

# THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL GROUPS AND SUBCULTURES ON THE ACTIVATION OF NEOLOGISMS

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**Abstract:** this article explores the influence of social groups and subcultures on the emergence, dissemination, and activation of neologisms in German and Uzbek. The study applies sociolinguistic and comparative approaches to identify how different social communities contribute to lexical innovation. Special attention is given to youth, digital, and professional subcultures, where new words are actively created and spread. The analysis shows that in German, neologisms are more likely to stabilize within scientific and professional communication, while in Uzbek youth communities and social media play a key role in their spread. Examples and corpus observations indicate that neologisms typically emerge within specific social groups, circulate through digital communication, and gradually integrate into the national lexical system.

**Keywords:** neologism, social group, subculture, lexical innovations, youth language, internet communication, German language, Uzbek language.

**Аннотация:** в статье рассматривается влияние социальных групп и субкультур на возникновение, распространение и активизацию неологизмов в немецком и узбекском языках. Исследование основано на социолингвистическом и сравнительном подходах, позволяющих выявить роль различных социальных сообществ в формировании лексических инноваций. Особое внимание уделяется молодежным, интернет- и профессиональным субкультурам, где активно создаются и распространяются новые слова. Показано, что в немецком языке неологизмы чаще закрепляются в научной и профессиональной коммуникации, тогда как в узбекском языке важную роль играют молодежные сообщества и социальные сети. Анализ примеров и корпусных данных демонстрирует, что неологизмы проходят этапы возникновения в социальной группе, распространения в цифровой среде и последующей интеграции в национальную лексическую систему.

**Ключевые слова:** неологизм, социальная группа, субкультура, лексические инновации, молодежный язык, интернет-коммуникация, немецкий язык, узбекский язык.

**Introduction:** In the process of the emergence and dissemination of neologisms, social groups represent one of the key sociolinguistic factors. A social group is understood as a set of individuals united by common cultural, age-related, professional, or social characteristics, whose communicative practices and lexical potential directly influence the processes of renewal within the language system<sup>1</sup>. Through such groups, neologisms are created, disseminated, and sometimes stabilized, that is, integrated into the national lexical system.

**Literature Review and Methodology:** In analyzing the role of social groups within the contexts of the German and Uzbek languages, the comparative approach is of particular importance. In German, the most active groups include academic communities, specialists in

<sup>1</sup> Labov W. Sociolinguistic Patterns. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972. – P.32.



science and technology, and professionals in various fields. These groups act as the primary drivers in the creation and dissemination of new terminology in a stable form<sup>2</sup>. In Uzbek, however, social media users, the younger generation, and bloggers generate and rapidly spread new words within a global digital environment. In this process, lexical units are assimilated not only semantically and morphologically but also pragmatically.

Several theoretical models can be used to explain the influence of social groups. For instance, Labov analyzed lexical change within speech communities and demonstrated the mechanisms through which innovations are adopted based on social status and group hierarchy<sup>3</sup>. According to his ideas, the activity of neologisms is closely connected with different social strata of society.

P. Eckert, through the concept of the “community of practice,” demonstrates that language change and renewal occur through neologisms that are regularly used by members of a particular social group<sup>4</sup>. Within this model, each group develops its own speech style and lexical innovativeness.

D. Crystal and F. Green emphasize in their works the influence of globalization on linguistic innovation and the rapid spread of neologisms through social groups<sup>5</sup>. These studies show that social groups play an important role not only in creating new lexical units but also in disseminating and stabilizing them within a wider audience.

The spread of neologisms through social groups occurs through several mechanisms:

the creation of a new word and its first use within a particular group;

dissemination through blogs, forums, and social networks;

morphological, semantic, and pragmatic assimilation of the word within the national language.

This process differs in German and Uzbek. In German, words tend to stabilize within formal and technical contexts, whereas in Uzbek they become rapidly activated within conversational and cultural contexts. This reflects the influence of social groups on the semantic and pragmatic properties of language.

Corpus analysis clearly demonstrates the influence of social groups in both languages. In German, the dissemination and popularity of new words are analyzed using electronic corpora such as Leipzig Corpora Collection and DeReKo (Deutsches Referenzkorpus). For example, between 2015 and 2020 the words “Kryptowährung” and “Digitalisierung” appeared frequently and became stabilized within technical discourse<sup>6</sup>.

In Uzbek, analysis is conducted using the Uzbek National Corpus as well as internet platforms such as Telegram, Instagram, and blogs. Between 2018 and 2023, words such as “selfi,” “layk bosish,” and “trendga kirish” became widespread among young people and spread rapidly through social media. In this process, new words usually adapt to conversational and cultural contexts.

Corpus analysis shows that in German new words tend to stabilize within formal discourse, whereas in Uzbek they spread rapidly and establish their place in society through pragmatic speech functions.

<sup>2</sup> Schlobinski P. Neologismen in der deutschen Fachsprache. De Gruyter, 2016. – S.15.

<sup>3</sup> Labov W. Sociolinguistic Patterns. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972. – P.56.

<sup>4</sup> Eckert P. Linguistic Variation as Social Practice. Blackwell, 2000. – P.72.

<sup>5</sup> Crystal D. English as a Global Language. Cambridge University Press, 2003. – P. 98.; Grin, F. Languages and Economy. Multilingual Matters, 2005. – P.121.

<sup>6</sup> Haugen E. The Ecology of Language. Stanford University Press, 1972. – P. 104-105.



**Discussion.** Social groups also influence the structural characteristics of neologisms. In German, new terms are often formed through derivation and compounding. For example, *Cloud-Computing-Technologie* or *Blockchain-Anwendung*. In Uzbek, however, words often emerge in expressive and creative forms such as *layk bosish*, *trendga kirish*, and *selfi-sessiya*. In this process, compound formation and semantic innovation can be observed.

From a pragmatic perspective, neologisms disseminated through social groups serve social purposes in communication. In German, such words are mainly used in professional, scientific, and technical communication. In Uzbek, however, they often carry expressive and communicative functions, serving as a means of self-expression and interaction among youth audiences<sup>7</sup>.

Comparative analysis shows that the influence of social groups is significant in both languages, although the mechanisms differ. In German, academic and technical communities play a leading role, and new words become stabilized in formal discourse. In Uzbek, youth communities and social media users act as the main initiators; words spread quickly and acquire pragmatic functions in speech. Thus, social groups function as key social drivers in the emergence, dissemination, and stabilization of neologisms.

Subculture is interpreted as a socio-cultural phenomenon formed within the general cultural system of society and encompassing values, worldview, behavioral norms, and communication forms characteristic of a particular social group. While remaining part of the broader cultural environment, it differs through specific symbolic markers, cultural orientations, and linguistic features. Among these symbolic elements, language occupies a central place as one of the main tools shaping the internal system of a subculture and ensuring its social cohesion<sup>8</sup>.

Within subculture, language functions not only as a means of transmitting information but also as a mechanism that strengthens social solidarity among group members. Through language, members of a subculture distinguish between “insiders” and “outsiders,” demonstrate group affiliation, and define their position within the broader social space. As P. Bourdieu notes, “language functions as symbolic capital within the social field, and its use is closely related to the social status and cultural authority of the group”<sup>9</sup>. For this reason, linguistic units characteristic of subcultures often appear unusual or incomprehensible to outsiders.

In sociolinguistic studies, lexical innovations formed within subcultures – particularly neologisms – are regarded as one of the important sources of language development. Such units often arise from the need to name new experiences, emotions, social evaluations, or realities specific to the group that cannot be fully expressed using existing linguistic means<sup>10</sup>. For instance, in German youth subculture, words such as *cringe* and *lost* describe not only particular situations but also express group-specific evaluative attitudes. Similarly, Uzbek neologisms such as *xayp* and *krash* serve to express emotional and social experiences within youth subculture in a concise and expressive form.

Another characteristic feature of subcultural lexical units is their high degree of expressiveness and pragmatic connotation. These neologisms perform not only a nominative function but also convey attitudes, evaluations, and influence within communication<sup>11</sup>. In this respect, they differ

<sup>7</sup> Kachru B. *The Other Tongue: English Across Cultures*. University of Illinois Press, 1992. – P. 87-89.

<sup>8</sup> Labov W. *Sociolinguistic Patterns*. – Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972. – P.34

<sup>9</sup> Bourdieu P. *Ce que parler veut dire*. – Paris: Fayard, 1982. – P. 69

<sup>10</sup> Androutsopoulos J. *Jugendsprache und Sprachwandel*. – Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2014. – P. 102

<sup>11</sup> Crystal D. *Language and the Internet*. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. – P. 287.



from neutral lexical means in the standard language and serve to intensify emotional and social impact in interaction.

Thus, the relationship between subculture and language has a two-way character: on the one hand, subculture reshapes linguistic resources in accordance with its communicative needs and creates new lexical units; on the other hand, these very speech units ensure the social existence and stability of the subculture itself. Therefore, the analysis of neologisms formed within subcultural contexts provides an important theoretical basis for understanding language development within a socio-cultural framework.

Youth subculture is considered one of the most dynamic and productive social environments for the emergence and activation of neologisms in modern languages. The strong expressiveness observed in youth speech, their enthusiasm for various computer games, frequent use of metaphors, and relatively free attitude toward normative restrictions create favorable conditions for the creation of new lexical units. From a sociolinguistic perspective, youth speech is often regarded as a “laboratory” of innovative linguistic processes, since new words and meanings are tested in this environment and later consolidated through communicative practice<sup>12</sup>.

In the German language, neologisms such as *cringe*, *lost*, *Ehrenmann*, and *flexen*, which emerged under the influence of youth subculture, initially functioned within particular social groups to express evaluation and emotional attitudes. For instance, in the expression *Das ist cringe*, the neologism *cringe*, borrowed from English, conveys a negative emotional reaction to a situation or action in a brief, expressive manner. Likewise, *Ehrenmann* has become widely used in youth speech as a semantic neologism expressing positive evaluation, and it is increasingly observed to replace more neutral evaluative means of the standard language<sup>13</sup>.

In Uzbek as well, neologisms formed under the influence of youth subculture are becoming increasingly active in speech practice. Lexical units such as *xayp*, *krash*, *top*, and *zashkvar* first appeared mainly in informal communication and the online environment, and later entered youth speech more broadly. Expressions such as *Bu mavzu hozir xaypda* (“This topic is currently hyped”) or *U mening krashim* (“He/She is my crush”) demonstrate how these neologisms have adapted to the morphological and syntactic system of the Uzbek language. This phenomenon illustrates the process by which lexical innovations created within youth subculture gradually integrate into the general language system<sup>14</sup>.

**Results:** The internet and digital communication environment play an important role in the formation, dissemination, and activation of neologisms in modern languages. Lexical units created within digital subculture meet the demands of rapid communication, brevity, and semantic density, enabling them to reach a wide audience within a short time. Neologisms emerging in this environment often possess a global character and simultaneously enter different languages<sup>15</sup>.

In German, verbs such as *liken*, *sharen*, and *canceln*, created under the influence of internet subculture and based on English lexical elements, have become widespread. These units adapt to German morphological rules and are actively used with the infinitive suffix *-en*, for example:

<sup>12</sup> Androutsopoulos J. *Jugendsprache und Sprachwandel*. – Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2014. – P.56

<sup>13</sup> Androutsopoulos J. “Youth Language.” In: *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. – Oxford: Blackwell, 2001. – P.18.

<sup>14</sup> Раҳматуллаев Ш. *Ҳозирги ўзбек адабий тили. Лексикология*. – Тошкент: Фан, 2006. – Б.69.

<sup>15</sup> Crystal D. *Language and the Internet*. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. – P. 158.



Ich habe den Beitrag gelikt or Er wurde gecancel. This demonstrates that the activation of neologisms occurs not only at the lexical but also at the grammatical level<sup>16</sup>.

In Uzbek, digital subculture has also contributed to the emergence of neologisms such as *layk bosmoq*, *repost qilmoq*, and *band qilmoq*, which have gained a stable place in everyday communication.

These expressions follow the analytic verb models of the Uzbek language, illustrating how borrowed lexical elements combine with native grammatical structures<sup>17</sup>.

Professional groups and fields also represent important sources of neologism activation. New concepts emerging in modern economic, technological, educational, and media environments stimulate the creation and use of new lexical units. For instance, in German terms such as *Homeoffice*, *Work-Life-Balance*, and *Digitalisierung* were initially used within professional communication before becoming common in general language use<sup>18</sup>.

Neologisms formed under the influence of professional subcultures are closely linked to the rapid development of technology. For instance, in the terminology used in the digital technology and internet communications market, new concepts emerge quickly, which in turn become relevant topics for lexical innovation. It is important to emphasize that a neologism does not merely name a new concept; it also serves to clearly visualize it within its field, simplify overall communication, and, on the other hand, help establish a shared language among members of the professional community<sup>19</sup>.

In the context of the Uzbek language, terms such as *startup* (startup), *frilanser* (freelancer), *onlayn platforma* (online platform), and *masofaviy ta'lim* (remote learning) have emerged within professional subcultures and convey concepts related to advanced forms of social activity in a precise and concise manner. These neologisms are entering not only professional discourse but also everyday communication, and their activity can be observed through sociolinguistic analysis. This phenomenon confirms that the activation and spread of neologisms are directly linked to spheres of social activity.

**Conclusion:** The integration of a neologism emerging within a subculture into the general language system is determined by its social autonomy and functional activity. Research emphasizes that the rapid spread of contemporary neologisms through internet communication, mass media, and social networks accelerates their acceptance in the language, as well as the stabilization of their semantic and pragmatic functions. For example, new words disseminated via the internet and social media are not limited to technology-related terms but also include a wide range of neologisms reflecting new social realities in society. In this process, the semantic scope of a neologism is reinforced through repeated use in speech practice, eventually acquiring the normative weight accepted across the broader community.

From this perspective, subcultures act as dynamic mechanisms of language development. They play a crucial role in incorporating neologisms that initially emerge in private, local, or professional contexts into the national language system. As a result, these neologisms do not

<sup>16</sup> Androutsopoulos J. *Jugendsprache und Sprachwandel*. – Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2014. – P.56

<sup>17</sup> Eisenberg P. *Das Fremdwort im Deutschen*. – Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011. – S. 114.

<sup>18</sup> Kristo E. Neologisms in the German Language – New Words from a Semantic Point of View // *ANGLISTICUM Journal*, 3(1), – S. 39-48.

<sup>19</sup> Urmonova M. Types of Neologisms and Their Classification in English and Uzbek, *International Journal of Science and Technology*, 2(4), – S.108-109.



remain mere lexical innovations but become communicative tools that reflect the social realities of society.

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