **French compounds** (as opposed to the **Germanic** type), and is no longer productive.

iii. adjective + noun compounds

Another subtype of nominal compounding is documented in relatively recent formations like *freeway*, *hardware* or *customer line*. Like many other compounds, they involve a fair degree of semantic specialization and lexicalization: compare *blackbird*, *greenhouse* or *shortbread*.

In addition, nominal compounds encompass another special category, termed **bahuvrihi compounds**. These include expressions of metonymic nature, like *redhead*, *wet-*

backs or *paleface*. They can be paraphrased as “the one who has X”, with the ‘X’ standing for a particular quality, and for this reason, they are sometimes referred to as ‘possessive’.

b) verbal compounds

i. noun + verb compounds

This category includes compounds like *pub crawl* or *daydream*. Verbal compounds in general are analysed as results of backformation or conversion (see 2.3.8 and 2.3.3, respectively). Accordingly, the former includes instances like *proofread* (from *proofreading*) or *chain-smoke* (from *chain smoking*), while the latter shows verbs converted from adjectives such as *shortcut* or *blindfold*.

ii. verb + verb compounds

Canonical verb + verb compounds are mostly analysable as specific coordinative types, compare *drink-drive*, *dry-clean* or *stir-fry*.

iii. adjective + verb compounds

This kind is not very common, and may be documented by examples such as *blindfold* or *shortfall*.

c) adjectival compounds

i. noun + adjective

Adjectival compounds can have nouns or adjectives as their non-heads. This way, they are similar in their structure and semantics to noun+noun compounds; see examples such as *sugar-free*, *knee-deep* or *structure-dependent*. Semantically, they are analysable as if a preposition was missing there: ‘free of sugar’, ‘deep to the level of one’s knees’, ‘dependent on structure’, respectively.

ii. adjective + adjective

Two types are recognized, based on whether the first element modifies the head, or is on the same level (compare *bittersweet*, and *Swedish-Irish*).

2) Special types

a) combining form compounds

Combining form compounds is a category comprising such compounds wherein one or two elements are combining forms¹⁰ rather than free bases. Five structural types of formations involving combining forms may be distinguished:

- (i) two (neo)classical (Latin or Greek) combining forms: *astro-*, *-gram* (*astrophysics*, *organigram*)
- (ii) free-standing English word + combining form: *-gate*, *-wide* (*Koreagate*, *citywide*)
- (iii) clipped word + combining form: *-holic*, *-nomics* (*blogaholic*, *Freakonomics*)
- (iv) combining form + free base: *tele-*, *-cide* (*telebanking*, *insecticide*)
- (v) combining form + affix: *anthropoid*

Of the five possible formations, the types (i) and (iv) may be termed neoclassical compounds, as the combining forms they involve were derived from Latin and Greek in the Early Modern English period. The type (iii) features words that were originally blends but based on analogy they became a productive pattern. That means, once a unique instance of blending becomes a pattern for other formations, it can be considered a case of combining form compounding. As for (ii), the difference from standard compounding is that the combining forms *-gate* or *-wide* have a different meaning from the free words *gate* and *wide*.

b) string compounds

Such compounds consist of a sequence (a 'string') of free bases. Examples include *wannabe*, *has-been* or *one-size-fits-all*. Potentially, any syntactic construction can be transformed into a string compound.

c) phonologically motivated compounds

This type of compounds involves some kind of onomatopoeia; typically, it is rhyme or ablaut reduplication, see *helter-skelter*, *jeepers creepers* or *clip-clop*, *chit-chat*, *the bye-buy shop*.

¹⁰ a constituent, either initial or final in a word, that does not occur as a separate word and which can be connected with another combining form (*astro-naut*), an independent word (*micro-wave*) or an affix (*astro-id*)

d) particle compounds

Formations such as *afterbirth*, *downgrade* or *inbuilt* may be considered a special kind of compounds, consisting on the surface of a preposition plus another element (noun, verb and adjective, respectively). However, this productive pattern rather seems to be formed by inverting phrasal combinations in which a base word is followed by a particle: *grade down* > *downgrade*, *put in* > *input*, *built in* > *inbuilt*, *flow over* > *overflow* etc.

2.3.3 Conversion

Plag (2005: 107) defines conversion as the derivation of a new word without any overt marking, whereby the word class and syntactic function of the word change, but the form stays the same. The source word usually has a wider semantic scope, while the target word is more specialized. In addition, implementation of conversion may be blocked by an already existing affixal process, when an expression of that sense is already established in the usage.

Below is an overview of the various types of conversion in Present-day English, based on the word class of the converted word, together with some comments on the tendencies in the semantic relations between the source and target words.

1) Nominal conversion

One of the significant properties of English is that it involves rich homonymy between nouns and verbs. In a great number of cases, one cannot clearly determine the directionality, that is, which of the two was earlier. Besides identifying the first time the word was recorded in English, one of the ways to find out is to assess which one is semantically more basic. For instance, the noun *bottle* is semantically more basic, as the verb *to bottle* means “put into a bottle”, and hence would not probably exist without the previous existence of the noun. Conversely, *attempt* is primarily a verb, for the noun merely denotes an event or result when somebody attempts to do something.

a) verb-to-noun

(i) event, result, accompanying circumstances: *arrest*, *attempt*, *control*, *cough*, *read*, *laugh*, *swim*

(ii) person: *spy*, *cheat*, *coach*, *flirt*

b) adjective-to-noun (*intellectual*, *female*, *professional*, *daily*)

c) adverb-to-noun (*ups and downs, the hereafter*)

d) closed-class-to-noun (*ifs and buts*)

e) phrase-to-noun (*has-been*)

f) affix-to-noun (*isms or pros and cons*)

2) Verbal conversion

The semantic classes conveyed within verbal conversion include ‘behave or act like X’ (*butcher, shepherd, father*), ‘perform an activity using the instrument X’ (*elbow finger, hammer*) or ‘apply/remove X’ (*water, sugar, peel, shell*) in the case of noun-to-verb conversion, and ‘become X’ (*empty*) or ‘make X’ (*slow*) as far as adjective-to-verb conversion is concerned. Often, the motivation behind this type of conversion lies in the simplification of the expression (e.g. *access a file* is much more economical than *gain access to a file*).

a) noun-to-verb

(i) ‘behave or act like X’ (*butcher*)

(ii) ‘perform an activity using the instrument X’ (*elbow*)

(iii) ‘apply/remove X’ (*water, peel*)

b) adjective-to-verb

(i) ‘become X’: *empty, clear*

(ii) ‘make X’: *blind, free*

c) closed-class-to-verb (*up the prices, down the beer*)

3) Adjectival conversion

Adjectival conversion is not very common in English. We may find some examples in the history, particularly with colours (*rose, orange*). Other types may involve materials (*a stone barn, a brick wall*).

a) noun-to-adjective (*a violet shirt, a leather jacket*)

b) adverb-to-adjective (*an away game, the then president*)

c) phrase-to-adjective (*off-the-cuff speech, off-record comments*)

2.3.4 Shortening

Shortening is a process whereby only the form of the word changes, while the meaning stays the same. In some cases, however, there is a shift in the pragmatic or stylistic properties in the target word, most often from a standard lexicon to colloquial or slang (*cam*, *limo*). By contrast, expressions such as *FYI* or *WTF*, initially used by a rather narrow group of Internet discussion forums and blogs users and thus clearly discernible as slang, are now used in common everyday speech. Furthermore, when these abbreviated forms become well-known, they gradually find their way to the media and further to the standard usage (as in the cases of *TV*, *VIP* or *radar*).

The motivation for shortening might be the tendency of English as an analytic language towards monosyllabication and the preference of expressing meaning in one word. See the overview of the categories of abbreviations:

1) Clipping

This type of shortening is predominantly informal, often displaying in-group usage, but some well-known clipped words have spread into wide usage, and are no longer perceived as informal. Then, the full form may shift to formal register and become stylistically marked. Sometimes the new form displaces the original (*mob* from *mobile*, *movie* from *moving picture*). The meaning of the clipped form may evolve to become different from the original (*fan* vs. *fanatic*).

Below is a structural division of clipping according to which part of the source word is omitted:

a) initial, or fore-clipping (*'cos*, *phone*)

b) final, or back-clipping (*lab*, *exam*)

c) medial (*maths*, *fancy*)

d) ambiclipping (*flu*)

Embellished clipping is a special type of clipping, a term used by Bauer and Huddleston (2002: 1636). The process features final clipping plus a suffix, so it may also be regarded as a form of affixation. This way, (jocular) pet names, hypocorisms and diminutives are formed, with the suffix being a marker of familiarity. Compare:

-ie/-y: *hubby, footie, Aussie*; proper names: *Fergie* (< *Ferguson*),

-o: *weirdo, dumbo*

-er, -ers, -s: *soccer, preppers*; proper names: *Babs*

2) Acronymy

Acronyms are formed from initial letters or syllables of the source words. The target word is then pronounced as one word (as opposed to initialisms, see below); this way, acronyms “must conform to the phonological patterns of English” (Plag 2005: 128). Similarly to clipping, most of them are nouns.

Their purpose is, besides convenience and space saving, to help remembering or recalling the meaning of the source word, often via connotations. Such acronyms are then in essence homonyms, including *START* (< *Strategic Arms Reduction Talks*). They are often used in advertising, and can be of humorous nature, compare: *ASH* (< *Action on Smoking and Health*), *DUMP* (< *Disposal of Unused Medicines and Pills*). Other examples like *scuba* (< *self-contained breathing apparatus*), or *radar* (< *radio detecting and ranging*) are spelled in lower case letters, which documents the higher degree of establishment of the words and the fact that they are probably no longer perceived as acronyms.

3) Initialism

This type refers to abbreviation from initial letters pronounced as a sequence of letters (unlike acronyms). Examples include *PDA, FBI, PC* or *RSVP*, which cannot be pronounced as one word for phonological reasons, but also *VAT* or *BYOB* which possibly could, yet they are not. A special case of initialisms are abbreviations of Latin phrases which are replaced in pronunciation with their English equivalents, see *e.g.* (< *exempli gratia* = ‘for example’) or *i.e.* (< *id est* = ‘that is’).

Recently, Internet abbreviations abound, compare *BTW, WTF* or *LOL*, which have gained international acclaim, and are possibly used also in conversation today. They are also gradually being spelled in the lower case. To complicate matters further, the initialism/acronym status of some Internet abbreviations is unclear, as they might be pronounced both as a single word and as a sequence of letters, compare *IMHO, LOL* or *ROFL*.

2.3.5 Semantic change

This phenomenon does not involve change in the structure of the word and often operates in combination with a structural change process, be it compounding, blending or other. Below is an overview of the various types of semantic change, with their names often derived from tropes. Like the literary language, slang also demonstrates a high degree of semantic change. Regarding the nature of the change, three main categories are identified, namely, semantic shift, semantic scope change and semantic modification.

1) Semantic shift

a) **metaphor** (*computer memory*)

b) **metonymy** (*white-collar jobs*)

- **synecdoche**

c) **eponymy** (*Casanova*)

d) **synaesthesia** (*rough voice*)

There are four main types of semantic shift. While metaphor is based on similarity in form or function, usually some quality, metonymy is based on association, usually of internal nature, like activity > result, material > product, place > institution/people etc. One particular type of metonymy is called synecdoche, based on the relationship part-whole or species-genus. Eponymy stands for the shift from a proper to common name, also called commonization. Another type of semantic shift close to metaphor is synaesthesia, where two notions of senses become crossed.

2) Semantic scope change

The change in semantic scope is represented by two pairs of changes:

a) **specialization** (*ghost* ‘soul, spirit’ > ‘soul of a dead person appearing to the living’)

b) **generalization** (*go* ‘walk’ > ‘move, proceed’)

c) **terminization** (*benign*)

d) **determinization** (*spectrum*)

With specialization and generalization, the range of reference of a word is either narrowed or broadened by adding or loss of semantic components, respectively. In the case of

specialization, the target word typically refers to a subclass of the semantic field of the source word. Terminization and determinization reflect changes between the general language and the usage in technical registers.

3) Semantic modification

The third category of semantic change involves 1) shift in evaluation, with amelioration corresponding to the improvement of the meaning connotations and pejoration, by contrast, the negative evaluative shift in connotation, and 2) change in the polarity or intensity of meaning, with euphemization on the one hand and intensification on the other. The most frequent type of intensification is hyperbole; sometimes, the two terms are treated as identical. In between lies the special types of litotes (replacing an affirmative by the negative of its contrary), and irony is also added into this category, a trope conveying a meaning that is the opposite of the literal one. See the summary below:

a) amelioration (*sophisticated* ‘too complex’ > ‘refined, elegant’)

b) pejoration (*crafty* ‘skilful’ > ‘cunning, dishonest’)

c) euphemization

- **euphemism** (*restroom*)

d) intensification

- **hyperbole** (*ecstatic reviews*), **litotes** (*not averse to*)

e) irony (*a proper mess*)

2.3.6 Borrowing

More precisely termed lexical borrowing, the process lies in adopting a lexical item from one language or language variety into another.

For this study it is most relevant to distinguish the source of borrowing, namely, whether it is a foreign language, or a variety (a dialect or a register) of English. Accordingly, three types may be set up:

1) interlingual: from foreign languages (*Chapeau!*, from French)

2) dialectal: from the dialects of the same language (*dude*, from African American English to general colloquial usage)

3) stylistic: from other registers of the language (*freak*; from the common word stock to slang usage)

Particularly in the past, English was borrowing extensively from French, Latin and Greek, also from Spanish, Italian, German or Dutch. The motivation for adopting a term from another language or variety may include close contact of the source and target language, domination of some language over another and its subsequent impact (English vs. Welsh or Irish Gaelic), prestige connected with using foreign words or the need for adopting certain term (due to lexical gaps).

2.3.7 Word combination

Word combinations may also be considered sources of new words in English. We may set up the following categories according to the degree of their compositionality (semantic regularity):

1) Free combination, an “open, random sequence with no mutual expectancy between the items, regularly formed, i.e. grammatically and lexically unrestricted, semantically (...) transparent” (Klégr 2008: No. 11). Most syntactic phrases are free combinations, like *break your nose* or *get a job*.

2) Collocation, a habitual word combination of frequently co-occurring items; mutual expectancy; criteria for a word to be considered a collocation include the frequency of co-occurrence of the elements, see *heavy rain* or *sleep soundly*)

3) Idiom, a fixed combination of two or more items functioning as one lexeme; non-compositional (i.e. semantically non-derivable from the meanings of its constituents), grammatically and lexically restricted (at least one element of the idiom cannot combine with other lexical items in the given function). Moreover, idioms are usually metaphorical and stylistically expressive. Examples include *make a fuss*, *the long arm of the law*, *Curiosity killed the cat*).

2.3.8 Backformation

The process of backformation is in essence reverse affixation, hence the other name deaffixation. It is based on the speakers’ expectations of regularity and analogy in the

language: if there is a word ending in a suffix (typically a noun, such as *babysitter*), a verb is quickly added to fill the structural (and also semantic) gap (*to babysit*).

Many cases of backformation feature compound verbs backformed from compound nouns with nominalized and participial heads, compare *brainwash* < *brainwashing*, *telephone-tap* < *telephone tapping*). In other cases, “a base in a word hitherto seen as only partially analysable becomes independent” (Adams 2001: 136), like the verb *laze* from the adjective *lazy*, the verb *burgle* from the noun *burglar*, the noun *greed* from the adjective *greedy* etc.

2.3.9 Blending

Blends are words that combine two (or rarely more) words into one, dropping material from at least one of the source bases. The core of the blending process thus lies in the combination of shortening and compounding, often in a clever, unpredictable way.

In terms of structure, Bauer and Huddleston (2002: 1636) distinguish 4 subtypes of blending, illustrated by their typical examples:

- 1) ‘*paratroops*’ (*parachute* + *troops*), also *telebanking*
- 2) ‘*breathalyzer*’ (*breath* + *analyzer*), also *newscast*
- 3) ‘*heliport*’ (*helicopter* + *airport*), also *stagflation*
- 4) ‘*sexploitation*’ (*sex* + *exploitation*), also *motel*

Bauer and Huddleston (2002: 1637) further point out that “some blends provide models for the formation of new words of the same kind”. This phenomenon features examples such as *Freakonomics* based on *economics*, *digerati* based on *literati*, *askhole* based on *asshole* etc. These words are created using clever sound or lexical analogies, including rhyme (*Freako-eco*) or consonant or other changes (*ask-ass*), often with the accompanying semantic association. Nevertheless, this study comprises the lexemes that were formed on the basis of such productive pattern under combining form compounds (see subchapter 2)a) in 2.3.2).

Plag (2005: 122) distinguishes two semantic types of blends. One of them involves existing compounds shortened to create a new word; the meaning, too, is identifiable with the source compound, where the first element modifies the second one, compare: *breathalyzer* is a kind of analyzer, not of breath, as well as *mocamp* (< *motor* + *camp*) is a kind of camp, not a

kind of motor. The instances of the other type are to be perceived as proper blends, for their meanings refer to entities sharing properties of both elements, like in *smog*, which is both smoke and fog; similarly, *brunch* is a meal between breakfast and lunch. In this respect, proper blends resemble coordinative compounds of the type *author-director* (see 2.3.2).

2.3.10 Onomatopoeia

Sound words, or onomatopoeic, include all iconic formations, that is, those whose form is derived by imitating or otherwise resembling certain sound. Three categories of processes involving onomatopoeia are identified, compare:

1) Imitative, directly imitating a sound; often one of an animal (*meow*) or a machine (*vroom*), or the human body (*burp*, *mutter*)

2) Symbolic, comprising the so-called phonaestheme blends, where a sound or group of sounds (phonemes) is associated with certain meaning. These elements “become identifiable after repeated appearances in particular kinds of context” (Adams 2001: 121). Common phonaesthemes include *sw-* associated with movement (*swirl*, *sway*, *swerve*), *sn-* used with nose and human noises (*sneeze*, *sniff*, *snore*) or *gl-* for radiance or light (*glare*, *gleam*, *glitter*). Phonaesthemes can also occur word-finally, compare *-ump* (‘loud, heavy impact’; *bump*, *stump*).

3) Echoic, involving reduplicatives such as *bow-wow*, *choo-choo* or *clip-clop*. Nevertheless, they are primarily considered a subclass of the compounding process (see also subchapter 2)c) in 2.3.2), with the onomatopoeic formation as a concomitant phenomenon.

2.3.11 Corruption

Corruption is closely related to borrowing; sometimes it is viewed as a mere by-product of this process. Speakers of the target language frequently adjust a foreign or otherwise unknown word to suit their pronunciation or spelling, and it is hard to set the boundary between what was adapted ‘correctly’ and what was not. The ‘corrupted’ word often involves folk etymology, consisting in a wrong association with an existing word. There is no accompanying change in denotative meaning between the source and the target, corrupted form; shifts in connotations may be involved, however.

Similarly to borrowing, corruption may be of three types, according to the source:

1) Interlingual: *cockroach* (< *cucaracha*; spelling change due to association with *cock* and *roach*), *cartridge* (from French *cartouche*; association with *cart* and *ridge*)

2) **Dialectal**: examples include *Injun, howdy, yep* or *tummy*; compared to interlingual, these are more likely to occur in slang

3) **Stylistic**: originally words from the standard lexicon, turned into colloquial or slang usage (*dunno, gotta, kinda, cum*).

2.3.12 Taboo-motivated processes

The formation of certain words may be motivated by the need of the speakers to hide some information from outsiders. English features several processes particularly suited to serve this purpose. They include **rhyming slang** (*girl > ribbon and curl > curl*), **back slang** (the written word is spoken phonemically backwards; *yob* for *boy*), **deliberate spoonerism** “deliberate interchanging of initial consonants in a pair of words, such as *queer old dean* for *dear old queen*” (Spears 2000: xi) or **Pig Latin** “a form of wordplay where the second part of a word is placed before the initial sound, which then ends in *-ay*, as with *unk-jay* for *junk*” (Spears 2000: xii). These types of formation are typical for an insider language of argotic function, used by criminals and social outcasts as well as any groups wanting to retain their privacy.

2.3.13 Graphic imitation

Emoticons are one of the best examples of graphic imitation, as most of them are created so that they resemble a human face with the given expression if viewed sideways. These include ;-)' ‘winking’, :-* ‘kissing’, :-S ‘puzzled’, :-B ‘chilled out’ etc. In some ways, this process is analogical to onomatopoeia, as they both involve iconicity and imitation.

2.3.14 Allusion

The category of allusion is a term used by Eble (1996: 86) as a reference to “a person, place or event outside the immediate context to elicit associations already in the minds of the audience” Allusion is a typical literary device, yet it is also frequent in non-literary language. The role of allusion as an independent word-formation process might be doubtful, given that it rarely generates new lexemes, and if so, it may be considered a form of semantic change, as it often coincides with metaphor, metonymy, specialization etc. Nonetheless, since allusion is expected to be more prominent in slang than in the standard language, it is treated in this study as a separate category.

Eble's notion of allusion is thus largely a matter of cultural reference, as it consists in a hint at a more or less well-known phenomenon from music (song titles or lyrics), films, television, advertisements, literature, sports as well as other areas like cultural values or stereotypes. In addition to this, analogical formations based on allusion to an already existing word or phrase can also be included in this category. As these analogies involve a rhyme between the existing and the new word, change of stem vowel (ablaut) or other sound or lexical similarity, such phenomenon can be referred to as sound and lexical allusion, respectively. Examples may include the verb *McGyver* ('use an item for a purpose of which it was not designed for', in reference to the special agent in the TV show of the same name) or *cleptopenia* (referring to the famous incident of the Czech president in Chile) as cultural allusions, and *askhole* or *sexploitation* as sound allusions.

3. Research Part

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 The subject of the study. Sources

The source material for the research was collected from UrbanDictionary.com, the largest and the most up-to-date repository of colloquial lexicon of English, a project that allows every user to add his/her own words and/or their definitions. Using two different types of search and several elimination guidelines and selection criteria of both qualitative and quantitative nature, a sample list of 200 lexemes from *Urban Dictionary* representing the contemporary slang vocabulary of English was gathered. Each of the 200 items was then analysed in terms of the word-formation process(es) participating in its creation as well as several other characteristics including word class, semantic areas or pragmatic features.

When checking the etymology of the lexemes in order to determine the word-formation processes as well as other features involved as closely and correctly as possible, *Oxford English Dictionary* and *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* were used as well as another electronic lexicographic work, *Online Etymology Dictionary*, and full-text search on *Google*. *Urban Dictionary* was also used for this purpose.

3.1.2 Search methods

Two search methods were selected in order to collect relevant lexical material from UD, namely, a random search and a search among the most recent Urban 'Word of the Day' items, which was labelled 'New-Word of the Day' (New-WOTD) search. The total number of 200 items in the sample was divided equally between the two methods, that is, both the Random search and the New-WOTD search were used to supply 100 expressions.

The reason to choose two different types of search was that their diverse nature would allow for obtaining a more diversified set of results; namely, it would include a general set of slang items attested in the last decade as well as popular recent neologisms.

1) New-WOTD search

The main point of this search method was to retrieve lexical expressions that would represent both the most popular recent slang lexemes, and therefore such expressions that are most likely to become established in the lexicon and to be well-known among the potential

users. The ‘Word of the Day’ label is given to the expression that receives the highest number of ‘Thumbs Up’ votes for the particular day.

The collection process took almost 2 years. It began in April 2009, since when the Words of the Day were noted every day. It lasted until 20 March 2011, when the last expression was taken. The overall number of items was approximately 700, which was then gradually reduced using several elimination guidelines for the expressions (see 3.1.3).

The New-WOTD search therefore pre-selected only the most popular lexemes for each day, and 100 newest expressions that fulfilled all the qualitative and quantitative criteria were included in the final sample, which dates its oldest member as early as September 2010.

2) Random search

The aim of the Random search method was simple: to obtain a representative, comprehensive sample of English slang lexis of the last decade, or more precisely, from 2001 to 2010, no matter how recent or popular they are.

The Random search took much less time compared to the New-WOTD one: it was performed on 8 March and 9 March 2011, in the manner of clicking repeatedly on the ‘Random’ button on the UD website and noting the entries that appeared. Overall, about 300 items were taken, and these were then filtered using the elimination guidelines. The first 100 lexemes that were acceptable then constituted the final sample, with the oldest item according to the date of submission being from November 2001.

3.1.3 UD failures. Elimination guidelines

As pointed out above, several necessary criteria had to be set to determine the final sample of 200 expressions from the 700 and 300 units from the two searches, respectively. Some of the deficiencies of *Urban Dictionary* that make it harder to find relevant information were mentioned in 2.2. See their full list, together with their description and proposed solutions, below:

1. ‘wiki’ element more in action

UD is also becoming a dictionary of culture, or an encyclopaedic one, besides being a purely lexical one. It means that more and more cultural concepts are defined there, including celebrities, music bands, politicians, characters from TV shows, films etc., yet without a shift in meaning.

→ Proposed solution: Eliminate celebrity names, music bands' names and other concepts related to the popular culture unless there is a shift in meaning.

2. name-calling practice

Despite the clear notification in the Guidelines for editors¹¹, there are still many cases to be found on UD where an entry consists of a 'headword' being a name of a real person, usually a person the author of the definition knows, and a definition giving this person derogatory names¹². Positive naming is present, too.

→ Eliminate all cases of name-calling (flaming), including positive.

3. naming: proper name, generic sense

This includes entries such as *Chris* (definition: 'A kid who is always up to party and have a good time', example: *Dude, I don't wanna go to that party unless Chris comes.*)

→ Eliminate all cases when a proper name of a specific person is defined, excluding the cases of eponymy.

4. place names, institution names and other proper nouns with no change in meaning

This category of failure embraces all other proper nouns with no semantic change involved; for example *Mexico City* 'The biggest city in the world, also the second largest in population' or *Phoenix Suns* 'My favorite Basketball team, probably known for it's great players but bad luck when it comes too winning in the post season'.

→ Eliminate all place names, institution names and other proper nouns, unless there is a shift in meaning.

5. idiosyncrasy and nonsense – non-existing expressions

Upon the full-text search via Google, it was discovered that many expression have no other use but on UD, which suggests they are author idiosyncrasies. For instance, *splave* has a definition of 'Divided by. This term is the word used to describe the mathematical operation of division', but showed zero occurrence in the Google search. The same goes for 'nonsense'

¹¹ "Publish celebrity names but reject friends' names."

¹² Alternatively, the derogatory term is found in the headword, and the proper name of a real person is in the definition.

items such as *xxl3o0mxx* ‘Xxl3o0mX is a highly intelligent human. They are more advanced than humans Hence the name Xxl3o0mX.’

→ Eliminate all user idiosyncrasies and nonsensical expressions, unless their usage is attested on the Internet outside UD.

6. common or formal word stock – non-slang, no semantic change

In the search for slang lexemes, it was necessary that all the words from the common or formal word stock on UD are eliminated. For instance, *rock music* ‘Music in it's purest form. Played with real instruments. The only music everybody likes in one form or the other. Comes in a variety of types’ or victory ‘a win’.

→ Eliminate all lexemes from the common or formal word stock, unless there is a shift in their meaning, and the new meaning is used in slang.

7. racist and sexist entries, sexual violence

Alongside name-calling, these are the only categories of expressions recommended to be rejected in the Guidelines for editors. Any instances of these are thus to be avoided.

→ Eliminate all racist and sexist entries as well as instances of sexual violence.

8. jokes or opinions

This category includes joke- and opinion-based definitions of already established lexical units, most often from the common, neutral stock. For instance, *love* as one of the WOTDs is defined as ‘nature's way of tricking people into reproducing’. Opinion-based definitions include ‘an obscure form of rock which you only learn about from someone slightly more hip than yourself’ for *indie*.

→ Eliminate all joke- and opinion-based definitions of already existing lexical units.

To sum up, 8 failure categories of UD expressions were identified and a guideline to overcome the respective failure was supplied with each category. All items fulfilling at least one of the failure criteria laid out above were removed from the first sample, based on these 8 elimination guidelines.

Stemming from – and in addition to – the above-stated elimination guidelines, two sets of criteria, one of qualitative and the other of quantitative nature, were set up in order to obtain a representative sample of 200 slang words.

3.1.4 Selection criteria

1) Qualitative criteria

There were three sets of criteria of qualitative nature using which the final set of items was acquired from the *Urban Dictionary* stock: temporal (time), regional (distribution) and sociolinguistic/‘relevance’ (other aspects).

a) temporal

The Random search was not concerned with any restrictions as to the novelty of the items; the only time limit was therefore the period of existence of the UD project, dating back to the year 2000. In the New-WOTD search, the focus was on neologisms, which were collected between April 2009 and 20 March 2011; this period was therefore set as the basic time restriction for the New-WOTD search items.

b) regional

UD is an American invention and one can expect that most of its users will be American. The majority of the expressions are used in the US, which can be backed up with the spelling and pronunciation patterns occurring in most entries. It is even more apparent from the cultural allusions, which mostly hint at US popular culture, media, lifestyles, customs etc. In order to make the final same as much consistent as possible, all items from other regional varieties of English were removed unless they were recorded in American English as well¹³.

c) sociolinguistic and ‘relevance’

Determining slang membership of a lexeme was carried out in accordance with the elimination guidelines: first, the expressions that were clearly part of the formal or neutral lexical stock (*victory* ‘a win’) were eliminated. The rest of the sample thus consisted of either colloquial expressions or originally neutral or formal lexical units that underwent semantic change and whose meaning and usage therefore shifted towards slang. Then, if an expression

¹³ However, the regional distribution is hard to determine in some cases, due to lack of evidence on the spoken form of the language, since *Google* cannot be taken as a reliable source of evidence. With novel words in particular, the only information that is to be found about their usage comes from the Internet; nevertheless, if an expression is found on a US website, it does not necessarily mean it is used there in speech as well. Therefore the information on regional distribution has to be regarded as tentative only.

was slang or colloquial showing one of the features of slang discussed in 2.1 such as evaluation, in-group nature or humorousness, it was accepted.

Finally, all the units that fall under the failure categories were crossed out based on the elimination guidelines. Given the varied nature of the failure categories (including pragmatic, semantic and other), this type of qualitative criteria was given a broad label of ‘relevance’.

2) Quantitative criteria

Three criteria of this type were set up: the number of thumbs-up votes by the users, the ratio of thumbs-up/thumbs-down votes and the number of occurrences retrieved via a full-text search on www.google.com.

a) number of thumbs-up votes

In both searches, the minimum number of approving votes was determined at the beginning of the selection process. In case of the New-WOTD items which rank among the most popular expressions on UD overall, the limit was set to 1000 ‘ups’. The Random search, meanwhile, featured a minimum of 20 ‘likes’. This criterion was considered the basic one to separate the items that qualify from those that do not.

b) ratio of thumbs-up/thumbs-down votes

This criterion is the essential one of the quantitative type, and perhaps also in the selection process as a whole. The ratio was determined on the same level of 3 for both searches, in favour of thumbs-up votes. Nonetheless, it was noticed that certain lexemes clearly meet all the other criteria, but they did not reach the set ratio of 3, often because they received too many thumbs-down votes. A possible explanation of this might be that these words or their definitions were not humorous enough, so they reached a much worse ratio than a sarcastic definition of a common word like *love* (see 3.1.3). Consequently, an additional full-text search on *Google* was performed in order to determine whether the expression is actually used even though the users of UD did not deem it eligible.

c) number of occurrences via *Google* search

The additional full-text search on www.google.com was performed only with those lexemes which featured a ratio of thumbs-up/thumbs-down votes of less than 3. The minimum

occurrence on the additional *Google* search was 1000 instances in the case of the New-WOTD search, and 100 instances in the case of the Random search items.¹⁴

3.1.5 Summary of the search and selection process

All in all, the entire search and selection process comprised three stages, summarized as follows:

First, two kinds of search were performed. One of them consisted in recording Urban ‘Words of the Day’ from 18 April 2009 to 20 March 2011, and since these expressions are novel in the lexicon, the search was labelled ‘New-Word of the Day’ (New-WOTD). The other was a classical random search, carried out by clicking on the ‘Random’ button on the UD website. About 700 and 300 items were recorded from either search, respectively.

Second, the quantitative criteria were adopted. One of them was UD user evaluation, the number of thumbs-up votes and the ratio between thumbs-up and thumbs-down votes from the users. The minimum number of approving votes was the basic filter, and it was set to 1000 in New-WOTD search and 20 in Random search. The most efficient filtering tool was the thumbs-up/thumbs-down ratio of 3. However, as the judgment of many UD users might be sometimes led by linguistically irrelevant motives such as the degree of humour or wordplay conveyed by the word or definition, an additional *Google* search was performed for the lexemes with the ratio below 3. As a result, several expressions were ‘rehabilitated’ this way.

Third, the remaining items were subjected to the last stage of the selection process, applying the qualitative criteria that stem from the elimination guidelines defined before. The aim of this stage was to remove all items that were not relevant to the focus of the research, that is, slang. Accordingly, all the expressions that were not identified as slang or otherwise failed to be relevant were crossed out.

Finally, of the remaining set of items that had met all the set criteria, the 100 newest in the case of the New-WOTD search and the 100 earliest retrieved in the case of the Random search were maintained, and these constitute the final sample. The research process then continued with the next stage which was the labelling part and analysis, as the 200 items were arranged into a table and individual features such as word-formation processes or word

¹⁴ In the latter, the limit was set lower, for the popularity (or the number of ‘ups’ received from UD users) was on average approximately 10 times (or more) lower in the Random search items than in the New-WOTD search ones. Accordingly, the ratio of 10 was taken into account when determining the minimum number of *Google* search renderings.

classes were assigned to each of them. The results are presented in the following section of the study. When the lexemes are used in the text, they are marked with numbers from (1) to (200), under which they are to be found in the table included in the Appendix.

3.2 Description and analysis of the sample material

This section will supply and analyse the data obtained from the research. The results are presented in tables, first overall for the entire sample, then contrasting the two types of sample material obtained via two different searches, and last, most significantly, focusing in more detail on each individual word-formation process (WFP) represented in the sample.

The main points here will be to determine the extension and depth of the existing stock of word formation techniques available, exploring whether slang reflects all WFPs, and if there are any patterns of co-occurrence of two or more WFPs.

3.2.1 Overall results

The overall incidence of word-formation processes in contemporary English slang, based on the sample of 200 lexemes from UD, is presented in Table 1 below. It is necessary to point out that where applicable, more than 1 WFP involved in the creation of the expression were included with each item.

Table 1: Overall occurrence of word-formation processes in the slang sample

WFP	TOTAL WFP Σ	TOTAL WFP %
semantic change	113	56.5
compounding	82	41.0
allusion	63	36.5
blending	35	17.5
shortening	24	12.0
word combination	21	10.5
borrowing	18	9.0
conversion	18	9.0
affixation	12	6.0
corruption	9	4.5
onomatopoeia	5	2.5
backformation	3	1.5
back slang	1	0.5
graphic imitation	1	0.5
TOTAL	200	100

note: 'Total' stands for the number of items in the sample, not the sum of all individual occurrences of the WFPs; hence the percentage accounts for the proportion of the items which were formed using the given WFP ('how many items out of the total of 200 were formed by semantic change/compounding/shortening etc')

The most frequent word formation process in the contemporary English slang sample was semantic change, identified in more than a half of all the items (113). Compounding follows with 41.0 % of the entire sample. Allusion comes next with 63 occurrences (36.5 %). Blending also shows rather high incidence of 35 instances, that is, more than 1/6 of the slang expressions. Shortening, word combination, borrowing and conversion were involved in 24, 21 and 18 (both borrowing and conversion) lexemes, respectively, which accounts for proportion of around 10 % each. Affixation and corruption display quite low frequency (they appeared 12 and 9 times out of 200). Finally, the processes of onomatopoeia, backformation, back slang and graphic imitation occurred very rarely in the slang sample.

The situation is different, however, with only one word formation process identified in each slang lexeme. With each item from the sample, one WFP was set as major, being the one that immediately brought about the creation of the word. If there were other processes taking part in the formation of the word, they were referred to as minor (accompanying) WFPs (see the Appendix for more details).

That being said, the results documented in Table 1 will have to be reassessed. See Table 2 below:

Table 2: Occurrence of word-formation processes in the slang sample as major WFP

WFP	as major WFP Σ	as major WFP %
compounding	82	41.0
blending	35	17.5
word combination	21	10.5
shortening	18	9.0
semantic change	17	8.5
affixation	11	5.5
borrowing	7	3.5
conversion	3	1.5
onomatopoeia	2	1.0
corruption	1	0.5
backformation	1	0.5
back slang	1	0.5
graphic imitation	1	0.5
allusion	0	0
TOTAL	200	100

When taking into account one WFP with each lexeme only, compounding would be by far the most frequent category, accounting for 41 % of all slang expressions, with 2.3 times higher incidence than the following one, that is, blending. These two are always identified as major WFPs, as well as word combination. Shortening and affixation show higher prominence, being the 4th and 6th most common WFP, respectively, this way. Semantic change only displays 17 instances as the major WFP in an expression, with a vast majority (96) of its occurrences only participating as a minor/accompanying process. Allusion was never identified as the major WFP, appearing thus 63 times as a concomitant phenomenon of other process. Similarly, corruption can also be regarded as a typical accompanying phenomenon.

There were two types of search methods used in the process of selection of the slang expressions from UD, namely, New-WOTD and Random. As they showed some differences in terms of the incidence of word-formation processes, they are discussed in more detail. See first Table 3 to contrast the two search methods applied from this point of view:

Table 3: Occurrence of word-formation processes in the New-WOTD vs. Random search slang samples

WFP	TOTAL WFP Σ	New-WOTD Σ	Random Σ
semantic change	113	46	67
compounding	82	53	29
allusion	63	42	21
blending	35	17	18
shortening	24	10	14
word combination	21	14	7
borrowing	18	1	17
conversion	18	10	8
affixation	12	5	7
corruption	9	1	8
onomatopoeia	5	1	4
backformation	3	1	2
back slang	1	0	1
graphic imitation	1	1	0
TOTAL	200	100	100

The part of the sample retrieved via the Random search features almost all instances of borrowing and corruption (17 out of 18 and 8 out of 9, respectively), while compounding, allusion and word combination are all twice as much typical for the New-WOTD search sample as for the Random search one. The overall most common process of semantic change

is slightly more prominent in the Random search sample (67 instances as opposed to 46 in the New-WOTD one). Other processes including blending, shortening, conversion and affixation display uniform distribution between the two search methods.

What is perhaps most striking is the much higher variability in the range of WFPs occurring in the Random search sample, where all but four WFPs occur at least 7 times, while in the case of the New-WOTD sample, compounding, allusion or semantic change are largely predominant, with 6 WFPs occurring only once or not at all.

More information on these comparisons as well as analyses of some of the slang lexemes will be provided in the following chapters concerning the individual WFPs, which are arranged from the most frequently occurring to the least.

3.2.2 Semantic change

Semantic change is the most common word-formation process in the sample of slang items, occurring 113 times; that is, more than a half of all the slang expressions show some kind of semantic change. In 96 cases, however, it is treated as a concomitant phenomenon alongside a major WFP, which is usually compounding (57 instances, i.e. approximately a half of all occurrences of semantic change). It also appears 25 times alongside allusion and 14 times with blending. Contrasting the two searches, semantic change is slightly more characteristic of the Random search sample, where it occurs in 67 % of all items.

Below is a table comparing all the types of semantic change appeared in the sample:

Table 4: Occurrence of the types of semantic change in the slang sample

SEMANTIC CHANGE TYPE	Σ	%
metaphor	55	48.7
metonymy	36	31.9
specialization	17	15.0
pejoration	11	9.7
hyperbole	10	8.8
eponymy	9	8.0
amelioration	5	4.4
generalization	5	4.4
irony	3	2.7
euphemism	2	1.8
determinization	1	0.8
litotes	1	0.8
TOTAL	113	100

As apparent from Table 4, by far the most frequent category of semantic change is semantic shift, represented by metaphor, metonymy and eponymy, which appears in 100 out of 113 instances of semantic change. Semantic modification (amelioration, pejoration, euphemism, litotes, hyperbole and irony) and semantic scope change (specialization, generalization and determinization) occur in 31 and 23 cases, respectively. As for the individual types of the three categories, there is a vast dominance of metaphor and metonymy, which are present in 55 and 36 slang words in the sample, respectively. In fact, only metaphor itself shows higher occurrence than the processes of blending and conversion together, for instance. If they were treated as separate word-formation processes, metaphor would be the fourth and metonymy the fifth most common one. Metonymy and metaphor together are then more numerous in the sample than compounding. See some examples of metaphor below:

- (23) *internest* ‘The cocoon of blankets, pillows, duvets, and comfy things you gather around yourself to keep warm whilst spending long amounts of time on the internet’
 (56) *brainspin* ‘The inability to sleep because of your mind fixating on a thought’
 (197) *roll the dice* ‘to masturbate’
 (152) *mechanic* “a paid assassin who ‘fixes’ a problem”

Concerning the four metaphors, there is always some outward similarity between the source and target lexeme. In (23), the objects placed around the person surfing the Internet help the place truly resemble cocoon or a nest. The feeling of ‘brainspin’ really reminds of the brain literally spinning around, while the similarity in mechanic is stated in the definition (‘fixes’); the two activities in the remaining example also show some resemblance.

- (73) *hot mess* ‘When ones thoughts or appearance are in a state of disarray but they maintain an undeniable attractiveness or beauty’
 (147) *Zaid* ‘an ingenious person; *the quality such a person has*’
 (170) *Stellard* ‘Totally intoxicated and anxious to pick a fight with anyone’
 (188) *pop tags* ‘When you have so much money that all you do is buy clothing’

All of these metonymies involve a shift based on some inward association rather than outward resemblance, unlike metaphor. *Hot mess* shifts the name from a state in which the person’s appearance is to the entire person. *Zaid* goes the opposite direction, obtaining the name for a quality from the name of a person. *Stellard* is based on the cause-effect relationship, the cause being the excessive amount of the Stella Artois lager, and the result being the state which the adjective describes. *Pop tags* is an example of ‘part for a whole’ synecdoche, since the tags obviously refer to clothes, on which they are to be found.

Semantic specialization comes third with 17 occurrences. Generalization, by contrast, is much rarer, attested in 5 instances. Compare the two contradictory processes:

(168) *shrooms*

(113) *crack fiend*

While in (168), the initial semantic scope of mushrooms has narrowed to a specialized referent of hallucinogenic mushrooms, (113) may refer to annoying people in general, not only those who use crack. The dominance of specialization over generalization might be explained by the in-group nature of slang, taking words from the general vocabulary, and utilizing them in a new, narrower context, and thus often bringing about more specialized meanings.

Generalization is in 3 instances recorded together with eponymy including (146) *ocker*, which is a term for a stereotypical Australian, derived from the AusEN pet name for Oscar. These two categories are closely connected, since eponymy frequently incorporates cases where a proper name is used as a common name, with a wider semantic scope.

As regards semantic modification, compare the instances of amelioration and pejoration below:

(123) *pen slut*

(125) *PoolGod*

The *slut* element no longer has a vulgar meaning in (123), relating to a person who is very fond of nice pens, and is therefore ameliorated; conversely, the meaning of *God* in (125) has been modified to anyone who is good at certain activity, and therefore the unique reference of *God* has been pejorated. As shown in Table 4, pejoration is more than twice as frequent as amelioration, which may reflect the overall more negative tone of slang.

Of other types of semantic modification, euphemism only occurred twice, irony three times, while hyperbole showed up 10 times, suggesting that slang tends to use strong expressions, like (31) *Bushler* (a combination of Bush and Hitler) or (70) Gate Rape, referring to the screening procedures at airports.

All in all, metaphor and metonymy are very rich sources of slang formation, or to be more precise, a very common accompanying process of compounding, blending and other major WFPs. The high incidence of semantic change points at the strong position of language invention, polysemy and playing with meaning in the formation of slang expressions, which are often built on associations, based on unexpected connections.

3.2.3 Compounding

With its 82 instances, compounding is the second most frequent word-formation process in the sample. See Table 5 for the overview of the incidence of the various compound types based on three different types of classification, namely, word-class, syntactic and semantic.

Table 5: Occurrence of the types of compounding in the slang sample

COMPOUNDING TYPE	Σ	%
word class – nominal	73	89.0
- verbal	5	6.1
- adjectival	2	2.4
- other	2	2.4
syntactic – subordinative	80	97.6
- coordinative	0	0
- other	2	2.4
semantic – idiomatic	68	82.9
- regular	14	17.1
TOTAL	82	100

As for the word-class approach, the vast majority (73) of the compounds are nominal, that is, with nouns as heads. They account for a substantial 37 % of all the slang expressions in the sample. Nominal compounds display four different modifiers: noun, adjective, phrase and combining form, with the noun-noun compound being predominant, showing 53 instances, which is more than 1/4 of all items overall. The remaining 9 instances include 5 verbal compounds and 2 adjectival ones, with the first, modifying element of the compound always being a noun, and 2 compounds that constitute special, non-subordinative types.

Interestingly, 4 of the verbal compounds are results of either backformation or conversion. (86) *Pixel counting* and (110) *cabin shagging* are both recorded in the nominal gerund form, but the example usage on UD shows them both as verbs. This reflects the backformation phenomenon in action, when the missing gap is filled as a verb is formed by analogy to an already existing, non-compound verb (*count* and *shag*, respectively). (61) *Courier newed* and (79) *love tap*, by contrast, are formed by conversion from nouns.

Concerning the syntactic classification, all the compounds in the sample except the two special types were subordinative, of the Germanic type. There were thus no special cases such as coordinative compounds or the Romance type of subordinative compounds. The semantic classification manifests the dominance of idiomatic compounds in the slang sample:

there are only 14 semantically regular (compositional) compounds as opposed to 68 idiomatic ones.

Adjective-noun compounds seem to show a higher degree of semantic regularity, since 36 % of these compounds are non-idiomatic, compared to the overall proportion of 17 %.

Compare:

(83) *perfectionist paralysis*

(87) *premature exasperation*

(88) *productive procrastination*

(92) *Russian toilette*

(96) *social chameleon*

(97) *social terrorism*

While the left column contains semantically regular hyponymic compounds with easily derived meanings, on the right we can see idiomatic compounds involving some kind of semantic change or allusion. Interestingly, all the three regular compounds resemble terminological expressions, from psychology in this case. As for the idiomatic compounds, (92) humorously alludes to Russian roulette, changing this game for life to ‘gambling on the fact you will have enough toilet paper to have a satisfying wipe’ (UD), whereas the other two are rather well-known compounds, yet non-compositional in their structure (*social chameleon* is not a kind of chameleon, nor *social terrorism* is a kind of terrorism).

Many compounds show humorous allusions to existing phenomena, like (121) *man bag* (cf. *handbag*; ‘a bag with one strap worn by metrosexual or homosexual males’), (98) *some-sex marriage* (*same-sex marriage*) or (94) *shelf esteem* (*self-esteem*; ‘self esteem built from self help books’). A lot of them resemble or parody terminologies, particularly those from the New-WOTD sample, including (128) *Racist bowel syndrome*, (87) *premature exasperation* or (100) *strategic dipping*. Compounds were on the whole very prominent in the New-WOTD sample, taking up more than a half of all its items. It may reflect that compounding is the most readily available source of neologisms, being very simple to generate, often using mere juxtaposition of two nouns or a noun plus adjective.

As for the special types, there are two bahuvrihi compounds, namely, (73) *hot mess*, referring not to the state itself but rather to the person who is in the state, and (132) *mooncake*, which is a derogatory term for a person of Asian descent. The bahuvrihi compounds are therefore to be interpreted as ‘the one who is in the state of a hot mess’ and ‘the one whose face resembles a mooncake’, respectively.

Next, the only two non-subordinative compounds are the phonologically motivated (63) *deja boo* and (114) *dilly dally shilly shally*. The former compound features four concomitant word-formation processes, among others onomatopoeia (imitating the ‘boo’

sound to scare people) and allusion (hinting at *deja vu*). The latter is a typical example of a rhyme- and ablaut reduplicative, where the individual elements do not carry any meaning if standing alone. Some more compounds involve rhyme or alliteration between the two elements, often for humorous or otherwise emphatic effect, such as (57) *career veneer*, (131) *yard tard*, (68) *facebook fever* or (81) *microwave mentality*.

The sample also contains 5 instances of combining form compounds, including (137) *Mormonistan*, which features the combining form (CF) *-stan*, originally a Persian suffix meaning ‘state’; therefore it is easily understandable via analogy as ‘a state of Mormons’, referring humorously to Utah. The other CF compounds employ the word-initial neoclassical CFs *auto-* and *micro-* ((133) *Auto Incorrect*, (135) *autotune*, (134) *microwait* and (136) *microsuck*). All of them allude to recent phenomena, which is a sign of their fashionability; they include relatively new brands (Microsoft and Autotune), features (Auto Correct) or situations (queues for microwave lunches).

Also, there are recurring elements in the compounds serving as patterns for analogical formations. These comprise *bar* in (111) *cash bar* and (109) *budget bar*, *slut* in (123) *pen slut*, *God* in (125) *PoolGod* or *snake* in (127) *racing snake*. The more compounds such element is used in, the more general meaning it gains, while losing the specific meaning it conveys as a free-standing word. It is therefore on its way to become a combining form and later possibly affix, gradually losing its lexical functions, and highlighting the newly gained grammatical functions. This process may be referred to as a specific kind of grammaticalization, represented by *personne* in French or the suffixes *-ful* or *-like* in the history of English.

Compounds are very prone to combinations with other WFPs: there are only 10 out of 82 compounds in the sample that do not occur alongside another WFP. The most frequent partner of compounding is by far semantic change (57 instances), followed by allusion (23 cases), both reflected in the high number (68) of idiomatic compounds.

3.2.4 Allusion

The process of allusion is the third most common in the slang sample, with 63 items. It is exclusively a minor (concomitant) WFP, participating in the creation of a new word only alongside another process, typically semantic change (25 instances), compounding and blending (23 cases each). Allusion is also fairly frequent in combinations of three or more WFPs, co-occurring very often with blending plus semantic change (in 13 cases), and also with compounding plus semantic change (in 8 cases).

Regarding the two types of search, allusion was far more prominent in the New-WOTD search than in the Random search (42 compared to 21 occurrences). The disproportion might be associated with the greater popularity of the New-WOTD search lexemes among UD users; since often, the cleverer allusions a word conveys, the more popular it tends to be.

As noted in 2.3.14, the category of allusion is rather an umbrella term referring to various cases of references. Besides cultural allusions, two more concepts are comprised under this category in this study, namely, sound allusion and lexical allusion, both of which refer to analogical formations based on similarity either of sound nature (in the form of rhyme, ablaut or other similarity), or some kind of lexical-semantic similarity. See Table 8 below for the incidence of the individual types:

Table 6: Occurrence of the types of allusion in the slang sample

ALLUSION TYPE	Σ	%
sound	32	50.8
cultural	25	39.7
lexical	6	9.5
TOTAL	63	100

Of the three types of allusion, cultural and sound were largely prevalent, with sound allusion only making up for more than a half of all the instances of allusion, thus being alone of similar incidence as the entire process of blending. Lexical allusion occurred rather sporadically. Taking into account the three subtypes of sound allusion, rhyme is by far the most common with 22 occurrences; ablaut and sound similarity show 6 and 5 appearances, respectively.

There are some substantial differences between cultural allusion on the one hand and sound and lexical allusion on the other. Aside from enhancing the meaning with cultural associations, cultural allusion also provides a way to exclude those who do not understand the reference, not sharing the necessary knowledge. This might be one of the reasons of its popularity in slang, as it functions as an in-group filter, like in (52) *Cao ni ma*, meaning in Mandarin literally ‘fuck your mother’, (189) *president please*, alluding to the African American phrase ‘nigga please’ or (182) fly like a G6, which refers to a song of the same name. Culture is a wide concept, and therefore the individual instances may allude to song

lyrics ((38) *Macramento*), technology ((133) *Auto Incorrect*), politics ((52) *Cao ni ma*¹⁵), religion ((76) *Irish twins*, ‘children born in succession within one year’), or even mythology ((103) *retard in aluminium foil*, a paraphrase of *knight in a shining armor*).

Sound and lexical allusion, by contrast, work on a different platform; they are rather analogical structural formations, utilizing language invention and wit, in creating expressions such as (17) *beardo*, (18) *boregasm* (both involving rhyme; cf. *weirdo*, *orgasm*, respectively), (98) *some-sex marriage* (ablaut; from *same-sex marriage*), (106) *ashwipe* (sound similarity; from *asswipe*) or (24) *mansplain* (lexical allusion; cf. *explain*).

In several cases, two different types of allusion co-occur with one lexeme. For instance, (180) *coming out of the cupboard*, which stands for ‘people’s disclosure of their secret obsession for Harry Potter’, is both a cultural allusion to the fact that Harry Potter lived in the cupboard under the stairs in the beginning of the book series and a lexical allusion to the phrase *coming out of the closet* which refers to a person’s revelation he/she is gay.

3.2.5 Blending

Blending is the fourth most significant word-formation process in contemporary English slang according to the research. It was identified in 35 lexemes, always as the major WFP. It has a stable position in slang, as testified by the uniform incidence in both types of search samples (17 times in the New-WOTD, 18 times in the Random search). As for the co-occurrence with other WFPs, the most notable are that with allusion (23 cases) and semantic change (14).

Four structural types of blending were identified in 2.3.9, according to which parts of the source words combine to form the target blend. They include ‘*breathalyzer*’, ‘*paratroops*’, ‘*heliport*’ and ‘*sexploitation*’. See Table 9 for the frequency of the types in the sample:

Table 7: Occurrence of the types of blending in the slang sample

BLENDING TYPE	Σ	%
‘ <i>breathalyzer</i> ’	13	37.1
‘ <i>paratroops</i> ’	12	34.3
‘ <i>heliport</i> ’	9	25.7
‘ <i>sexploitation</i> ’	1	2.9
TOTAL	35	100

¹⁵ Literally meaning ‘fuck your mother’ but also ‘grass mud horse’, thanks to the different tone pronunciation of the two expressions, this phrase is an Internet meme used to express disagreement with the Internet censorship in China. See more on http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grass_Mud_Horse.

The first three types have similar incidence in the sample, accounting for 12, 13 and 9 items, respectively. Blends of the ‘*paratroops*’ type include instances such as (14) *adverblasting* or (42) *simulpost*. The ‘*breathalyzer*’ type blends include (45) *STRAIDS* ‘infectious disease, like AIDS, only more straight’ is then based on the acronym *AIDS*, adding a back-clipped first element *straight*, playing both with the rhyme between the two source words and the semantic association of something that is ‘infectious’. A structurally similar example is (47) *stfudy*, meaning literally ‘shut the fuck up and study’; this time, the second element is fore-clipped and added to the initialism *stfu*.

There is also a significant overlap between some blends and combining form compounds. The general tendency followed in this analysis is that once the clipped element appears in more words, it becomes a base of its own, and the blend should no longer be considered a blend, but rather a CF compound. Blends that stand at the boundary of these two processes may comprise (15) *alltheist*, where *-theist* is potentially open for further analogical formations, (36) *Jossverse*, where *-verse* can be used to emphasize specific ‘universes’ of individual people, or (16) *bacontarian*. The last mentioned is the most likely to be analysed as a CF compound, as UD attests other blends of this type including *custartarian* or *wannatarian*¹⁶;

Regarding the semantics of blends, Plag applies the distinction between proper blends and blends which are in fact shortened compounds (see 2.3.9). Compare these two categories:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| (35) <i>fuscle</i> | (42) <i>simulpost</i> |
| (44) <i>smirt</i> | (23) <i>internest</i> |
| (31) <i>Bushler</i> | (39) <i>osnap</i> |

The three blends in the left column are defined as follows, respectively: ‘the mixture between fat and muscle’, ‘people who flirt while they smoke outside their office buildings or pubs’ and ‘a Bush/Hitler hybrid’. They all resemble coordinative compounds of the *singer-songwriter* type. There is always some semantic relation needed between the two elements which stand on the same level; fat and muscle are both materials the human body consists of, Bush and Hitler both unpopular political leaders, and smoking and flirting both take place at a designated time and area in a workplace. There were 8 such blends in the sample.

¹⁶ However, neither of them has received more than 10 thumbs-up votes, which suggests that this type of analogy has not become commonly used so far.

The right column, by contrast, features blends functioning in a similar way as hyponymic compounds, with the potential source constructions being ‘simultaneous post’, ‘Internet nest’ and ‘object snap’, respectively. They work as handy abbreviations, used as brand names (*osnap* is a function in CAD software), as well as humorous hints at already existing words, using sound or lexical analogy (*internest* is a hint at *Internet*, adding one letter, *boregasm* rhymes with *orgasm* etc.).

Allusion in general is a word-formation process that typically accompanies blending, as evidenced in expressions such as (25) *masturdating* (sound – rhyme) (29) *traffuck* (sound – ablaut), (26) *mistext* (sound – similarity), (24) *mansplain* (lexical) or (36) *Jossverse* (cultural). There are 23 instances involving a combination of blending and allusion, which means that approximately 2 out of 3 blends are complemented by some type of allusion. Most typically, it is sound allusion, accounting for 17 cases.

A single phonaestheme blend appeared, namely, (33) *choop* ‘taking a dip (chew tobacco) while taking a poop’, where the *-(o)op* ending in particular may be viewed as a phonaestheme, representing a sound of something falling down (compare *plop*, *clop*).

3.2.6 Shortening

Shortening (abbreviation) is the sixth most frequent word-formation process in the slang sample, and accounts for 24 (12 %) of the items. In 18 cases, shortening was identified as the major WFP. Abbreviation combines to some extent with semantic change (9 times), but it is also fairly frequent with no other co-occurring WFP; this is the case of 7 items out of the total 24 instances of shortening.

Compare the abbreviations *idgaf*, *stfu*, *RIP* and *TGIF*, none of them employing any other WFP but shortening. This may indicate that shortening is usually a purely ‘structural’ process, that is, it involves loss of phonological material, but without accompanying semantic alterations, allusions etc. This particularly holds for initialisms, which often come about as abbreviations of verb phrases on the Internet, mainly for the reason of economy.

See the table below for the overview of the different types of abbreviation identified in the sample:

Table 8: Occurrence of the types of shortening in the slang sample

SHORTENING TYPE	Σ	%
clipping	8	33.3
initialism	7	29.2
acronymy	4	16.7
embellished clipping	2	8.4
initialism reverse	2	8.4
acronymy reverse	1	4.2
word ellipsis	1	4.2
TOTAL	24	100

Clippings and initialisms account for nearly 2/3 of all the instances of abbreviation in the sample. As for clipping, there are 5 back-clipped words, like *G6* ('Gulfstream G650, a twin-engine jet airplane') in (182) *fly like a G6* or (169) *spec* 'specification'. Fore-clipping takes up the remaining 3 cases, exemplified by (168) *shrooms* or (183) *going ham*.

Acronyms may be analysed as a further development stage following initialisms, which are pronounced as separate letters, towards pronunciation as one word. There were 4 acronyms in the sample, including *PHOBAR* 'Photoshopped beyond all recognition', showing that not only initial letters can be involved in an acronym, or *daps* 'knocking of fists together as a greeting' (UD), possibly derived from 'dignity and pride', adding the plural *-s*¹⁷.

Embellished clipping, that is, involvement of a diminutive or augmentative suffix, was identified in two cases: (17) *beardo*, besides being a blend, also features the diminutive suffix *-o*, and (178) *beamer*, which employs the suffix *-er* (compare *rugger*, *footer*). The latter is also an instance of a special type of shortening termed reverse initialism, as it came about by taking the first two letters from the abbreviation *BMW* ('Bayerische MotorWerke') to make a new word from them. The other case of reverse initialism is (179) *the "fuck" word*, which is a parody of the politically correct expression *the "f" word*, used to express disdain for censorship. Similarly, reverse acronymy is represented by (165) *sugar honey iced tea*, which is used as a taboo expression in order to avoid swearing, serving as an example of both taboo and anti-authority functions of slang.

3.2.7 Word combination

Word combination is technically not a word-formation process, as it does not form new words, but rather juxtapositions of words, various phrases. Perhaps largely due to the

¹⁷ *Wikipedia*, "Dap greeting" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dap_greeting), accessed April 15, 2011

extremely liberal policy of adding new expressions on UD discussed in 2.2 and 3.1, a fairly high number of the sample items fall into this category (21, making up more than 10 %). They were particularly striking in the New-WOTD search sample, apparently showing high popularity. Examples include (192) *This is actually happening* ‘a phrase for use to highlight an ensuing awkward or unbelievable event’ or (181) *cool story bro* ‘a sarcastic expression to show disgust or indifference to someone’s story’.

Word combinations comprise three categories of items according to the degree of their compositionality, as pointed out in 2.3.7; namely, free combinations, collocations and idioms. The boundaries between the first two appear to be rather fuzzy in the sample items, but idiomatic expressions are relatively easy to point out; compare (188) *pop tags*, (197) *roll the dice* using metonymy and metaphor, respectively, and (180) *coming out of the cupboard* and (195) *give (one) the Wiggins*, both employing cultural allusion. The majority of the word combinations in the sample are of idiomatic nature.

We may opt for a simple word class distinction of word combinations, similar to the one in compounding; see Table 9:

Table 9: Occurrence of the types of word combination in the slang sample

WORD COMBINATION TYPE	Σ	%
verb	9	42.9
clause	8	38.1
adjective	2	9.5
noun	2	9.5
TOTAL	21	100

As seen in the table, about 4/5 of the identified word combinations are verbs or clauses. The difference between the two lies in the presence of a verb as the head of the phrase in the case of the ‘verb’ type; by contrast, in the case of the clause type, the verb is either missing, or an entire clause is involved, compare:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| (199) <i>spit your game</i> | (185) <i>no homo</i> |
| (197) <i>roll the dice</i> | (186) <i>or the terrorists have won</i> |
| (194) <i>flicking the bean</i> | (200) <i>tru dat</i> |

The left column displays three idiomatic verb phrases, classified structurally as word combinations (idioms) and semantically as semantic change (metaphor), whereas in the right one, there are three clauses/word combinations, of which *tru dat* also represents corruption

(see 3.2.11), *no homo* contains an abbreviation and *or the terrorists have won* ‘the best excuse to get what you want’ is a cultural allusion, hinting at the current political and social issues.

3.2.8 Borrowing

The category of borrowing is also of fairly high incidence, involving 18 instances. There is a striking disproportion in the occurrence of loanwords between the New-WOTD and Random search samples, since the latter comprises 17 out of 18 instances. It may reflect that loanwords are typically not widely popular slang expressions that would be used by various groups of people and likely to become established in the common word stock one day. Given their foreign roots and different sounding, reinforced by their uneasy pronunciation, these words are more likely either to remain restricted to smaller groups or to vanish gradually even from such narrow usage.

See the table below presenting the incidence of three different types of loanwords:

Table 10: Occurrence of the types of borrowing in the slang sample

BORROWING TYPE	Σ	%
interlingual	10	55.6
dialectal	8	44.4
stylistic	0	0
TOTAL	18	100

Only two of the three available source types of loanwords occurred in the sample, with quite even distribution: 10 borrowings from foreign languages as opposed to 8 from dialects of English.

As for interlingual borrowing in general, there are only two source languages represented more than once, namely, Italian and Arabic. Then there is one word each from French, Spanish, German, Mandarin, Persian and Hindu. None of the languages, with the exception of Mandarin, has more first-language speakers than English, and arguably none of them has a stronger position than English. In that case, the motivation for borrowing may be manifold: for instance, there is constant pressure in slang for innovation in expression, supported by the tendency to sound cool among one’s peers and hard to understand among one’s enemies. Another reason might be mockery, as many foreign words may sound funny to a native ear, adding some condescending approach to the speaker, when he/she addresses someone a *baristo* ((49)) or *Gordito* ((53)), not to speak of (137) *Mormonistan*.

Regarding dialect borrowing, 3 of the instances ((162) *daps*, (48) *mayne*, (151) *jivin*) were adopted from African American slang, and are nowadays used rather unanimously in slang. Two words were taken from Australian and British English each (e.g. (146) *ocker* and (140) *peng*, respectively). Dialect borrowing involves the dominant variety (i.e. the standard language) adopting expressions from the dominated varieties (dialects or varieties spoken by subcultures), a direction usually opposite than in interlingual borrowing.

3.2.9 Conversion

Conversion is typically considered one of the three central word-formation processes in English; nevertheless, in the contemporary slang words sample, it comes only eighth, displaying 18 times. As for the classification of converted forms, there might be two basic approaches, namely, according to the word class of the source item, or according to the word class of the target item.

Table 11: Occurrence of the types of conversion in the slang sample

CONVERSION TYPE	Σ	%
nominal	7	38.9
verbal	6	33.3
adjectival	4	22.2
interjectional	1	5.6
TOTAL	18	100

The three types of conversion as classified in 2.3.3, that is, according to the target word class, show rather uniform incidence. Nominal conversion appears 7 times, with the most common subtype of verb-to-noun having 4 occurrences. Verbal conversion follows with 6 instances, 5 out of which are noun-to-verb, which makes it the most frequent subtype in the sample. Adjectival conversion shows 4 occurrences, 3 of which are noun-to-adjective. The only category not described in 2.3.3 is interjectional conversion, namely, one case of noun-to-interjection conversion.

The subtype of verb-to-noun conversion includes the semantic classes of a person named after a typical activity ((44) *smirt*), a result of an activity ((134) *microwait*, ‘consequence of the lunchtime rush for the microwave in corporate settings’). (187) *pop a squat* is then analogical to other verb phrases like *have a swim*, *take a dip*, referring to a momentary event.

The process of the opposite directionality, i.e. noun-to-verb, is the most frequent one in the sample, showing 5 occurrences. The examples include (42) *simulpost*, (130) *tub girl* and (61) *courier newed*, which all refer to activities people do on the computer, named after something which is directly associated the activity.

Adjectival conversion is represented by the noun-to-adjective process, like in (51) *Ubermensch* ('an adjective used to describe a person who is awesome, talented, cool, hip, or someone who did something excellent') or (170) *Stellard* ('totally intoxicated and anxious to pick a fight with anyone').

Besides the usual examples of conversion, the sample also shows a few untypical instances, including (138) *gassed* and (160) *nice*. *Gassed* is interpreted as conversion of a past participle into an adjective; originally, the expression was only used after verbs of change of state like *get* or *become* and semantically it referred to a momentary emotion. Yet gradually, it has become used as an adjective, expressing a character quality, see the example usage 'man fuck that gassed bitch'. The other instance, *nice*, involves emptied meaning; some people say it so often it has become used 'as a filler during a pause in conversation', and the adjective was therefore converted to an interjection.

3.2.10 Affixation

Alongside conversion, affixation is another central word-formation process in English which was only represented in a smaller number of lexemes in the slang sample. In 11 out of the 12 instances, it was identified as the major WFP. Affixation is the WFP least likely to combine with others according to the data from the sample; in 7 cases, the derived word shows no other accompanying change.

Examples include (3) *fappable* 'sexually desirable', literally 'possible to fap', (2) *degifting*, with the prefix *de-* conveying the privative meaning, (1) *arch douche* ('the title given to someone high on the corporate ladder, in a position of authority, etc. who is also a douchebag') analogical to similar expressions bearing the negative connotation of the prefix, like *arch-villain* or *arch-criminal*.

As for the classification of affixation, there are clearly two main categories, namely, prefixation and suffixation, the former accounting for 9 words, the latter present in 3 items. Alternatively, the classification according to word classes may be advocated:

Table 12: Occurrence of the types of affixation in the slang sample

AFFIXATION TYPE	Σ	%
nominal	8	66.7
adjectival	4	33.3
verbal	0	0
TOTAL	12	100

As we can see, nominal affixes take up 2/3 of all the occurrences, and the remaining third is occupied by adjectival suffixes. The only recurring affix in the sample was *-er* (3 times).

Despite the relatively low proportion of affixation in the slang sample (6 %), it does not necessarily mean that this process is on the decline in formation of slang words. This is exemplified in (8) *boobage*, ‘the noticeable presence of breasts’, which includes a specific type of a newly productive affix, meaning ‘the high amount or intensity of something’; compare *rainage* or *scoopage*. Other affixes with recent newly adopted meanings or functions include *-orama* (*geekorama*, *Futurama*), *-omatic* (*jamomatic*) with a similar meaning of abundance, *-dom* ‘the domination of’ (*geekdom*, *femdom*) or *-fest* (*beerfest*, *pizzafest*). These stand at the boundary of combining forms, being identical in form to existing affixes (compare *drainage*, *boredom*, *automatic*), but with differing, new meanings and functions.

3.2.11 Corruption

The sample contained 9 instances of corruption. Like borrowing, corruption is of three different kinds according to whether the expression was adopted from a foreign language or a variety of the domestic language. See the table:

Table 13: Occurrence of the types of corruption in the slang sample

CORRUPTION TYPE	Σ	%
stylistic	5	55.6
interlingual	3	33.3
dialectal	1	11.1
TOTAL	9	100

More than a half of all the instances of corruption were of stylistic nature. Stylistic corruption differs from the dialectal one in that it concerns words from the standard variety of the language that underwent some change in spelling or pronunciation bringing about a shift in stylistic connotations. Stylistic corruption is exemplified by (141) *ho*, which stands for ‘prostitute’, and is an alteration of the standard form *whore* used in slang. Other examples

include *ham* in (183) *going ham* (< *going mayhem*) or (200) *tru dat* “a bastardized version of ‘true that’”, used as an affirmative answer in hip hop slang.

Dialectal corruption was identified in the Southern-US expression *mayne* (48), which is originally a laid back way of pronouncing ‘man’. It is not a case of stylistic corruption, because the corrupted word is not *man* in any of the senses included in the standard language, but *man* as a form of address in colloquial language and slang. As Klégr (2010: 156) points out, corruption typically involves ‘a shift in attitude’. Also, corruption often brings about a change in the connotations from the source lexeme to the target one.

Interlingual corruption appears in the two cases described in 3.2.8 (49) *baristo* and (54) *ugats*. The former, ‘a male worker in an espresso bar. Related to *barista* (female) and *baristi* (plural)’ is based on false analogy, since in this case, the Italian form *barista* is used both as male and female (cf. *pianista*, *protagonista*), and hence *baristo* is incorrect in Italian, but corrupted and admissible in English slang. The latter, ‘Italian American slang for Bullshit’, has its origin in the Italian ‘o cazzo’ (literally translated as ‘this penis’) reflects the influence of English phonological system and pronunciation upon an Italian word, with the initial vowel change, voicing of k to g and loss of the final syllable. Another example of corruption based on folk etymology is (170) *Stellard*, derived from *Stella Artois*, which may resemble some other adjective denoting a drunk or obnoxious person; this notion is reinforced by the example usage “He thinks he's Artois ...but he's Stellard”.

3.2.12 Onomatopoeia

This category comprises words motivated by sounds, either by imitation of the sound, symbolic associations of a sound with certain meaning (phonaesthemes) or echoic reduplicatives. See Table 14 for the occurrence of the types:

Table 14: Occurrence of the types of onomatopoeia in the slang sample

ONOMATOPOEIA TYPE	Σ	%
imitative	3	60.0
symbolic	1	20.0
echoic	1	20.0
TOTAL	5	100

Onomatopoeia appears 5 times in the sample: in the compounds (63) *deja boo* (imitative) and (114) *dilly dally shilly shally* (echoic rhyme- and ablaut reduplicative) and the phonaestheme blend (33) *choop*; the two remaining words (143) *blarb* and (144) *meep* were

identified as new coinages, imitating certain sound. Blarb might also be connected with words like *blah*, *blabber* or *blurb* using the phonaestheme *bl-*, which indicates ‘too much talk’; UD defines it as ‘a word that is an exuberance of emotion as a result of boredom’. *Meep* stands for “an exclamation akin to ‘ouch’ or ‘uh oh’”. Both these sound words are interjections.

In addition, onomatopoeia also plays an important role in sound allusion, as rhyme, ablaut and other sound similarity between the source and target lexeme can be comprised here. Another level on which onomatopoeia operates is represented by rhyme and alliteration within some compounds, like in *yard tard* and *career veneer*, *Jesus Jeans* and *tongue typo* and others.

3.2.13 Backformation

Backformation occurs 3 times in the sample; namely, in (13) *firsting*, (86) *pixel counting* and (110) *cabin shagging*. All of them are verbs backformed from nouns, according to the example usage on UD, compare:

firsting “damn firsters, **firsting** all over the place”

pixel counting “Yea I missed the big catastrophe at work today as I was too busy **pixel counting**.”

cabin shagging “It snowed 2 feet so we got high and **cabin shagged** till the sun came up.”

3.2.14 Back slang

The only example of this taboo-motivated process in the sample is (12) *saggin*. The word has rather unclear etymology, but there is an explanation on UD arguing it was formed from the word *niggas* spelled backwards. This word has apparently come into use among prison inmates, who were reportedly wearing their pants hanging. Gradually, the usage has spread among gangsters and hip hop culture in general, where this way of wearing one’s pants low is a sign of fashion.

3.2.15 Graphic imitation

There is only one case of graphic imitation in the sample, referring to emoticons used in online communication. Similar to *xo*, (142) *xio* imitates the human body, or the shapes the respective parts of the human body make, when performing the ‘Kisses, Boners, and Hugs’. The variation of the original *xo* might be regarded as a special case of lexical allusion, in the field of communication reduced to graphic symbols.

4. Conclusion

The main aims of this study as outlined in the Introduction include the following: 1) to determine which patterns of word building are the most productive in contemporary English slang, 2) to examine the possible reasons for their prominence, 3) to explore if there are any processes that have been given little or no attention so far and 4) to point out the differences in the word-formation tendencies between slang and the general lexicon.

Starting with the last mentioned objective, the standard language and slang can be contrasted using the overview of the most frequent word-formation processes in English 1941-1991 by Pyles and Algeo (1993). The most frequent process as recorded for this period is compounding (40.0 % of all items), followed by affixation (28.0 %), conversion (17.0 %), shortening (8.0 %), blending (5.0 %) and borrowing (2.0 %). The most prominent processes in the sample of slang expressions were semantic change (56.5 %), compounding (41.0 %), allusion (36.5 %), then blending (17.5 %), shortening (12.0 %) and word combination (10.5 %). Borrowing and conversion only follow then, both with 9.0 %. See table below to compare:

Table 15: Comparison of the frequency of WFPs in contemporary slang and in the general lexicon of English

WFP SLANG TOTAL	WFP GENERAL ENGLISH	WFP SLANG MAJOR
semantic change (56.5 %)	compounding (40.0 %)	compounding (41.0 %)
compounding (41.0 %)	affixation (28.0 %)	blending (17.5 %)
allusion (36.5 %)	conversion (17.0 %)	word combination (10.5 %)
blending (17.5 %)	shortening (8.0 %)	shortening (9.0 %)
shortening (12.0 %)	blending (5.0 %)	semantic change (8.5 %)
word combination (10.5 %)	borrowing (2.0 %)	affixation (5.5 %)

Taking into account the overall occurrence of word-formation processes in the slang sample (the first column), there are significant differences from the general English lexicon, particularly concerning affixation and conversion which do not feature at all in the six most common processes in slang, while coming second and third in general English. In the slang sample, their places are occupied by semantic change and allusion.

Additionally, the third column ('WFP SLANG MAJOR') was supplied, only involving one WFP in each lexeme. This way, there are still only two similarities between this column and the common word stock of English: namely, compounding is in the first place in both cases, with almost the same proportion (41 as opposed to 40 %), and shortening comes fourth

with 9 and 8 %, respectively. Nevertheless, affixation is still much less prominent, while blending is more than three times as common in contemporary slang as in the general word stock from 1941 to 1991. In addition, word combination never occurs among the most common WFPs in the general lexicon, while being rather substantial in slang.

There is one more conclusion resulting from Table 15, that is, while the sum of the proportions of the six most frequent WFPs in English from 1941 to 1991 represent 100 %, suggesting there were no other phenomena taking part in the creation of new words but these, the word formation in slang comprises 14 different processes. Consequently, contemporary English slang appears to show a much greater variation as to the phenomena which are used to create new lexemes. This is also connected with the frequent co-occurrence of two or more processes participating in the formation of the new word in slang. The status of some of the phenomena may be questionable, nonetheless, as they only accompany other processes; such is the case of allusion and corruption in particular. Similarly, word combination is not exactly a word-formation process, as it rather produces phrases.

Furthermore, for the variation of WFPs in contemporary English slang, it is typical that corruption, which is often not even regarded as a rightful word-formation process, shows almost as many occurrences in the slang words as affixation (9 and 12, respectively), which is considered one of the central processes for English. It might reflect the overall democratization of the way how new words can be formed in the recent years, most apparently in slang, for it is a layer of language that often seems to ignore the set rules of the language.

As for some of the less frequent sources of new words, onomatopoeia in particular tends to be much more significant in slang than in the general word stock, which is reflected both in new coinages based on sound imitation ((143) *blarb*, (144) *meep*), in phonaestheme blends ((33) *choop*) and rhyme reduplicatives ((114) *dilly dally shilly shally*). This prominence may be attributable to the proneness of slang to wordplay, a tendency also lying behind the high occurrence of allusion or blending, among others.

Of the other possible reasons for the higher significance of certain WFPs in slang, technological developments lying behind the rise of online communication and increased information speed can be mentioned. All this has given way to new borrowings, including (52) *Cao ni ma* from Mandarin. The almost equal access to information and knowledge allows for a higher degree of interlingual borrowing, sometimes accompanied with corruption ((49) *baristo* and (54) *ugats* for instance). Also dialectal borrowing is much easier now: thanks to

electronic communication tools, what used to be a Scottish or Australian English slang expression may now spread in several days throughout North America. The more traditional motivations for borrowing remain, nevertheless: the fashionable-sounding effect of certain words ((50) *moza*), showing off one's sophistication ((51) *Übermensch*) and thus strengthening one's position within a group as well as excluding those who do not understand, or simply poking fun at the dominated language ((53) *gordito*).

The innovation and ephemerality features of slang are well reflected in the dominance of compounding. Slang words emerge very quickly, and therefore are more likely to apply the easiest processes available such as compounding. Indeed, compounds are much easier to be formed than derivatives, abbreviations or converted forms, for instance.

The overall prevalence of semantic change, metaphor and metonymy in particular, in the slang sample is not very surprising, given that slang has a figurative nature based on associations. As Eble (1996: 52) notes, "The raison d'être of slang is its power to evoke connotations based on human association". Besides that, semantic change also reflects other slang features outlined in 2.1, namely, the vagueness of slang words, their polysemy and also the existence of numerous expressions for a single concept. Another tendency responsible for the high occurrence of semantic change is that slang items often come about semasiologically, that is, via a change in meaning rather than onomasiologically, via a change in form. Hence "the meaning of a slang term can be described as a series of increasing divergences from general usage" (Eble 1996: 53). That suggests that most slang words represent alternatives for existing referents that are already named in the language.

Many compounds or blends, as well as instances of semantic change and allusion, also rest on unexpected relationships and connections between the two or more concepts in question. Given the high incidence of these particular WFPs, this association appears to be the key feature in the formation of slang words. That would confirm the nature of slang words as being based on changes in connotations rather than in the denotative meaning of a word. It may as well be one of the reasons of the relatively low frequency of the predominantly structural processes of affixation and conversion, together with the fact that their creation involves a little more effort than a mere juxtaposition of two words, such as in the case of compounding or word combination. On the other hand, slang word formation does not always favour simplicity. For instance, blending requires some amount of linguistic invention on the part of the slang user, as the two words must respect certain phonological rules to be easy to pronounce and remember.

What often helps in creating new blends is their most typical accompanying process of allusion, another phenomenon that is much more significant in slang word formation than elsewhere in English. Alternatively termed analogy, it consists in creating new words by hinting at existing ones. In the sample, the analogical formations are either conveyed by similar sounds, lexical semantics or a reference to a phenomenon of culture. As show Klégr and Čermák (2009: 232), almost every word-formation process can be accompanied by analogical coinages. In contemporary slang, formation by analogy seems to be very productive, as demonstrated by the occurrence of the ‘allusion’ process in the sample. Analogies occur in blends ((17) *beardo*), combining form compounds ((134) *microwait*) or standard compounds ((94) *shelf esteem*). They might also accompany abbreviations ((164) *PHOBAR*, based on *FUBAR*), word combinations ((180) *coming out of the cupboard*, cf. *coming out of the closet*) or even the rare process of graphic imitation ((142) *xio*, based on *xo*). According to Szymanek (2005, 431), “regardless of the strength and productivity of a particular pattern, a new complex word may be created by analogy”.

In addition, allusions, particularly those involving rhyme or other sound similarity, also demonstrate the playfulness of slang. Cultural allusions function on a slightly different principle, as they may often serve as a group filter, eliminating from the group those who do not understand the reference.

As for the two types of search samples, some differences emerged regarding the significance of individual WFPs. While borrowing and corruption is much more prominent and semantic change is slightly more prominent in the sample obtained via the Random search, the part of the sample retrieved via the New-WOTD search features twice as many instances of compounding, allusion and word combination than the Random search sample. Other processes, including blending, shortening, affixation or conversion showed uniform distribution between the two types of search.

Concerning the most salient subtypes of the individual processes, semantic change features metaphor and metonymy (48.7 and 31.9 % of all instances of semantic change, respectively), compounding mostly displays nominal compounds (89.0 %) and idiomatic (82.9 % of all compounds), while allusion mostly involves sound similarities (50.8 %) and cultural references (39.7 %). The various structural types of blends, abbreviations and converted words show quite uniform incidence, while most of the word combinations are verbs or phrases, or idioms in terms of semantics. In the loanwords, the situation is balanced

between borrowings from foreign languages and those from various dialects of English (10 and 8, respectively).

Slang also displays frequent co-occurrence (in 74 % of all items) of two or more word building phenomena in a single lexeme. By far the most common combination was compounding + semantic change, which was identified in 57 cases out of 200, that is, almost 30 % of all slang items in the sample. Other recurrent patterns include semantic change + allusion with 25 occurrences, compounding + allusion and blending + allusion with 23 instances each, and also blending + semantic change (14 instances). There are also two significant patterns involving three word-formation processes, namely, blending + semantic change + allusion (13 occurrences) and compounding + semantic change + allusion (8). The processes that were most prone to combination were allusion, compounding and semantic change; by contrast, the least compatible were affixation and shortening.

In conclusion, slang reflects the entire range of word-formation processes productive in Present-day English. What is more, the WFPs in contemporary English slang show greater variability than in the general English word stock, comprising 14 different processes in the sample of 200 slang expressions. By far the most frequent of them were semantic change (56.5 % of all the slang lexemes), compounding (41.0 %), allusion (36.5 %) and also blending (17.5 %), and a typical slang expression is formed using a combination of two of these processes. Shortening and word combination also showed fair frequency and compatibility, as well as borrowing. Other traditional processes like conversion or affixation play a relatively minor role compared to the general lexicon. By contrast, some phenomena seem to be particularly characteristic of slang, such as allusion, and also corruption or onomatopoeic formations.

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Resumé

Tato práce se zabývá slovotvornými procesy, které se podílejí na tvoření slov v rámci anglického slangu. Cílem práce je v první řadě vymezit, jaké slovotvorné procesy se účastní tvoření nových slov v současném anglickém slangu a které z nich jsou nejfrekventovanější. Práce má rovněž stanovit, které z těchto jevů se vyskytují nejčastěji ve srovnání se situací v obecné slovní zásobě současné angličtiny. Vedle toho se pokouší určit, zda mezi nimi jsou jevy dosud málo popsané nebo dokonce zcela opomíjené.

Práce sestává ze dvou částí. V teoretické části jsou popsány jevy a procesy, které jsou relevantní pro předmět výzkumu a téma práce. První sekce teoretické části se soustředí na popis slangu, přičemž zdůrazňuje rozdíly v přístupu k této oblasti lexika mezi anglosaskou a českou lingvistickou teorií. Zatímco v češtině se slangem obvykle rozumí výrazivo určité profesní nebo zájmové skupiny, slang v anglosaském pojetí má mnohem širší záběr a chápe se jako jev typický pro mluvené, hovorové, neformální aspekty komunikace. V kapitole 2.1.1 je popsáno české pojetí slangu, které spíše odpovídá anglosaskému chápání pojmu *jargon*, jež se blíží konceptu pracovní hantýrky v češtině. Z tohoto důvodu, stejně jako vzhledem k jisté nekonzistenci tohoto pojetí i zaměření práce na současný anglický slang se přejímá anglosaské pojetí slangu, popsané v kapitole 2.1.2. Zde je vyjmenováno a charakterizováno několik vlastností, jimiž se slang vyznačuje a odlišuje od jiných oblastí slovní zásoby. Patří mezi ně mimo jiné pomíjivost (efemérnost) a neustálá inovace, kdy se slova ve slangu rychle objevují a zase zanikají, sociální funkce příslušnosti k určité skupině, ze sémantického hlediska jistá vágnost významů a výrazná polysémie a synonymičnost. Slang je pak především typický pro ústní komunikaci v neformálních kontextech a situacích. V anglosaském pojetí je někdy obtížné určit hranici mezi slangovým a „pouhým“ hovorovým výrazem. Určitým kritériem může být větší aktuálnost a modernost/obliba slangových slov, stejně jako jejich výraznější expresivita a vyjádření postoje či dokonce emocionálního vztahu k denotátu.

Druhá sekce obsahuje popis zdroje dat použitých ve výzkumu, otevřeného internetového slovníku slangu *Urban Dictionary* (www.urbandictionary.com), který je považován za nejužívanější slangový slovník na internetu, přičemž mezi jeho hlavní devizy oproti tradičním lexikografickým dílům patří zejména jeho aktuálnost a autentičnost. V prvních dvou kapitolách je představen unikátní koncept *Urban Dictionary* (UD) spočívající v tom, že každý uživatel slovníku může přidat vlastní slovo nebo novou definici k již existujícímu heslu. To je umožněno prostřednictvím krátkého, přehledného formuláře na

stránkách *UD*. Tyto nové příspěvky musí být poté schváleny tzv. editory, což jsou registrovaní uživatelé tohoto webu. *UD* také disponuje systémem hodnocení jednotlivých hesel a definic, kdy každý návštěvník stránky může vyjádřit svůj postoj k nim svým kladným, či záporným hlasem. Tyto velmi demokratické principy snižují spolehlivost slovníku jakožto zdroje slangových výrazů, a to z několika důvodů, které jsou vyjmenovány v kapitole 2.2.4; mj. množství definic populárních osobností a dalších kulturních fenoménů bez posunu ve významu, vytváření hesel se jmény přátel, spolužáků apod. (např. heslo „Jan Novák“, definice: „největší hlupák pod sluncem“), výskyt dalších vlastních jmen, včetně jmen místních a názvů institucí. Další kategorii neslangových výrazů představují idiosynkratická slova, nesmyslné a neexistující výrazy, či slova ze standardního lexika, často jen opatřená humornou definicí. Eliminace všech těchto položek, tak aby byla zaručena co nejvyšší relevance výsledného vzorku, byla provedena ve třech etapách v rámci výzkumné fáze a je popsána v metodologii práce v sekci 3.1.

Třetí sekce (2.3) teoretické části práce je nejrozsáhlejší a přináší přehled slovotvorných procesů, které jsou produktivní v současné angličtině a relevantní vzhledem ke zdrojovému materiálu 200 slangových slov. Postupně jsou v jednotlivých kapitolách představeny slovotvorné procesy derivace (odvozování), kompozice (skládání), konverze, zkracování, sémantické změny, přejímání slov, spojování slov, zpětné derivace, mísení (*blending*), tvoření slov na základě zvukové podobnosti (onomatopoeia), komolení (*corruption*), slovotvorné procesy argotického původu (mj. *rhyming slang*), procesy založené na grafické nápodobě (zahrnující tzv. emotikony) a aluze/analogie. Všechny zmíněné slovotvorné procesy jsou charakterizovány, popsány a opatřeny příklady, a v neposlední řadě také dále rozděleny do různých kategorií a podtypů. Derivace se dělí na sufixaci a prefixaci, přičemž jednotlivé sufixy a prefixy jsou rozčleněny na základě významu, který nesou. U kompozice existuje více možností klasifikace. Práce se přiklání k morfologickému rozdělení podle slovnědruhové příslušnosti řídicího členu kompozita, a rozlišuje nominální, verbální (slovesné) a adjektivální složeniny. Dalšími možnými děleními jsou mj. sémantické (idiomatická vs. neidiomatická kompozita) či syntaktické. Kapitola zmiňuje i zvláštní druhy kompozit, jako jsou např. citátová kompozita (*one-size-fits-all*), zvukově motivované složeniny (*jeepers creepers*) či složeniny obsahující tzv. *combining forms*, což jsou komponenty na přechodu mezi afixem a samostatným slovním základem (často jde o terminologické výrazy využívající řecké nebo latinské elementy, např. *euroseptic*, *astrophysics*).

Konverze je podobně jako skládání rozčleněna podle slovního druhu cílového slova; zahrnuje tak nominální (*drunk*), verbální (*hammer*) a adjektivální (*leather*) konverzi. Zkracování se dělí podle rozsahu abreviace na vlastní zkrácená slova (tzv. *clipping*; *bus*, *ad*) a zkratky sestávající pouze z počátečních písmen zdrojových slov, tj. akronyma a tzv. alfabetismy (*NATO*, resp. *CIA*). Sémantické změny zahrnují jednak posun ve významu (metafora, metonymie, apelativizace, synestézie), jednak změnu v sémantickém poli (např. zúžení, či rozšíření významu) a jednak významovou modifikaci (zhoršení či zlepšení významu, tj. amelioraci, resp. pejoraci; dále tvoření eufemismů, či naopak hyperbol; řadí se sem i ironie). Přejímání slov se dělí podle původu daného slova na přejímky z cizích jazyků, z dialektů stejného jazyka či z odlišných stylů stejného jazyka. Slovní spojení mohou zahrnovat nahodilé kombinace slov, kolokace či idiomy. Proces mísení (*blending*) se dělí strukturně, podle toho, která část příslušného slova je využita pro vytvoření cílového blendu.

U méně se vyskytujících procesů většinou práce nedodává další klasifikaci. Výjimkou je jednak tvoření slov na základě zvukové podobnosti, které je v angličtině vcelku bohaté [může spočívat v přímé nápodobě zvuku, či obsahovat skupinu hlásek symbolizující určitý význam (tzv. fonestém; např. *pl-* v *plonk*); řadí se sem i reduplikované výrazy využívající rým či ablaut (*bow-wow*, *ding-dong*)], jednak komolení, jehož dělení je stejné jako u přejímání slov, a také aluze/analogie, která může operovat na základě zvukové, či lexikálně-sémantické podobnosti se zdrojovým slovem, nebo může být odkazem na určitý kulturní fenomén.

Druhá, výzkumná část práce, sestává ze dvou sekcí: první z nich představuje metodologie výzkumu a práce obecně, zatímco druhá obsahuje popis a analýzu výsledků výzkumu. Co se metodologie týče, práce se opírá o výzkum založený na analýze aktuálního reprezentativního vzorku slangových slov o rozsahu 200 položek, které byly shromážděny pomocí dvou různých typů výběru. Jedním z nich bylo prosté náhodné vyhledávání, prováděné opakovaným kliknutím na tlačítko „Random“ při prohlížení *UD*; tento typ vyhledávání byl tedy nazván „Random“. Druhý typ vyhledávání měl za cíl akcentovat nejnovější přírůstky do slovníku, což spočívalo v zaznamenávání „Urban Words of the Day“ („Slova dne“) v období od 18. dubna 2009 do 20. března 2011; protože jde o výrazy nové, byl tento typ vyhledávání označen jako „New-Word of the Day“ („New-WOTD“). Takto bylo zaznamenáno 700 položek prostřednictvím tohoto typu a 300 položek pomocí náhodného způsobu vyhledávání.

Poté byla uplatněna následující kvantitativní kritéria pro výběr relevantních položek: Prvním z nich bylo hodnocení od uživatelů *UD*, přesněji počet jejich kladných hlasů („palec

nahoru“) a poměr mezi kladnými a zápornými hlasy („palec dolů“). Základním filtrem byl minimální počet kladných hlasů, stanoven na 1000 u typu *New-WOTD* a 20 u typu *Random*. Jako neúčinnější nástroj pro filtrování se ukázal být poměr mezi kladnými a zápornými hlasy, který byl stanoven na 3. Nicméně vzhledem k tomu, že uživatelé UD jsou většinou jen amatérskými lexikografy a jejich rozhodnutí udělit kladný, či záporný hlas může být leckdy řízeno jinými motivy než čistě jazykovými (např. přítomností humoru či slovní hříčky), bylo provedeno dodatečné vyhledávání na www.google.com u těch lexémů, u nichž byl podíl mezi kladnými a zápornými hlasy nižší než 3. Následkem toho bylo tímto způsobem několik výrazů „rehabilitováno“.

Následně byly zbývající položky vystaveny poslední fázi procesu eliminace slov irelevantních pro tento výzkum, a to na základě kvalitativních kritérií, která byla vymezena v opozici vůči nedostatkům UD, spočívajícím např. v množství vlastních jmen či výrazů neslangových – včetně slov z obecného lexika nebo neexistujících, zcela nesmyslných slov. Proto byly odstraněny všechny položky, které nebyly shledány slangovými.

Ze zbylých slov, která splnila všechna stanovená kritéria a prošla všemi filtry, bylo ponecháno 100 nejnovějších v případě typu vyhledávání *New-WOTD* a 100 nejdříve zobrazených v případě náhodného vyhledávání. Těchto 200 položek tedy tvoří finální vzorek, jenž je obsažen v příloze práce. Časové ohraničení získaných položek, alespoň podle data vložení na UD, je mezi zářím 2010 a březnem 2011 v případě typu vyhledávání *New-WOTD*; u náhodného vyhledávání pak sahá nejstarší položka až do listopadu 2001. Co se týče místního ohraničení, z velké části jde o výrazy primárně používané v americké angličtině.

Proces výzkumu pak pokračoval další etapou, která spočívala v charakteristice jednotlivých položek vzorku z hlediska slovotvorných procesů, slovnědruhové příslušnosti a dalších znaků. Výsledky této fáze jsou prezentovány v tabulce, která je součástí přílohy práce.

Ve druhé sekci výzkumné části práce jsou nejprve shrnuty a popsány výsledky výzkumu ohledně frekvence výskytu slovotvorných procesů, a to jak souhrnně pro celý vzorek, tak zvlášť jednak pro každý typ vyhledávání a jednak beroucí v úvahu jen jeden slovotvorný proces jakožto hlavní u každého výrazu. V dalších kapitolách jsou podrobně popsány jednotlivé slovotvorné procesy, které se vyskytly ve zkoumaném vzorku slangových slov, a to v pořadí podle jejich četnosti. U každého jevu jsou okomentovány jeho podtypy, jakož i kombinace s dalšími slovotvornými procesy. Vždy jsou uvedeny a blíže charakterizovány i některé příklady ze zkoumaného vzorku. Výsledky jsou prezentovány v

tabulkách, jak v případě souhrnného popisu, tak v rámci podtypů každého jednotlivého slovotvorného procesu.

Z výzkumu 200 slangových výrazů vyplynulo, že nejrozšířenějším slovotvorným procesem v současném anglickém slangu jsou sémantické změny, které se vyskytly u 113 z 200 položek, což představuje 56,5 %. Následují kompozice a aluze (analogie), s výskytem 41, respektive 36,5 %. Mísení (*blending*) se objevilo u 35 výrazů. Vcelku slušnou frekvenci výskytu vykazují i zkracování, slovní spojení, přejímání slov a konverze, ačkoli u posledně jmenovaného procesu jde o relativně nižší výskyt než obecně v anglické slovní zásobě. Totéž platí i pro derivaci, která má v rámci slangového vzorku daleko menší frekvenci. Zcela naopak jsou na tom sémantické změny a aluze, které nepatří mezi časté zdroje nových slov v angličtině, avšak ve slangu dominují. Převaha těchto slovotvorných procesů může být dána celkovou figurativní povahou slangového vyjadřování, která napomáhá uplatnění metafory, metonymie a dalších jevů. Potřeba neustálé inovace a modernosti ve slangu stojí za četností kompozice, která umožňuje jednoduché tvoření nových výrazů, často pouhou juxtapozicí dvou plnovýznamových slov, spolu s jejich významovou jednotností. Nejen snadné procesy jako skládání nebo i slovní spojení se však uplatňují ve slangu; např. mísení naopak vyžaduje dodržení fonologických pravidel, tak aby mohla být dvě slova spojena v jedno. Další významný znak slangu, vyjádření příslušnosti k určité skupině, se projevuje nejvíce u přejímání slov a aluzí, kdy je uživatel, který nerozumí dané narážce nebo výrazu z cizího jazyka či jiné vrstvy stejného jazyka, vyčleněn ze skupiny. U aluze pak jde často, podobně jako u mísení, i o jazykový humor a slovní hříčky. Z méně běžných slovotvorných procesů mají ve slangu významnější roli než v obecném lexiku zejména komolení a tvoření slov na základě zvukové podobnosti.

Pokud by se počítal jen jeden slovotvorný proces u každého slova, byla by s velkým náskokem na prvním místě kompozice (82 případů), následovaná mísením (35), a s odstupem pak slovními spojeními, zkracováním a sémantickými změnami, postupně s 21, 18 a 17 výskyty. Odlišnosti se objevily také mezi dvěma typy vzorků podle různých způsobů vyhledávání: zatímco sémantické změny jsou o něco výraznější ve vzorku získaném náhodným výběrem (67 výskytů oproti 46), stejně jako přejímání slov (17 z celkových 18) a komolení (8 z 9), část vzorku získaná vyhledáváním *New-WOTD* vykazuje dvojnásobný výskyt kompozit (53 oproti 29), aluzí (42 ku 21) a slovních spojení (14 oproti 7). Jiné procesy, mj. mísení, zkracování, konverze a derivace měly rovnoměrné rozdělení mezi oba typy vyhledávání.

Co se týče podtypů jednotlivých procesů, mezi nejvýrazněji zastoupené patří u sémantických změn metafora a metonymie (48,7, respektive 31,9 %), u skládání nominální kompozita (89 % ze všech složenin) a idiomatická (82,9 %), u aluzí pak analogie na základě zvukové podobnosti (50,8 %) a kulturních referencí (39,7 %). Strukturální typy *blendů*, zkratek i konvertovaných slov vykazují vcelku rovnoměrný výskyt. U slovních spojení tvoří většinu slovesa či věty, ze sémantických typů dominují idiomy. U přejatých slov je situace vyrovnaná mezi výpůjčkami z cizích jazyků a z dialektů angličtiny (10 versus 8).

Studie také zkoumala časté kombinace dvou nebo více různých procesů tvoření slov u jednoho lexému. Nejtypičtější kombinací byla kompozice + sémantické změny, která byla zjištěna v 57 případech z 200, tedy u téměř 30 % všech slangových položek ze zkoumaného vzorku. Další významné případy představují sémantické změny + aluze s 25 výskyty, kompozice + aluze a mísení + aluze, obě se objevující 23krát, a také mísení + sémantické změny (14 případů). Z kombinací tří slovo tvorných procesů byly nejvýznamnější mísení + sémantické změny + aluze (13 výskytů) a kompozice + sémantické změny + aluze (8 případů).