

**MODESTUL BLAZON AL
TERMENILOR “FISTICII” –
REMARCI ASUPRA EXPRESIVITĂȚII
ARGOULUI LIMBII ENGLEZE**

Constantin MANEA
Universitatea din Pitești

Rezumat. The aim of the present paper is to sketch a bird’s-eye case study of the rich display of (lexical) metaphor and sheer lexical novelty represented by the slang and slangy terms in English – be they part of slang proper, or else of *cant*, *jargon*, *argot*, *highly colloquial speech*. This is in fact the continuation of, and the follow-up to, an earlier series of papers where the author was trying to delineate some of the most striking qualities of Romanian slang and slangy terms. The domain inclusion of the terms is identified with a view to drawing a (tentative) spectrum of the lexical corpus under consideration, while the slang uses of otherwise non-slang terms (e.g. *grass*, *sugar*, *sweet*) are singled out. Attention is devoted to more conspicuous word-formation patterns and mechanisms (especially reduplication, blending, back-formation, acronymy, various types of compounds and clipping, analogous synonymic series, e.g. *blockhead*, *fathead*, *saphead* “stupid”, peculiar types of suffixal forms, various combining forms, terms derived from proper names, etc.). Similarly, some more or less “exotic” forms are analyzed, and issues like synonymy (mainly when coming in ample series, e.g. the slang synonyms for “money”, “drink”, “drunk”, “food”, “jail”, “pudenda”, etc.), polysemy, and etymological paths and channels are addressed. Questions like style and register are only marginally dealt with. The most interesting cases discussed were those where the terms in question are illustrative instances of metaphor (some of which can be more “transparent” – even “international metaphors / images” –, while some others are rather hard to decipher), or those involving cultural, historical, literary, etc. allusion. Comparison with the opposite numbers in Romanian was only marginally attempted.

Cuvinte cheie: argou, poezia limbajului, *outsideri*

**THE UNASSUMING BLAZON OF
“BLUE” WORDS – NOTES ON THE
EXPRESSIVENESS OF ENGLISH
SLANG**

Constantin MANEA
University of Pitești

Abstract. The aim of the present paper is to sketch a bird’s-eye case study of the rich display of (lexical) metaphor and sheer lexical novelty represented by the slang and slangy terms in English – be they part of slang proper, or else of *cant*, *jargon*, *argot*, *highly colloquial speech*. This is in fact the continuation of, and the follow-up to, an earlier series of papers where the author was trying to delineate some of the most striking qualities of Romanian slang and slangy terms. The domain inclusion of the terms is identified with a view to drawing a (tentative) spectrum of the lexical corpus under consideration, while the slang uses of otherwise non-slang terms (e.g. *grass*, *sugar*, *sweet*) are singled out. Attention is devoted to more conspicuous word-formation patterns and mechanisms (especially reduplication, blending, back-formation, acronymy, various types of compounds and clipping, analogous synonymic series, e.g. *blockhead*, *fathead*, *saphead* “stupid”, peculiar types of suffixal forms, various combining forms, terms derived from proper names, etc.). Similarly, some more or less “exotic” forms are analyzed, and issues like synonymy (mainly when coming in ample series, e.g. the slang synonyms for “money”, “drink”, “drunk”, “food”, “jail”, “pudenda”, etc.), polysemy, and etymological paths and channels are addressed. Questions like style and register are only marginally dealt with. The most interesting cases discussed were those where the terms in question are illustrative instances of metaphor (some of which can be more “transparent” – even “international metaphors / images” –, while some others are rather hard to decipher), or those involving cultural, historical, literary, etc. allusion. Comparison with the opposite numbers in Romanian was only marginally attempted.

Key words: argou, poeticality of language, *outsiders*

Însăși definiția termenului rom. *argou*, ca și a engl. *slang* este de natură să incite, dar și să pună în încurcătură, atât pe specialist, cât și pe nespecialistul atras de *poezia* simplă a limbii. Elementele de convergență, nu puține, sunt în mare parte minate de punctele de divergență demonstrate de realitatea însăși a limbii. Argoul se regăsește din plin în structura diastratică a limbii, ca fel de a vorbi și vocabular / terminologie având un caracter predominant vulgar și de tabu lingvistic, care contravine, în mod esențial, autorității limbii standard, fiind folosit mai ales de indivizii aparținând categoriilor sociale declasate (dar și, marginal, unor pături sociale dornice să se distingă de masa vorbitorilor). Și termenul englezesc *slang* recunoaște, ca sens primar (și originar) conceptul de devianță și de nepotrivire cu forma standard a limbii naționale (față de care argoul este un sociolect), plecându-se de la felul de a vorbi al celor certați cu legea și al celor fără căpătâi, menit să disimuleze înțelesul mesajului transmis, pentru ca aceștia să nu fie înțeleși de masa vorbitorilor, văzuți ca *outsideri*; acest sens, comun cu cel al termenului francez *argot*, este acum transferat, prin specializare, termenului *cant* ("specialized vocabulary of a particular group, such as thieves, journalists, or lawyers; jargon"). Din păcate, în engleză situația se complică prin coexistența mai multor cuvinte desemnând felul de a vorbi și vocabularul întrebuițat de cei care au același fel de viață sau profesie / ocupație: pe lângă *cant*, limba engleză utilizează în acest sens și termenii *shoptalk*, *argot* și *jargon* (care reprezintă tot atâtea *False Friends* pentru vorbitorii de română). Mai mult, asociat termenului *jargon*, cuvântul *slang* poate să desemneze o vorbire caracterizată printr-o sintaxă, un vocabular sau o semantică afectate, pretențioase; ba chiar o "vorbire păsărească" ori chiar *pidgin* (limbă mixtă – cuprinzând elemente de vocabular și de gramatică luate din mai multe idiomuri – asemănătoare

The very definition of the Romanian term *argou*, no less than that of the English word *slang*, is likely to both stimulate, and baffle the linguist or the non-linguist with a penchant for the simple *poeticity* of language. The quite numerous convergent elements are to a large extent undermined by the divergency points exhibited by the very reality of the language. *Slang* (and *argot*) are to be found in plenty in the diastratic structure of language itself, as an idiom and a special vocabulary / terminology of a prevalently vulgar and taboo character, which essentially runs counter the authority of standard language, being mainly used by people belonging to the debased social classes (and also, marginally, to some other social sections willing to single themselves out from the mass of the speakers). The English term *slang* admits, as its primary (and also original) meaning the concept of deviancy from, and inappropriateness to, the standard form of a national language (in comparison to which *slang* / *argot* is a sociolect), starting from the way of speaking characteristic of lawless or homeless people, meant to dissimulate the meaning of the message conveyed, lest the latter should be understood by the common speakers, seen as *outsiders*; that sense of the term, identical to that of Fr. *argot*, is currently shifted, through specialization, to the word *cant* ("specialized vocabulary of a particular group, such as thieves, journalists, or lawyers; jargon" (Collins). Unfortunately, the picture of its semantics in English is further complicated through the fact that several terms co-exist which designate the idiom and the special vocabulary employed by people sharing the same way of life or profession / occupation: in addition to *cant*, English also uses, for the above-mentioned sense, the terms *shoptalk*, *argot* and *jargon* (which, incidentally, represent as many patent *False Friends* for the native speakers of Romanian). Furthermore, in association with the term *jargon*, the word *slang* may also designate an idiom characterized by affected / mannered syntax, vocabulary or semantics, and also a kind of

variantelor creole ale limbilor occidentale, care e folosită, mai ales pentru contacte comerciale, de către vorbitorii limbilor locale).

Firește că trăsătura de devianță față de normă tinde să fie foarte populară mai ales la vârsta adolescenței, când semnificativă este încercarea de a crea noi termeni și expresii sau modalități de exprimare, nu crearea unui limbaj codificat (sau *antilingvaj*), care să-i excludă pe alți vorbitori din conversație. Caracterul *criptic* al argoului nu funcționează, în general (și cu atât mai puțin în limba română), decât pentru scurt timp (și doar incidental – lucru care se întâmplă de altfel și cu vorbirea specializată sau “de atelier” caracteristică anumitor profesii sau ocupații); ceea ce rămâne însă este ineditul, ca și exprimarea colocvială, colorată, glumeață. Dislocuirea termenului (perceput ca fiind) învechit / convențional se face, de regulă, dintr-un reflex de apărare împotriva percepțiilor negative asociate, în cadrul (sub)grupului respectiv, cu folosirea termenilor convenționali.

Prin urmare, astfel de variante diastratice ale limbii naționale, caracterizate printr-o selecție socială și non-dialectală, reprezintă, fără îndoială, căi de îmbogățire a vocabularului. Înnoirea semantică a fondului lexical pe care argoul o poate asigura ține, în primul rând, de marea sa deschidere către nou (prin faptul că se creează în permanență termeni și sensuri noi, dar se și “importă” termeni din alte limbi), ca și de imensa lui *fantezie conotativ-stilistică*. Această fantezie debordantă este expresia strădaniei vorbitorilor argotizanți de a găsi modalități de expresie inedite, colorate, pline de sevă, viguroase, cel mai adesea riscate și / sau umoristice (de pildă, pentru conceptul de „băutură”, în românește se folosesc cuvinte precum: *sirop, medicament, calmant, dezinfectant, adormire, streptomycină, flanelă de Drăgășani / Odobești, stropeală, liniștire, împărtașanie, închinare, valeriană, vanilie, sfințenie*). Se poate vorbi despre o

gibberish, or even *pidgin* (the mixed language or idiom – including lexical and grammar elements taken over from several distinct idioms – which is quite similar to the creole variants of western European languages, and is used, mainly in trading intercourse, by the speakers of local languages).

Obviously, the feature implying deviance from the linguistic standard tends to be very popular especially with teenagers, an age when there is a significant effort towards using and coining new terms and expressions, rather than generating an encrypted language (or an *anti-language*), which should keep the other speakers out of the conversation. The *cryptic* character of slang generally works for a short period of time (in Romanian, it hardly ever does that) – and only incidentally, which actually also occurs in the specialized idiom, or “shoptalk” typical of certain professions or callings; however, what remains is the novelty, as well as the colloquial, colourful, jocular expression. The displacement of the older term (which is perceived as being conventional and humdrum) occurs as a rule out of a defence reflex directed against the negative perceptions that are associated, within the respective (sub)group, with the use of conventional(ized) words.

Consequently, such diastratic variants of a national language characterized by social and non-dialectal selection represent, beyond the shadow of a doubt, effective ways of lexical enrichment. The semantic rejuvenation of the lexicon that slang can secure fundamentally appertains to its primarily being open to novelty (through the fact that it can constantly coin fresh terms and meanings, while also importing foreign terms), and also to its immense *connotative and stylistic imaginativeness*. This exuberant fantasy is an expression of the slang speakers’ attempt to find new, colourful, vigorous ways of linguistic expression that are, more often than not, risqué and / or humorous (e.g., for the concept of “drink”, Romanian slang uses such words as *sirop, medicament, calmant, dezinfectant, adormire, streptomycină, flanelă*

adevărată pletoră sinonimică a termenilor de argou (de exemplu, pentru „închisoare” se folosesc cuvintele românești: *bordei, bortă, arcan, preventoriu, locație, obor, întreprindere, labirint, răcoare, pension (pentru femei), reclusiune, incintă, incubator, groapă, hrubă, grotă, văgăună, pripon, templu, bască, ostrov, cofă, staționar, colegiu, sălaș, sechestru, dubă, ospiciu, fermă (de stat), tabără, universitate, pivniță, cușcă, colivie, cotlon, copcă*), dar, în mod natural, și despre perisabilitatea vocabularului argotic sau argotizant: cel mai adesea, astfel de termeni ajung să nu mai fie folosiți ori, dacă mai sunt folosiți, să nu mai aibă un uz asociat ideii de “vorbire colorată / (sub)colocvială”.

Este firesc ca și în engleză, limbă cu un vocabular am putea spune hipertrofiat, să existe serii *sinonimice* argotizante deosebit de bogate, în special pentru concepte comune sau tabuizate precum: *bani, beat, băutură, mâncare, închisoare, părți intime ale corpului* etc. Folosind dicționarul *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language* pentru a studia “pe viu” bogăția și varietatea faptelor de limbă pe care le pune la dispoziție limba engleză, în speranța că astfel vom putea trasa¹ o paralelă între tipologiile formale și stilistico-semantice din această limbă și cele din limba română, am selectat câteva mii de termeni și expresii ținând de vorbirea argotică, argotizantă și (sub)colocvială. Dintre aceste unități lexicale, iată doar câteva ilustrări ale seriilor sinonimice (cu adevărat pletorice) pe care le poate pune la dispoziție engleza: ■ MONEY *the bite, bread, coin, dough, gelt, (long / folding) green, lolly* (brit.), *mazuma* (m. al. amer.), *moola(h), poke, pot, rhino* (brit.), *roll, scratch, shekel, spondulix, sugar, tin* (arg. înv.), *take, wad, wampum*; (paper money) *cabbage, kale, lettuce*; (piece of money) *ducat, spot*; (money easily or illegally obtained) *gravy*; (money paid in bribes or graft) *ice*; (colocv.) *loot, readies, the ready*; (glumet) *filthy lucre*; (peior.) *pelf*. ■ FOOD

de Drăgășani / Odobești, stropeală, liniștire, împărtășanie, închinare, valeriană, vanilie, sfințenie). So, one can talk about a real synonymic plethora of slang and slangy terms (for instance, for the idea of “prison / jail” the following Romanian terms are used: *bordei, bortă, arcan, preventoriu, locație, obor, întreprindere, labirint, răcoare, pension (pentru femei), reclusiune, incintă, incubator, groapă, hrubă, grotă, văgăună, pripon, templu, bască, ostrov, cofă, pârnaie, staționar, colegiu, sălaș, sechestru, dubă, ospiciu, fermă (de stat), tabără, universitate, pivniță, cușcă, colivie, cotlon, copcă*), but also, naturally, about the transitoriness and perishability of slang and slangy vocabulary: more often than not, such terms come into disuse, or, if they are still used, they are no longer associated with the idea of “colourful or (sub)colloquial speech”.

It is only natural that English – a language boasting, one could say, a hyperabundant vocabulary – should possess extremely rich slang(y) synonymic series, especially for common, or taboo concepts, such as *money, drunk(en), drink, food, prison, pudenda*, etc. Using the *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language* in order to conduct a “live” study of the profusion and variety of the linguistic material English can provide, hoping that we will be thus able to draw⁵ a parallel between the form-, and stylistic and semantic typologies in that language and those in Romanian, we have selected several thousands of words and phrases having to do with slang, slangy and (sub)colloquial speech. Out of those lexical units, the following are apt to give an image of the (really plethoric) synonymic series that English can supply: ■ MONEY *the bite, bread, coin, dough, gelt, (long / folding) green, lolly* (Brit.), *mazuma* (esp. U.S.), *moola(h), poke, pot, rhino* (Brit.), *roll, scratch, shekel, spondulix, sugar, tin* (old slang), *take, wad, wampum*; (paper money) *cabbage, kale, lettuce*; (piece of money) *ducat, spot*; (money easily or illegally obtained) *gravy*; (money paid in bribes or

eatables, eats, grub, nosh, scoff; (colocv.) *chow*. ■ DRINK (1. verb) *to pub-crawl* (m. al. brit.); (colocv.) *to booze, to go on a binge / bender, to hit the bottle*; (2. subst.) *hooch*; (colocv.) *booze*. ■ DRUNK(EN) *canned, fu' (scot.), loaded, pie-eyed, plastered, sloshed, stewed, stinko, stoned, tiddly, well-oiled*; (colocv.) *half seas over, merry, soaked, tight, under the influence*; (euf.) *tired and emotional*. ■ DRUNK(ARD) *lush, soak, wino*; (colocv.) *boozer*. ■ PRISON *brig* (m. al. amer.), *can, clink, cooler, hoosegow / hoosgow, inside, jailhouse* (S. amer.), *jug, nick, quod, stir*. ■ RICH, WELL-OFF *loaded, rolling, well-heeled*; (colocv.) *in the money, flush, in clover, on Easy Street*. ■ PENIS *cock, dick, dong, dork, jock, pecker, peter, prick, putz, weenie*. ■ POSTERIOR *ass, bucket, bum* (brit.), *buns, butt, can, duff, fanny, heinie, keister / keester, prat, rear (end), slat, tail*.

Sporirea efectului expresiv este asigurată, în majoritatea acestor termeni nou creați, de *metaforizare*. Legat de aceasta, am verificat și pentru vocabularul argotic al limbii române (în articolul *Termeni argotici, (sub-)colocviali și familiari proveniți din limbajele „de atelier” și din vocabularele meșteșugurilor tradiționale*) faptul că expresivitatea termenilor este cu atât mai mare cu cât: trăsăturile distinctive ale termenului propriu și ale celui figurat aparțin unor sfere semantice mai depărtate, termenul figurat provine dintr-o clasă de cuvinte cu un câmp semantic mai restrâns, termenii provin din stiluri depărtate de stilul familiar-argotic (de ex. *segment „picior”*). Este, așadar, de remarcat, în română ca și în engleză, pătrunderea în vorbirea argotică, argotizantă sau subcolocvială a unui destul de mare număr de termeni livrești, tehnici sau chiar tehnico-științifici / savanți, cum sunt rom. *acciz, acut, a anestezia, antene, boxe, brand, clișeu, colimator, a degresa, ecologist, ecran, falset, flanc, flotă, a glisa, hamlet, hemogramă, incintă, labirint, laminor, ludovici, luxat, malaxoare, mușă, mulaj, orbită, oxidat, paralel, parapantă,*

graft) ice; (colloq.) *loot, readies, the ready*; (jocular) *filthy lucre*; (contemptuous) *pelf*. ■ FOOD *eatables, eats, grub, nosh, scoff*; (colloq.) *chow*. ■ DRINK (1. verb) *to pub-crawl* (esp. Brit.); (colloq.) *to booze, to go on a binge / bender, to hit the bottle*; (2. noun) *hooch*; (colloq.) *booze*. ■ DRUNK(EN) *canned, fu' (Scot.), loaded, pie-eyed, plastered, sloshed, stewed, stinko, stoned, tiddly, well-oiled*; (colloq.) *half seas over, merry, soaked, tight, under the influence*; (euphemistic) *tired and emotional*. ■ DRUNK(ARD) *lush, soak, wino*; (colloq.) *boozer*. ■ PRISON *brig* (esp. U.S.), *can, clink, cooler, hoosegow / hoosgow, inside, jailhouse* (Southern U.S.), *jug, nick, quod, stir*. ■ RICH, WELL-OFF *loaded, rolling, well-heeled*; (colloq.) *in the money, flush, in clover, on Easy Street*. ■ PENIS *cock, dick, dong, dork, jock, pecker, peter, prick, putz, weenie*. ■ POSTERIOR *ass, bucket, bum* (Brit.), *buns, butt, can, duff, fanny, heinie, keister / keester, prat, rear (end), slat, tail*.

Enhancing the expressive or graphical effect is ensured, for most of those newfangled terms, by the *metaphoric bent*. In this respect, we have verified, for the slang(y) vocabulary of Romanian as well (in an article titled *Termeni argotici, (sub-)colocviali și familiari proveniți din limbajele „de atelier” și din vocabularele meșteșugurilor tradiționale*⁶), the fact that the increased expressiveness of such terms is in direct proportion to: the distinctive traits of the direct word, and those of its figurative use being part of remote semantic spheres, the figurative term originating in a lexical group of a more restricted semantic description, the terms coming from registers as far as possible from the colloquial / highly informal / slangy area (e.g. Rom. *segment „leg”*). In this connection, the fact is noticeable that, in both Romanian and English, a large number of learned, technical and scientific / specialized terms have made their way into the slang, slangy or highly colloquial idiom, e.g. Rom. *acciz, acut, a anestezia, antene, boxe, brand, clișeu, colimator, a degresa, ecologist, ecran, falset, flanc, flotă, a glisa, hamlet,*

perfuzie, polizor, profundor, recital, a se reseta, satelit, scenariu, a skipa, solvabil, stronțisor, tandem, ateleporta, torpilat, tranzistor, a trotila, umoare, vernisaj.

În ceea ce privește apartenența domeniială a termenilor englezești selectați (și, în consecință, încadrarea lor funcțională strictă), câteva sfere tipice de activitate par să se situeze în prim-plan, alături de variantele argotice corespunzătoare lor: ■ Argoul militar și al marinei, de ex. **brig² n.* "the guardhouse; prison" (cf. rom. *țuhau(s), bahau(s), țambal*); *dog biscuit *2.* "an army field-ration biscuit" (cf. rom. *conducete* "macaroane", *balast(ru)* "orez" etc.); *sundowner* "Naut. an officer who is a strict disciplinarian [from requiring return from shore leave by sundown]". ■ Argoul curselor de cai: *boot¹* "vt. 5. Horse Racing to ride (a horse) in a race"; *chalk* "adj. *2. Horse Racing a) favored to win, place, or show b) betting on favorites only". ■ Argoul boxerilor și luptătorilor de wrestling: *beezer* "n. the nose". ■ Argoul jucătorilor de baseball sau de fotbal american: *ballhawk* "n.1 Baseball a skillful outfielder; 2. Football a) a defensive player adept at intercepting passes and recovering fumbles b) a skillful pass receiver". ■ Argoul narcomanilor și al lumii interlope: *acid* "n. 2. LSD"; *acidhead* "n. a habitual user of LSD". ■ Altele (argoul hackerilor, al astronautilor etc.): **no-go* "adj. not functioning properly or not ready to go [orig. astronauts' jargon]".² (Nu ne-am propus însă să ne referim aici și la termenii argotici peiorativi cu nuanță exclusivist-rasistă, de tipul: *abo* "aborigen, băstinaș", *Dago* "negricios, țigănos", *jig* "negru, negrotei", *Nigger* "negrotei, cioroi, bronzat", *spic / spick* "hispanofon din S.U.A.", *wop* "broscar", *wog* "străin" etc.).

De asemenea, am considerat operațională distincția între termenii *exclusiv argotici* și *sensurile argotice* ale unor cuvinte obișnuite (cum ar fi *red, sugar, sweet, snow*, etc. – care, cel mai adesea, nu sunt foarte numeroase: *red* "a red capsule of

hemogramă, incintă, labirint, laminor, ludovici, luxat, malaxoare, muță, mulaj, orbită, oxidat, paralel, parapanită, perfuzie, polizor, profundor, recital, a se reseta, satelit, scenariu, a skipa, solvabil, stronțisor, tandem, a teleporta, torpilat, tranzistor, a trotila, umoare, vernisaj.

As far as the domain inclusion of the English terms selected is concerned (and, consequently, their strict register association), a number of typical fields of activity seem to be placed in the foreground, with the respective slang(y) terms and variants: ■ Army and navy slang, e.g. **brig² n.* "the guardhouse; prison" (cf. Rom. *țuhau(s), bahau(s), țambal*); *dog biscuit *2.* "an army field-ration biscuit" (cf. Rom. *conducete* "macaronis", *balast(ru)* "rice", etc.); *sundowner* "Naut. an officer who is a strict disciplinarian [from requiring return from shore leave by sundown]". ■ Horse racing slang, e.g. *boot¹* "vt. 5. Horse Racing to ride (a horse) in a race"; *chalk* "adj. *2. Horse Racing a) favored to win, place, or show b) betting on favorites only". ■ Prize fighters' slang, e.g. *beezer* "n. the nose". ■ Baseball and football players' slang, e.g. *ballhawk* "n.1. Baseball a skillful outfielder; 2. Football a) a defensive player adept at intercepting passes and recovering fumbles b) a skillful pass receiver". ■ Underworld and drug-users' slang, e.g. *acid* "n. 2. LSD"; *acidhead* "n. a habitual user of LSD". ■ Other categories of slang (hackers' slang, astronauts' slang, etc.), e.g. **no-go* "adj. not functioning properly or not ready to go [orig. astronauts' jargon]".⁷ (Another prolific field, which we did not mean to include in this contribution, is that represented by such racist, derogatory, offensive slang words as *abo* "aborigine, native", *Dago* "a member of a Latin race, esp. a Spaniard or Portuguese", *jig* "Negro", *Nigger* "Negro; a member of any dark-skinned race", *spic / spick* "a person from a Spanish-speaking country in South or Central America or a Spanish-speaking community in the U.S", *wop* "a member of a Latin people, esp. an Italian", *wog* "a foreigner, esp. one who is not

secobarbital, a barbiturate”, *sugar* “bani”, *sweet* “good, delightful, etc. (a generalized epithet of approval)”, *to sweeten* “*Poker* to add further stakes to (a pot) before opening”, *snow* “*n.* cocaine or heroin; *vt.* 3. to deceive, mislead, or win over by glib talk, flattery, etc.”). Expresivitatea deosebită a creațiilor lexicale argotizante se vedește în ambele categorii, însă ea este cu totul remarcabilă la termenii aparținând celei de-a doua. Dintre imaginile *metaforice* puse în circulație de vorbirea argotică, unele sunt mai degrabă “transparente”, în vreme ce altele sunt mai greu de descifrat (caz în care, cele mai adesea, ne ajută explicațiile lexicosemantice sau indicațiile etimologice ale dicționarelor – deși, și aici, este adevărat dictonul *Grammatici certant*); uneori însă am putut detecta chiar și „metafore sau imagini internaționale”. Pentru a exemplifica prima categorie menționată – cea a argotismelor cu sens relativ ușor de dedus (și de reținut) –, dăm mai jos doar câțiva termeni argotici creați prin mecanismul semantic al metaforei: *alphabet soup* “a jumble of initials, as of government agencies or other organizations”; *angel* “*vt.* to support with money”; **antsy* “*adj.* fidgety, nervous, impatient, etc.”; **barfly* *n.* a person who spends much time drinking in barrooms”; **bat around* “1. to travel or roam about. 2. to consider or discuss (an idea, plan, etc.) freely and informally”; **bat out* “to create or compose quickly or hastily”; *bay window* “*2. a large, protruding belly”; **canned* “*adj.* 2. a) recorded for reproduction, as on radio or TV [*canned* commercials] b) prepared for publication in a number of newspapers simultaneously [a *canned* editorial]”; *cat burglar* “a burglar who enters buildings by climbing up to openings in upper stories, roofs, etc.”; *daylight* “*n.* 5. [*pl.*]orig., the eyes; hence, consciousness: often used hyperbolically, as in *scare* (or *beat* or *knock*, etc.) *the daylights out of*”; *dead duck* / *dead pigeon* “* a person or thing that is ruined or certain to suffer ruin, failure, or death; goner”; **dead soldier*

White”, etc.).

Moreover, a distinction we considered to be operational in the present contribution is that between the *exclusively slang terms* and the *slang(y) meanings* of a number of common words (e.g. *red*, *sugar*, *sweet*, *snow*, etc. – which, as a rule, did not prove very numerous: *red* “a red capsule of secobarbital, a barbiturate”, *sugar* “money”, *sweet* “good, delightful, etc. (a generalized epithet of approval)”, *to sweeten* “*Poker* to add further stakes to (a pot) before opening”, *snow* “*n.* cocaine or heroin; *vt.* 3. to deceive, mislead, or win over by glib talk, flattery, etc.”). The remarkable expressiveness of the slang(y) coinages is visible in both categories, but its conspicuousness is really overwhelming with the terms belonging to the latter class. Out of the *metaphoric* images circulated by slang speech, some are rather “transparent”, while others are harder to decipher (in which case we can, more often than not, have recourse to the lexical and semantic gloss, or to the etymological notes provided by monolingual dictionaries – although, there as well, the dictum *Grammatici certant* proves true); at times though, we have had the opportunity to detect even “international metaphors or images”. To illustrate the first category mentioned above – the slang words whose meaning is relatively easy to deduce / grasp (and remember) –, we list below a few of the many slang terms coined through the semantic mechanism of metaphor: *alphabet soup* “a jumble of initials, as of government agencies or other organizations”; *angel* “*vt.* to support with money”; **antsy* “*adj.* fidgety, nervous, impatient, etc.”; **barfly* *n.* a person who spends much time drinking in barrooms”; **bat around* “1. to travel or roam about. 2. to consider or discuss (an idea, plan, etc.) freely and informally”; **bat out* “to create or compose quickly or hastily”; *bay window* “*2. a large, protruding belly”; **canned* “*adj.* 2. a) recorded for reproduction, as on radio or TV [*canned* commercials] b) prepared for publication in a number of newspapers simultaneously [a *canned* editorial]”; *cat*

“an empty beer, wine, or whiskey bottle”;³ **ding-a-ling* “n. a crazy, stupid, or eccentric person [< the ringing in the head of a punch-drunk boxer]”; *ink* “n. 3. publicity, esp. in newspapers; vt. to sign one’s name to”; *kicker* “n. 3. a) a surprise ending, ironic twist, etc. b) a hidden, unsuspected point or difficulty”; *nose job* “a cosmetic alteration of a person’s nose by plastic surgery”; *pickled* “adj. intoxicated; drunk”; **shoot’em-up* “n. 1. a book, film, TV show, video game, etc. characterized by much violent content, gunplay, etc., esp. one in the western, crime, or war genres; 2. GUNPLAY”; **shooting iron* “any firearm”; **short fuse* “a tendency to become angry readily; quick temper”; **soft touch* “a person who is easily persuaded, esp. to give or lend money”. Există și astfel de termeni care au la bază aceeași imagine referențială ca și în românește, de ex. *rubber*¹ “n. 3. something made of this substance; specif., [...] c) a condom” – cf. rom. *cauciuc* “prezervativ”. La fel, nu puține sunt cuvintele sau expresiile comune, redate, cu un sens predictibil, în registrul argotic (de *slang*): *all-right* “adj. honest, honorable, good, excellent, etc.: used before the noun it modifies”; *almighty* adv. extremely; *baby* “*5. darling; honey: often a casual term of address; *6. any person or thing [this car is a tough *baby* to drive]”.

Iată câteva cuvinte și expresii argotice, de o expresivitate (imagistic-metaforică) deosebită, care fac parte din cea de-a doua categorie: **apple polisher* “a person who curries favor by gifts, flattery, etc., as a child bringing his teacher an apple”; *AC/DC* or *A.C./D.C.* “adj. BISEXUAL (adj. 3) [by analogy with a device that works on either alternating current or direct current]; *ax / axe* “n. *3. a musical instrument”; **badger game* “the blackmailing of a man by maneuvering him into a compromising situation with a woman”; *banana oil* “[Old Slang] insincere talk; *bad*¹ “*14. very good, stylish,

burglar “a burglar who enters buildings by climbing up to openings in upper stories, roofs, etc.”; *daylight* “n. 5. [pl.] orig., the eyes; hence, consciousness: often used hyperbolically, as in *scare* (or *beat* or *knock*, etc.) *the daylights out of*”; *dead duck / dead pigeon* “* a person or thing that is ruined or certain to suffer ruin, failure, or death; goner”; **dead soldier* “an empty beer, wine, or whiskey bottle”;⁸ **ding-a-ling* “n. a crazy, stupid, or eccentric person [< the ringing in the head of a punch-drunk boxer]”; *ink* “n. 3. publicity, esp. in newspapers; vt. to sign one’s name to”; *kicker* “n. 3. a) a surprise ending, ironic twist, etc. b) a hidden, unsuspected point or difficulty”; *nose job* “a cosmetic alteration of a person’s nose by plastic surgery”; *pickled* “adj. intoxicated; drunk”; **shoot’em-up* “n. 1. a book, film, TV show, video game, etc. characterized by much violent content, gunplay, etc., esp. one in the western, crime, or war genres; 2. GUNPLAY”; **shooting iron* “any firearm”; **short fuse* “a tendency to become angry readily; quick temper”; **soft touch* “a person who is easily persuaded, esp. to give or lend money”. Not surprisingly, there are terms that start from the same referential images as those underlying the Romanian terms, e.g. *rubber*¹ “n. 3. something made of this substance; specif., [...] c) a condom” – cf. Rom. *cauciuc* “condom”. Similarly, many common words or phrases were shifted into the slang(y) register, with a predictable meaning, e.g. *all-right* “adj. honest, honorable, good, excellent, etc.: used before the noun it modifies”; *almighty* adv. extremely; *baby* “*5. darling; honey: often a casual term of address; *6. any person or thing [this car is a tough *baby* to drive]”.

Here are some slang(y) words and phrases, loaded with special (imaginal and metaphoric) expressivity, which belong to the latter category: **apple polisher* “a person who curries favor by gifts, flattery, etc., as a child bringing his teacher an apple”; *AC/DC* or *A.C./D.C.* “adj. BISEXUAL (adj. 3) [by analogy with a device that works on either alternating current or direct current]; *ax / axe* “n. *3. a

effective, etc.”; *bang*¹ “vt. 4 [Vulgar Slang] to engage in sexual intercourse with; n. *3 b) a thrill; excitement. n. [Vulgar Slang] the act or an instance of sexual intercourse”; *banger* “n. [Brit. Slang] a sausage [BANG¹ + -ER: ? from resemblance to a thick club used for banging]”; *black-bag* “adj. designating or of a secret illegal break-in made by a government agency in pursuit of suspected criminals, enemy agents, etc. Etymology [in allusion to a burglar's bag of tools]”; **duck soup* “something that is easy to do; cinch”; *flatfoot* “n. 2. a policeman: so called from the notion that flat feet result from walking a beat”; **gravy train* “a sinecure, subsidy, etc. that allows one to live luxuriously without much work”; **greenie* “n. an amphetamine pill, used as a stimulant. [after the color of a common type]”; *honey bucket* “a bucket or container for human body waste, used where a toilet is not available”; **one-armed bandit* “SLOT MACHINE”; *reefer* “n. *3. a marijuana cigarette [from the rolled appearance of a reef (of a sail)]”; **rubber check* “a check that is worthless because of insufficient funds in the drawer's account [from the notion that it bounces: see BOUNCE (vi. 3)]”; **Saturday night special* “any small, cheap, short-barreled handgun that is readily available [from their use in weekend crimes]”; *shooting gallery* “*2. a place, as an apartment, where a narcotics addict can prepare and inject an illicit drug, as heroin, with equipment usually provided on the premises”; **short snort* “a quick drink of liquor”; **showboat* “n. 2. a showoff; exhibitionist. vi. to show off”; *put* (or *get*) *the show on the road* “to set things in operation; start an activity, venture, etc.”; **snake eyes* “a throw of two ones (two) in craps”; **squirrelly* or *squirrely* “adj. odd, crazy, etc. [in allusion to a squirrel's diet of nuts: see NUT, n. 8a]”.

Faptul că foarte multe creații argotice au o certă valoare (și, de cele mai multe ori, și o intenționalitate) umoristică este cât se poate de lesne de demonstrat, așa cum dovedesc, credem convingător,

musical instrument”; **badger game* “the blackmailing of a man by maneuvering him into a compromising situation with a woman”; *banana oil* “[Old Slang] insincere talk; *bad*¹ “*14. very good, stylish, effective, etc.”; *bang*¹ “vt. 4 [Vulgar Slang] to engage in sexual intercourse with; n. *3 b) a thrill; excitement. n. [Vulgar Slang] the act or an instance of sexual intercourse”; *banger* “n. [Brit. Slang] a sausage [BANG¹ + -ER: ? from resemblance to a thick club used for banging]”; *black-bag* “adj. designating or of a secret illegal break-in made by a government agency in pursuit of suspected criminals, enemy agents, etc. Etymology [in allusion to a burglar's bag of tools]”; **duck soup* “something that is easy to do; cinch”; *flatfoot* “n. 2. a policeman: so called from the notion that flat feet result from walking a beat”; **gravy train* “a sinecure, subsidy, etc. that allows one to live luxuriously without much work”; **greenie* “n. an amphetamine pill, used as a stimulant. [after the color of a common type]”; *honey bucket* “a bucket or container for human body waste, used where a toilet is not available”; **one-armed bandit* “SLOT MACHINE”; *reefer* “n. *3. a marijuana cigarette [from the rolled appearance of a reef (of a sail)]”; **rubber check* “a check that is worthless because of insufficient funds in the drawer's account [from the notion that it bounces: see BOUNCE (vi. 3)]”; **Saturday night special* “any small, cheap, short-barreled handgun that is readily available [from their use in weekend crimes]”; *shooting gallery* “*2. a place, as an apartment, where a narcotics addict can prepare and inject an illicit drug, as heroin, with equipment usually provided on the premises”; **short snort* “a quick drink of liquor”; **showboat* “n. 2. a showoff; exhibitionist. vi. to show off”; *put* (or *get*) *the show on the road* “to set things in operation; start an activity, venture, etc.”; **snake eyes* “a throw of two ones (two) in craps”; **squirrelly* or *squirrely* “adj. odd, crazy, etc. [in allusion to a squirrel's diet of nuts]”.

exemple ca: *battle-ax / battle-axe* “n. *2.a woman who is harsh, domineering, etc.”; **battlewagon* “n. a battleship; *beam* “n. 10. the width of the hips”; **bent out of shape* “very angry, upset, or agitated”; **big house, the* “a penitentiary”; *blink *on the blink* “not working right; out of order”; *boo²* “n. MARIJUANA”; *breadbasket* “n. 2. the stomach or abdomen”; **Bronx cheer* “RASPBERRY (sense 3)”; *give (or get) the bum’s rush* “to eject (or be ejected) forcibly”; *cartwheel* “n. *2. a large coin, esp. a silver dollar”; *chassis* “n. *5. the body or figure, esp. of a woman”; **cheaters* “n.pl. eyeglasses, esp. dark glasses”; **chicken colonel* “[Mil. Slang] a full colonel [from the eagle insignia worn on the shoulders]”; *chopper* “n. 3. [pl.] a set of teeth, esp. false teeth”; **church key* “a device for opening cans, esp. originally beer cans, by punching a V-shaped hole in the top”; **coffin nail* “[Old Slang] a cigarette”; *out to lunch* “crazy; insane”; **motormouth* n. “a person who talks incessantly: also *motor-mouth* or *motor mouth*”; **tanglefoot* “n. [West Slang] cheap whiskey”. Există și variante glumețe / umoristice precum *bazooms* “n.pl. a woman's breasts; bosom”.

Este adevărat că foarte multe exprimări cu certă valoare expresiv-imagistică au rămas simple argotisme “fosilizate” – lucru dovedibil în primul rând prin studierea etimologiei lor.⁴ Iată doar câteva cuvinte care, la origine, au fost (după mărturia dicționarilor de specialitate), termeni argotici: *banter* “[17th-c. slang < ?]”; **bogus* “adj. not genuine”; spurious. [orig. (slang), counterfeiter's apparatus: < ?]”; *boondocks* “n.pl. [Colloq.] 1. a jungle or a wild, heavily wooded area; wilderness; *2. any remote rural or provincial region; hinterland Used with *the* [orig. World War II military slang < Tagalog *bundok*, mountain]”; *chum* “[late 17th-c. slang; prob. altered sp. of *cham*, clipped form of *chamber* (*fellow*), *chamber* (*mate*)]”; *conundrum* “n. [16th-c. Oxford University Lat. slang for pedant, whim, etc.; early sp.

The fact that many slang(y) coinages have an obvious humorous and jocular value (and, on most occasions, also such an intentionality) is extremely easy to demonstrate – as can show, we believe convincingly, examples like: *battle-ax / battle-axe* “n. *2.a woman who is harsh, domineering, etc.”; **battlewagon* “n. a battleship; *beam* “n. 10. the width of the hips”; **bent out of shape* “very angry, upset, or agitated”; **big house, the* “a penitentiary”; *blink *on the blink* “not working right; out of order”; *boo²* “n. MARIJUANA”; *breadbasket* “n. 2. the stomach or abdomen”; **Bronx cheer* “RASPBERRY (sense 3)”; *give (or get) the bum’s rush* “to eject (or be ejected) forcibly”; *cartwheel* “n. *2. a large coin, esp. a silver dollar”; *chassis* “n. *5. the body or figure, esp. of a woman”; **cheaters* “n.pl. eyeglasses, esp. dark glasses”; **chicken colonel* “[Mil. Slang] a full colonel [from the eagle insignia worn on the shoulders]”; *chopper* “n. 3. [pl.] a set of teeth, esp. false teeth”; **church key* “a device for opening cans, esp. originally beer cans, by punching a V-shaped hole in the top”; **coffin nail* “[Old Slang] a cigarette”; *out to lunch* “crazy; insane”; **motormouth* n. “a person who talks incessantly: also *motor-mouth* or *motor mouth*”; **tanglefoot* “n. [West Slang] cheap whiskey”. There are also jocular / humorous variants such as *bazooms* “n.pl. a woman’s breasts; bosom”.

It is perfectly true that lots of turns of phrase having a clear expressive and imaginal value have remained mere “fossilized” slang terms – which can be proved, in the first place, by studying their etymology.⁹ Here is a random list of words that were originally (as the specialised dictionaries can testify) slang / slangy terms: *banter* “[17th-c. slang < ?]”; **bogus* “adj. not genuine”; spurious. [orig. (slang), counterfeiter's apparatus: < ?]”; *boondocks* “n.pl. [Colloq.] 1. a jungle or a wild, heavily wooded area; wilderness; *2. any remote rural or provincial region; hinterland. Used with *the* [orig. World War II military slang < Tagalog *bundok*, mountain]”; *chum* “[late 17th-c. slang; prob. altered sp. of *cham*,

quonundrum”]; *cully* “*n.* [Old Slang] **1.** a dupe. **2.** a fellow; companion; mate. *vt.* [Old Slang] to trick; deceive; cheat [17th-c. thieves' slang, prob. contr. of CULLION]”; *dicky*² “*adj.* [Brit. Colloq.] diseased; unsound [late 18th-c. Brit slang < ?]”; *fuss* “[17th-c. slang, prob. echoic]”; *jiggery-pokery* “*n.* [Colloq., Chiefly Brit.] trickery or deception; hanky-panky [altered < Scot *joukery-paukery*, rhyming slang < IE **joukerie*, trickery < **joukere*, a cheater < **jouk*, a dodge, dart < ?]”; *nab* “*vt.* [Colloq.] **1.** to seize suddenly; snatch or steal. **2.** to arrest or catch (a felon or wrongdoer) [< thieves' slang (16th-17th c.) prob. var. of dial. *nap*, to snatch < Scand, as in Dan *nappe*, Swed *nappa*, to snatch]”.

Chiar dacă se poate spune că este vorba aici despre ceea ce s-ar putea numi “expresivitate latentă” (de tip cultural / livresc) ori despre “imagini dispărute”, termenii argotici care conțin aluzii de tip cultural, istoric, literar etc. reprezintă – paradoxal, trebuie s-o recunoaștem – o bogăție (ascunsă) a limbii. Câteva exemple credem că vor putea da – măcar parțial – dimensiunea acestui fenomen, care suntem de părere că ar trebui cercetat mai îndeaproape (chiar și în conjuncție cu fenomenul, asemănător, al inscripțiilor urbane de tip *graffiti*): **boll weevil* “**2.** a conservative Democratic politician from a State of the southern U.S.” [deoarece insecta, *Anthonomus grandis*, produce larve care atacă fructul plantei de bumbac, în sudul S.U.A. și în Mexic]; **-fest* “*combining form* an occasion of much or many (of the thing specified): often used to form colloquial or slang words [*songfest*, *slugfest*] [< Ger *fest*, a celebration < Lat. *festum*: see FEAST]”; **gandy dancer* “[Old Slang] a worker in a railroad section gang [prob. so named because of movements while using tools from the *Gandy Manufacturing Co.* (Chicago)]”; **Montezuma's revenge* “acute infectious diarrhea, esp. when contracted in Mexico”; *sheik* / *sheikh* “*n.* **3.** [Old Slang] a

clipped form of *chamber (fellow)*, *chamber (mate)*”]; *conundrum* “*n.* [16th-c. Oxford University Lat. slang for pedant, whim, etc.; early sp. *quonundrum*”]; *cully* “*n.* [Old Slang] **1.** a dupe. **2.** a fellow; companion; mate. *vt.* [Old Slang] to trick; deceive; cheat [17th-c. thieves' slang, prob. contr. of CULLION]”; *dicky*² “*adj.* [Brit. Colloq.] diseased; unsound [late 18th-c. Brit slang < ?]”; *fuss* “[17th-c. slang, prob. echoic]”; *jiggery-pokery* “*n.* [Colloq., Chiefly Brit.] trickery or deception; hanky-panky [altered < Scot *joukery-paukery*, rhyming slang < IE **joukerie*, trickery < **joukere*, a cheater < **jouk*, a dodge, dart < ?]”; *nab* “*vt.* [Colloq.] **1.** to seize suddenly; snatch or steal. **2.** to arrest or catch (a felon or wrongdoer) [< thieves' slang (16th-17th c.) prob. var. of dial. *nap*, to snatch < Scand, as in Dan *nappe*, Swed *nappa*, to snatch]”.

Even if it can be argued that this is a case of what may be called “latent expressivity” (of a cultural / learned type), or of “lost images”, the slang terms which contain allusions to cultural, historical, literary, etc. facts represent – in a rather paradoxical way, we have to admit – a (hidden) asset of the language. A few examples would suffice, we think, to calliper – be it partially – the actual size of that phenomenon, which we think should be studied more thoroughly (even in conjunction with the quite similar phenomenon of urban *graffiti*): **boll weevil* “**2.** a conservative Democratic politician from a State of the southern U.S.” [because the larvae of that insect, *Anthonomus grandis*, living in the southern U.S. and Mexico, consume cotton bolls]; **-fest* “*combining form* an occasion of much or many (of the thing specified): often used to form colloquial or slang words [*songfest*, *slugfest*] [< Ger *fest*, a celebration < Lat. *festum*: see FEAST]”; **gandy dancer* “[Old Slang] a worker in a railroad section gang [prob. so named because of movements while using tools from the *Gandy Manufacturing Co.* (Chicago)]”; **Montezuma's revenge* “acute infectious diarrhea, esp. when contracted in Mexico”; *sheik* / *sheikh* “*n.* **3.** [Old Slang] a

irresistibly attracted [after E. M. Hull's novel, *The Sheik* (1921)]”; *zap “vt., vi. to move, strike, stun, smash, kill, defeat, etc. suddenly and with great speed and force. n. energy, verve, pep, zip, etc. interj. an exclamation used to express sudden, swift action or change [echoic blend < ? Z(IP) and (SL)AP, popularized in comic-strip use]”.

Uneori, este vorba despre creații personale: *palooka “n. [Old Slang] a clumsy or oafish fellow, esp. an inept athlete [< ? : popularized by Jack Conway (died 1928), U.S. baseball player and sportswriter]”; *gobbledygook “n. talk or writing, esp. of officialdom, that is pompous, wordy, involved, and full of long, Latinized words Also gobbledegook. [first used in current sense by Maury Maverick (1895-1954), U.S. Representative: ? echoic of turkey cries]; *goon n.2. a person who is awkward, grotesque, stupid, etc. [after Alice the Goon, grotesque comic-strip figure created by E. C. Segar (1894-1938), U.S. cartoonist]”; *heebie-jeebies “n.pl. [Old Slang] a state of nervousness; jitters: with the. [coined by W. B. De Beck (1890-1942) in his comic strip *Barney Google*]”; *hot dog “2. an exclamation expressing delight [orig. (?) so called (c. 1900) by T. A. Dorgan, U.S. cartoonist (died 1929), prob. in allusion to pop. notion that the sausage was made of dog meat]”.

Un statut asemănător îl au numele proprii folosite în compunerea argotismelor sau ca bază etimologică de plecare pentru acestea: *Annie Oakley “a free ticket; pass [after woman rifle expert (1860-1926): ? because her small targets resembled punched tickets]”; *rube “n. a person from a rural region who lacks polish and sophistication; rustic [< Rube, nickname of REUBEN]”; *brannigan “n. a noisy quarrel or fight; brawl [prob. after surname Brannigan]”; Lulu / lulu “n. *1. any person or thing outstanding for some quality, as a beautiful girl, a difficult task, etc.; *2. a fixed allowance given in lieu of payment for itemized expenses”; murphy “n. [Old Slang]

masterful man to whom women are irresistibly attracted [after E. M. Hull's novel, *The Sheik* (1921)]”; *zap “vt., vi. to move, strike, stun, smash, kill, defeat, etc. suddenly and with great speed and force. n. energy, verve, pep, zip, etc. interj. an exclamation used to express sudden, swift action or change [echoic blend < ? Z(IP) and (SL)AP, popularized in comic-strip use]”.

Sometimes, expressive terms are the result of personal coinages, e.g. *palooka “n. [Old Slang] a clumsy or oafish fellow, esp. an inept athlete [< ? : popularized by Jack Conway (died 1928), U.S. baseball player and sportswriter]”; *gobbledygook “n. talk or writing, esp. of officialdom, that is pompous, wordy, involved, and full of long, Latinized words Also gobbledegook. [first used in current sense by Maury Maverick (1895-1954), U.S. Representative: ? echoic of turkey cries]; *goon n.2. a person who is awkward, grotesque, stupid, etc. [after Alice the Goon, grotesque comic-strip figure created by E. C. Segar (1894-1938), U.S. cartoonist]”; *heebie-jeebies “n.pl. [Old Slang] a state of nervousness; jitters: with the. [coined by W. B. De Beck (1890-1942) in his comic strip *Barney Google*]”; *hot dog “2. an exclamation expressing delight [orig. (?) so called (c. 1900) by T. A. Dorgan, U.S. cartoonist (died 1929), prob. in allusion to pop. notion that the sausage was made of dog meat]”.

A similar status is held by the proper names used in making up the slang(y) terms, or detectable as part of their etymological bases, e.g. *Annie Oakley “a free ticket; pass [after woman rifle expert (1860-1926): ? because her small targets resembled punched tickets]”; *rube “n. a person from a rural region who lacks polish and sophistication; rustic [< Rube, nickname of REUBEN]”; *brannigan “n. a noisy quarrel or fight; brawl [prob. after surname Brannigan]”; Lulu / lulu “n. *1. any person or thing outstanding for some quality, as a beautiful girl, a difficult task, etc.; *2. a fixed allowance given in lieu of payment for itemized expenses”; murphy “n. [Old Slang] a potato [after *Murphy*, Irish

a potato [after *Murphy*, Irish surname]”; *gussy / gussie* “*vt., vi.* to dress (up) or decorate in a fine or showy way [after *Gussie*, nickname for AUGUSTA]”; *Joe* “**n.* 1. [often *j-*] fellow; guy; 2. [*j-*] coffee; *Joe Blow* 1. *personification* of an average, ordinary man; 2. a name used to refer to a man whose name is not known or whose typicalness is being emphasized”; **nervous Nellie* “a timid person who is easily upset and is hesitant to act [orig. used of high-strung racehorses: in ref. to *old Nell*, jocular name for a nag]”; *Jane* “*n.* **[j-]*a girl or woman”; **fancy dan* “a flashy, ostentatious person, often one who lacks real skill, stamina, etc.; [*fancy* + (prob.) *Dan*, nickname for DANIEL]”; **sneaky Pete* “very cheap wine, often the dregs”. În mod similar se prezintă termenii proveniți din nume de mărci înregistrate: **moxie* “*n.* courage, pluck, perseverance, etc.; guts. [after *Moxie*, trademark for a soft drink]”.

În ceea ce privește sensul termenilor argotici analizați, pe lângă evoluțiile în sensul extinderii sau nuanțării (de ex. **jive*¹ “*vt., vi.* to speak (to) in a way that is exaggerated, insincere, flippant, etc., esp. in trying to fool or mislead; *n.* 1. talk used in jiving someone. *adj.* insincere, misleading, fake, fraudulent, etc. [altered < JIBE²: sense development, to taunt, banter, improvise, swing (music)]”), se pot remarca foarte numeroasele cuvinte și expresii polisemantice: *basket case* “1. a person lacking all four limbs 2. a person unable to function, esp. because of emotional disturbance. 3. anything that does not function properly”; **bazoo* “*n.* 1. the mouth 2. the nose. 3. loud or boastful talk”; **bimbo* “*n.* 1. [Old Slang] a guy, fellow; 2. a silly or stupid person: used esp. of a woman. 3. a sexually promiscuous woman”; *bird* “*n.* 6. a sound of disapproval made by vibrating the lips. 7. a rocket or guided missile; [Brit.] a young woman”; *bitch* “*n.* 3. anything especially unpleasant or difficult; *4. a complaint; *vi.* * to complain; *vt.* 1. to bungle: usually with *up*; 2. to behave spitefully or

surname]”; *gussy / gussie* “*vt., vi.* to dress (up) or decorate in a fine or showy way [after *Gussie*, nickname for AUGUSTA]”; *Joe* “**n.* 1. [often *j-*] fellow; guy; 2. [*j-*] coffee; *Joe Blow* 1. *personification* of an average, ordinary man; 2. a name used to refer to a man whose name is not known or whose typicalness is being emphasized”; **nervous Nellie* “a timid person who is easily upset and is hesitant to act [orig. used of high-strung racehorses: in ref. to *old Nell*, jocular name for a nag]”; *Jane* “*n.* **[j-]*a girl or woman”; **fancy dan* “a flashy, ostentatious person, often one who lacks real skill, stamina, etc.; [*fancy* + (prob.) *Dan*, nickname for DANIEL]”; **sneaky Pete* “very cheap wine, often the dregs”. În much the same way can be analyzed the terms derived from trademark names, e.g. **moxie* “*n.* courage, pluck, perseverance, etc.; guts. [after *Moxie*, trademark for a soft drink]”.

With respect to the sense of the slang(y) terms examined, in addition to the semantic developments resulting in extension or adding new shades of meaning (e.g. **jive*¹ “*vt., vi.* to speak (to) in a way that is exaggerated, insincere, flippant, etc., esp. in trying to fool or mislead; *n.* 1. talk used in jiving someone. *adj.* insincere, misleading, fake, fraudulent, etc. [altered < JIBE²: sense development, to taunt, banter, improvise, swing (music)]”), what is highly remarkable is the very numerous polysemous terms and phrases, e.g. *basket case* “1. a person lacking all four limbs 2. a person unable to function, esp. because of emotional disturbance. 3. anything that does not function properly”; **bazoo* “*n.* 1. the mouth 2. the nose. 3. loud or boastful talk”; **bimbo* “*n.* 1. [Old Slang] a guy, fellow; 2. a silly or stupid person: used esp. of a woman. 3. a sexually promiscuous woman”; *bird* “*n.* 6. a sound of disapproval made by vibrating the lips. 7. a rocket or guided missile; [Brit.] a young woman”; *bitch* “*n.* 3. anything especially unpleasant or difficult; *4. a complaint; *vi.* * to complain; *vt.* 1. to bungle: usually with *up*; 2. to behave spitefully or angrily toward”; *blast* “*n.* *8. *Sports* a strong, driving hit, as of a baseball;

angrily toward"; *blast* "n. *8. *Sports* a strong, driving hit, as of a baseball; *9. a pleasurable, exciting event or experience, as a wild party. *vt.* *4. *Sports* to drive (a ball) far with a sharp blow of the bat or club"; *blow*¹ "vi. *11. to go away; leave. 12. *Jazz* to improvise. 13. to cease functioning, esp. by overuse: said of an engine, etc.; *vt.* *16. to go away from; leave [he *blew* town]; *17. to bungle and fail in [we had our chance and *blew* it]; 18. *pp.* *blowed* to damn: used in euphemistic oaths; 19. to inhale (cocaine, marijuana, etc.); 20. to reveal or disclose, esp. so as to compromise [they *blew* our cover]; 21. [Vulgar Slang] to perform fellatio on; 22. to cause (an engine, transmission, etc.) to cease functioning, esp. by overuse; n. 6. COCAINE": *bounce* "vt. *3. to put (an undesirable person) out by force; *4. to discharge from employment; *vi.* *3. to be returned to the payee by a bank as a worthless check, because of insufficient funds in the drawer's account"; *bug*¹ "n. *6. a) an enthusiast or devotee (often used in combination) [a *shutterbug* pursues photography as a hobby] b) a particular enthusiasm or obsession; *7. a small, compact automobile; 8. the weight allowance (5 pounds, or 2.3 kg) granted to an apprentice jockey for one year after; *vt.* 2. a) to annoy, bother, anger, etc. b) to confuse or puzzle. *vi.* to bulge or open wide, as in amazement: said of the eyes"; *bump* "vt. *2. to displace, as from a job or plane reservation; *3. to raise (a price, a salary, a bet in poker, etc.); n. *4. a thrusting movement forward of the lower part of the torso, as in striptease dancing: see also GRIND (n. 5)"; *burn*¹ "vt. *14. to electrocute; 15. a) to cheat, swindle, or rob b) to cause to suffer through misplaced trust or confidence (usually used in the passive); *vi.* *9. to be electrocuted"; *chicken* "n. 5. a) a timid or cowardly person b) a young male homosexual; 6. [Mil. Slang] petty insistence on rules[< CHICKENSHIT]; *adj.* 3. timid or cowardly; *4. [Mil. Slang] characterized by unnecessary discipline or pettiness [cf. n. 6]; *vi. to lose courage and abandon a plan or action: usually with *out*"; *cold turkey "1. by abruptly and totally withdrawing from an addiction to

*9. a pleasurable, exciting event or experience, as a wild party. *vt.* *4. *Sports* to drive (a ball) far with a sharp blow of the bat or club"; *blow*¹ "vi. *11. to go away; leave. 12. *Jazz* to improvise. 13. to cease functioning, esp. by overuse: said of an engine, etc.; *vt.* *16. to go away from; leave [he *blew* town]; *17. to bungle and fail in [we had our chance and *blew* it]; 18. *pp.* *blowed* to damn: used in euphemistic oaths; 19. to inhale (cocaine, marijuana, etc.); 20. to reveal or disclose, esp. so as to compromise [they *blew* our cover]; 21. [Vulgar Slang] to perform fellatio on; 22. to cause (an engine, transmission, etc.) to cease functioning, esp. by overuse; n. 6. COCAINE": *bounce* "vt. *3. to put (an undesirable person) out by force; *4. to discharge from employment; *vi.* *3. to be returned to the payee by a bank as a worthless check, because of insufficient funds in the drawer's account"; *bug*¹ "n. *6. a) an enthusiast or devotee (often used in combination) [a *shutterbug* pursues photography as a hobby] b) a particular enthusiasm or obsession; *7. a small, compact automobile; 8. the weight allowance (5 pounds, or 2.3 kg) granted to an apprentice jockey for one year after; *vt.* 2. a) to annoy, bother, anger, etc. b) to confuse or puzzle. *vi.* to bulge or open wide, as in amazement: said of the eyes"; *bump* "vt. *2. to displace, as from a job or plane reservation; *3. to raise (a price, a salary, a bet in poker, etc.); n. *4. a thrusting movement forward of the lower part of the torso, as in striptease dancing: see also GRIND (n. 5)"; *burn*¹ "vt. *14. to electrocute; 15. a) to cheat, swindle, or rob b) to cause to suffer through misplaced trust or confidence (usually used in the passive); *vi.* *9. to be electrocuted"; *chicken* "n. 5. a) a timid or cowardly person b) a young male homosexual; 6. [Mil. Slang] petty insistence on rules[< CHICKENSHIT]; *adj.* 3. timid or cowardly; *4. [Mil. Slang] characterized by unnecessary discipline or pettiness [cf. n. 6]; *vi. to lose courage and abandon a plan or action: usually with *out*"; *cold turkey "1. by abruptly and totally withdrawing from an addiction to

unnecessary discipline or pettiness [cf. *n.* 6]; **vi.* to lose courage and abandon a plan or action: usually with *out*"; **cold turkey* "1. by abruptly and totally withdrawing from an addiction to drugs, tobacco, etc. 2. in a frank, blunt, or matter-of-fact way [to talk *cold turkey* about our chances]. 3. without preparation or preliminaries [to approach a sales prospect *cold turkey*]; **come-on* "n.1. an inviting look or gesture. 2. something offered as an inducement. 3. a swindler, esp. a shill"; *kicky* "adj.1. fashionable; stylish. 2. stimulating; exciting"; *pig* "n. 5. *a) a slatternly or sluttish woman b) a rude or arrogant person c) a police officer (a derogatory term)"; *yap* "vi. 1. to make a sharp, shrill bark or yelp. 2. to talk noisily and stupidly; jabber; n. 2. noisy, stupid talk; jabber; 3. a crude, noisy, or contemptible person. 4. the mouth [echoic]". Iată câteva cazuri de cuvinte cu totul remarcabile prin polisemia lor foarte extinsă: *bag* "*10. one's special sphere of interest, milieu, talent, obsession, etc. *11. an unattractive woman [< BAGGAGE, sense 3a]; 5. to obtain or collect"; *ball¹* "n. 7 [pl.]a) [Vulgar] the testicles b) daring or courage; vi., vt. 2 [Vulgar Slang] to have sexual intercourse (with); interj. [pl.] nonsense!; **bazoo* n.1. the mouth. 2. the nose. 3. loud or boastful talk"; *sleaze* "n.1. the quality or condition of being sleazy; sleaziness. 2. anything cheap, vulgar, shoddy, etc. 3. a shady, coarse, or immoral person".

În ceea ce privește mecanismele de formare a cuvintelor, se poate aprecia că termenii alcătuiți prin compunere furnizează un număr foarte mare de formații deosebit de expresive, așa cum pot dovedi cuvintele glosate mai jos: *angel dust* "PCP, phencyclidine; a depressant drug used illegally as a hallucinogen"; **bad-mouth* vt., vi. to find fault (with); criticize or disparage"; **bug-eyed* "adj. with bulging eyes"; **beat-up* "adj. in a worn-out condition; dilapidated, battered, shabby, etc."; *bumboat* "n. a small boat used in a port or anchorage to peddle goods to ships'

drugs, tobacco, etc. 2. in a frank, blunt, or matter-of-fact way [to talk *cold turkey* about our chances]. 3. without preparation or preliminaries [to approach a sales prospect *cold turkey*]; **come-on* "n.1. an inviting look or gesture. 2. something offered as an inducement. 3. a swindler, esp. a shill"; *kicky* "adj.1. fashionable; stylish. 2. stimulating; exciting"; *pig* "n. 5. *a) a slatternly or sluttish woman b) a rude or arrogant person c) a police officer (a derogatory term)"; *yap* "vi. 1. to make a sharp, shrill bark or yelp. 2. to talk noisily and stupidly; jabber; n. 2. noisy, stupid talk; jabber; 3. a crude, noisy, or contemptible person. 4. the mouth [echoic]". The following terms are absolutely remarkable, we think, through their incredibly extended polysemy: *bag* "*10. one's special sphere of interest, milieu, talent, obsession, etc. *11. an unattractive woman [< BAGGAGE, sense 3a]; 5. to obtain or collect"; *ball¹* "n. 7 [pl.]a) [Vulgar] the testicles b) daring or courage; vi., vt. 2 [Vulgar Slang] to have sexual intercourse (with); interj. [pl.] nonsense!; **bazoo* n.1. the mouth. 2. the nose. 3. loud or boastful talk"; *sleaze* "n.1. the quality or condition of being sleazy; sleaziness. 2. anything cheap, vulgar, shoddy, etc. 3. a shady, coarse, or immoral person".

As far as the mechanisms of word-formation are concerned, we could form the opinion that the terms made up by compounding / composition supply a large number of highly expressive constructs, as can be proved by the words glossed below: *angel dust* "PCP, or phencyclidine; a depressant drug used illegally as a hallucinogen"; **bad-mouth* vt., vi. to find fault (with); criticize or disparage"; **bug-eyed* "adj. with bulging eyes"; **beat-up* "adj. in a worn-out condition; dilapidated, battered, shabby, etc."; *bumboat* "n. a small boat used in a port or anchorage to peddle goods to ships' crews [BUM² + BOAT; orig. (17th c.), sailors' slang for garbage boat]; **candy-ass* "n. a weak, hesitant, or ineffectual person; wimp; sissy"; *half-assed* "adj. having or showing little thought, care, or foresight"; *pop-off* "n. a person who talks

crews [BUM² + BOAT; orig. (17th c.), sailors' slang for garbage boat]"; **candy-ass* "n. a weak, hesitant, or ineffectual person; wimp; sissy"; *half-assed* "adj. having or showing little thought, care, or foresight"; *pop-off* "n. a person who talks carelessly, emotionally, or angrily, esp. in a sudden outburst"; *rave-up* "n.1. [Brit.] a wild party; 2. an exciting, energetic musical performance, esp. in popular music"; **red-eye* "adj. designating a late-night or all-night commercial airline flight; n. such a flight [from the bloodshot eyes of someone who has not slept]"; *rotgut* "n. * raw, low-grade whiskey or other liquor [ROT + GUT]"; *scaredy-cat* "n. a person who is unreasonably afraid"; *shut-eye* "n. sleep; **shutterbug* n. a person whose hobby is photography [SHUTTER (n. 4) + BUG¹]; **stir-crazy* "adj. neurotically affected by long, close confinement, specif. in prison"; *stone-broke* "adj. having no money at all; penniless [STONE- + BROKE]"; **teenybopper* "n. a young teenager, esp. a girl, following the latest fads in fashion, popular music, etc. [< TEEN¹ + -Y¹ + BOP² + -ER]"; **with-it* "adj. 1. sophisticated, aware, up-to-date, etc. 2. fashionable; stylish". O categorie aparte de compuși, prin excelență expresivi, îl constituie termenii (nu foarte numeroși) care conțin, ca element de formare (engl. *combining form*), cuvântul *ville* – de ex. *dullsville* / *Dulsville* "n. a person, condition, etc. that is very dull or boring; adj. very dull, boring, tedious, etc.", *squaresville*.

Reduplicarea (fie totală, fie parțială) pare să fie un procedeu lexical foarte popular în cadrul vocabularului argotic: **buddy-buddy* "adj. friendly or chummy, often in an effusive or insincere way"; **dum-dum* "n. a stupid person; dumbbell"; **razzle-dazzle* "n. a flashy display intended to confuse, bewilder, or deceive [redupl. of DAZZLE]"; *ricky-tick* "adj.1. designating, producing, or of popular music, as of the 1920's, with a mechanical, regular beat and fast tempo. 2. old-fashioned; corny; Also *ricky-ticky* [echoic]"; **superduper* "adj. extremely great, large, impressive, etc. [redupl. of SUPER]"; **wheeler-dealer* "n. a person who wheels and deals".

carelessly, emotionally, or angrily, esp. in a sudden outburst"; *rave-up* "n.1. [Brit.] a wild party; 2. an exciting, energetic musical performance, esp. in popular music"; **red-eye* "adj. designating a late-night or all-night commercial airline flight; n. such a flight [from the bloodshot eyes of someone who has not slept]"; *rotgut* "n. * raw, low-grade whiskey or other liquor [ROT + GUT]"; *scaredy-cat* "n. a person who is unreasonably afraid"; *shut-eye* "n. sleep; **shutterbug* n. a person whose hobby is photography [SHUTTER (n. 4) + BUG¹]; **stir-crazy* "adj. neurotically affected by long, close confinement, specif. in prison"; *stone-broke* "adj. having no money at all; penniless [STONE- + BROKE]"; **teenybopper* "n. a young teenager, esp. a girl, following the latest fads in fashion, popular music, etc. [< TEEN¹ + -Y¹ + BOP² + -ER]"; **with-it* "adj. 1. sophisticated, aware, up-to-date, etc. 2. fashionable; stylish". A special category of compound words, which are expressive *par excellence*, comprises the (not very numerous) terms that contain the word *ville* as a combining form, e.g. *dullsville* / *Dulsville* "n. a person, condition, etc. that is very dull or boring; adj. very dull, boring, tedious, etc.", *squaresville*.

Reduplication (either total, or partial) seems to be a lexical / WF device very popular within the slang(y) vocabulary, e.g. **buddy-buddy* "adj. friendly or chummy, often in an effusive or insincere way"; **dum-dum* "n. a stupid person; dumbbell"; **razzle-dazzle* "n. a flashy display intended to confuse, bewilder, or deceive [redupl. of DAZZLE]"; *ricky-tick* "adj.1. designating, producing, or of popular music, as of the 1920's, with a mechanical, regular beat and fast tempo. 2. old-fashioned; corny; Also *ricky-ticky* [echoic]"; **superduper* "adj. extremely great, large, impressive, etc. [redupl. of SUPER]"; **wheeler-dealer* "n. a person who wheels and deals".

A fair proportion of the lexical and metaphoric expressivity furnished by the English slang(y) terms is attributable to such rhyming compounds as: **boob tube* "television or a television set"; **culture*

ricky-ticky [echoic]"; **super-duper* "adj. extremely great, large, impressive, etc. [redupl. of SUPER]"; **wheeler-dealer* "n. a person who wheels and deals".

Mare parte din expresivitatea lexicală furnizată de argotismele din limba engleză provine și din termenii compuși cu rimă, de tipul: **boob tube* "television or a television set"; **culture vulturea* person who professes great interest in culture and the arts; **eager beaver* "a person characterized by much, or too much, industry, initiative, or enthusiasm"; **fag hag* "a heterosexual woman who prefers the company of and socializes with homosexual men: usually a term of derision or contempt"; **lovey-dovey* "adj. very affectionate, amorous, or sentimental [LOVE + -Y² + DOVE + -Y²]"; **nitty-gritty* "n. the actual, basic facts, elements, issues, etc. [orig. black scatological slang: rhyming euphemism]".

Exemplele de "cuvinte-sandviș" (ilustrând, așadar, mecanismul de compunere numit în engleză *blend* sau *portmanteau words*) nu sunt foarte numeroase în corpusul analizat: **flabbergast* "vt. to make speechless with amazement; astonish [18th-c. slang < ? flab + AGHAST]"; **grungy* "adj. dirty, messy, disreputable, etc.; unpleasant in any way [? a blend of GRIMY, DINGY & *grunt*, childish euphemism for defecate]"; **gues(s)time* "n. an estimate based on a guess or conjecture; vt. to form a guesstimate [guess + (ES)TIMATE]"; **slurb* "n. a suburb with poorly planned, cheaply built housing developments [SL(UM) + (SUB)URB]".

Sufixarea (ca și sufixoidele) sunt destul de bine reprezentate în corpusul lexical studiat: **baddie / baddy* n. a bad or wicked person, esp. such a character in a play, movie, etc.; **bananas* "adj. 1 crazy or eccentric 2 wildly enthusiastic, excited, etc."; **mixologist* "n. a bartender [MIX + -ologist, as in *biologist*]"; **popper* "n. *3. a capsule containing amyl nitrite or, now more commonly, butyl nitrite, used as a

vulture "a person who professes great interest in culture and the arts; **eager beaver* "a person characterized by much, or too much, industry, initiative, or enthusiasm"; **fag hag* "a heterosexual woman who prefers the company of and socializes with homosexual men: usually a term of derision or contempt"; **lovey-dovey* "adj. very affectionate, amorous, or sentimental [LOVE + -Y² + DOVE + -Y²]"; **nitty-gritty* "n. the actual, basic facts, elements, issues, etc. [orig. black scatological slang: rhyming euphemism]".

The examples of *blends* or *portmanteau words* (which illustrate the compounding mechanism that Romanians and the French call "cuvinte-sandviș" and "mots-sandwich", respectively) were not very numerous within the corpus studied, e.g. **gues(s)time* "n. an estimate based on a guess or conjecture; vt. to form a guesstimate [guess + (ES)TIMATE]"; **slurb* "n. a suburb with poorly planned, cheaply built housing developments [SL(UM) + (SUB)URB]"; (diachronically): **flabbergast* "vt. to make speechless with amazement; astonish [18th-c. slang < ? flab + AGHAST]"; **grungy* "adj. dirty, messy, disreputable, etc.; unpleasant in any way [? a blend of GRIMY, DINGY & *grunt*, childish euphemism for defecate]";

Affixation by means of suffixes and suffix-like elements / combining forms is fairly well represented in the lexical corpus under study, e.g. **baddie / baddy* n. a bad or wicked person, esp. such a character in a play, movie, etc.; **bananas* "adj. 1. crazy or eccentric 2. wildly enthusiastic, excited, etc."; **mixologist* "n. a bartender [MIX + -ologist, as in *biologist*]"; **popper* "n. *3. a capsule containing amyl nitrite or, now more commonly, butyl nitrite, used as a stimulant". Unlike suffixation, the words made up with prefixes and prefix-like combining forms do not occur massively in the corpus analyzed, e.g. **re-up* "vi. [Mil. Slang] to reenlist [RE- + (SIGN) UP]", **megabuck* "a large, indefinite amount of money". A special, highly expressive category, represented by large numbers in the slang(y) vocabulary of English,

stimulant". Cuvintele formate du prefixe și prefixoide nu apar în număr mare: **re-up* "vi. [Mil. Slang] to reenlist [RE- + (SIGN) UP]", **megabuck* "a large, indefinite amount of money". O categorie aparte, bine reprezentată în cadrul vocabularului argotic anglo-american, o formează termenii terminați în sufixul sui-generis -o: **boffo*, **cheapo*, **doggo*, **freako*, **pinko*, **sicko*, **sleazo*, **stinko*, **wacko*, **weirdo*, etc.

Conversiunea (schimbarea clasei gramaticale) nu este însă la fel de bine reprezentată în segmentul lexical studiat: **bellyache* vi. to complain or grumble; **brain* "vt. 2. to hit hard on the head". Spre deosebire de conversiune, mecanismele de abreviere și contragere a corpului fonetic al cuvintelor sunt foarte bine reprezentate în limba engleză: **bumf* / **bumph* "n. [Brit.] official documents, regarded disparagingly [contr. < *bumfodder*, lit., toilet paper < BUM² + FODDER]"; **bun*² "n. a drunken spree; *get a bun on* to become drunk [prob. contr. < colloq. (Scot) *bung*, drunk (short for *bung-full*, filled to the bung)"]; **scatty* "adj. [Brit. Slang] silly, foolish, or crazy [contr. < ? SCATTERBRAINED]"; **scram* "vi. to leave or get out, esp. in a hurry: often used in the imperative [contr. of *scramble*]"; **whosis* "n. any person or thing: jocular substitute for a name forgotten or not known [contr. < *who is this*]".

De obicei, în engleză avem de-a face cu mecanismul apocopei: **abo* "n. [Austral. Slang] an Aborigine: an offensive term"; **bach* "n. a bachelor; **beaut* "n. one that is beautiful or superlative: often used ironically [his alibi was a *beaut*]"; **biz* "n. business [show *biz*]"; **boob*¹ "n. a stupid or foolish person; vi. [Brit. Slang] to make a stupid mistake [< BOOBY]"; **bud*² "n. short for BUDDY (n. 1): used in addressing a man or boy"; **bunk*² "n. short for BUNKUM"; **coke*² "n. cocaine [short for COCAINE]"; **con*⁵ "n. short for CONVICT; *do*³ "n. short for HAIRDO"; **fin*² "n. a five-dollar bill [shortened < W Yidd *fin*, five (cf. E Yidd *fin*)]";

is formed by the terms ending in the sui-generis suffix -o, e.g. **boffo*, **cheapo*, **doggo*, **freako*, **pinko*, **sicko*, **sleazo*, **stinko*, **wacko*, **weirdo*, etc.

Conversion (or change of grammatical class) is not, however, as well represented within the lexical section under study, e.g. **bellyache* "vi. to complain or grumble"; **brain* "vt. 2. to hit hard on the head". Unlike conversion, the mechanisms of abbreviation and phonetic contraction are very well substantiated in the English slang idiom, e.g. **bumf* / **bumph* "n. [Brit.] official documents, regarded disparagingly [contr. < *bumfodder*, lit., toilet paper < BUM² + FODDER]"; **bun*² "n. a drunken spree; *get a bun on* to become drunk [prob. contr. < colloq. (Scot) *bung*, drunk (short for *bung-full*, filled to the bung)"]; **scatty* "adj. [Brit. Slang] silly, foolish, or crazy [contr. < ? SCATTERBRAINED]"; **scram* "vi. to leave or get out, esp. in a hurry: often used in the imperative [contr. of *scramble*]"; **whosis* "n. any person or thing: jocular substitute for a name forgotten or not known [contr. < *who is this*]".

As a rule, English uses the mechanism of apocope (i.e. the omission of the final sound or sounds of a word), e.g. **abo* "n. [Austral. Slang] an Aborigine: an offensive term"; **bach* "n. a bachelor; **beaut* "n. one that is beautiful or superlative: often used ironically [his alibi was a *beaut*]"; **biz* "n. business [show *biz*]"; **boob*¹ "n. a stupid or foolish person; vi. [Brit. Slang] to make a stupid mistake [< BOOBY]"; **bud*² "n. short for BUDDY (n. 1): used in addressing a man or boy"; **bunk*² "n. short for BUNKUM"; **coke*² "n. cocaine [short for COCAINE]"; **con*⁵ "n. short for CONVICT; *do*³ "n. short for HAIRDO"; **fin*² "n. a five-dollar bill [shortened < W Yidd *fin*, five (cf. E Yidd *fin*)]"; **grid* "n. *adj.* having to do with football [a *grid* score]; [short for GRIDIRON]; **hash*² "n. short for HASHISH"; **hetero* "n. short for HETEROSEXUAL"; **homo*² "n. short for

finf]); *grid* "n. *adj. having to do with football [a *grid* score]; [short for GRIDIRON]; *hash*² "n. short for HASHISH"; *hetero* "n. short for HETEROSEXUAL"; *homo*² "n. short for HOMOSEXUAL"; **hood*² "n. short for HOODLUM"; *info* "n. short for INFORMATION"; *intro* "n. short for INTRODUCTION"; *lolly* "n. [Brit. Slang] 1. money. 2. piece of hard candy [contr. < LOLLYPOP]; *mitt* "n. *4. a hand [contr. < MITTEN]; *mag* "n. short for MAGAZINE"; **nabe* "n. a neighborhood movie theater [altered < NEIGHB(ORHOOD)]; *Paki* "n. [Brit. & Cdn. Slang] any East Indian person or any dark-skinned person thought to be an East Indian: a term of hostility and contempt [shortened < PAKISTANI]; *pash*² "n. an ardent, usually shallow enthusiasm or affection; infatuation. [short for PASSION]; *prelim* "n. short for PRELIMINARY"; *reg* "n. short for REGULATION"; **simp* "n. short for SIMPLETON"; *stew*² "n. short for STEWARDESS"; *suss* "vt. [Slang, Chiefly Brit., etc. (exc. Cdn)] to figure out; grasp, as a result of investigation, study, or intuition: often with *out* [shortened < SUSPECT]; *trank / tranq* "n. short for TRANQUILIZER".

Ca și prescurtarea prin afereză (de ex. *lude* "n. a methaqualone pill [< QUAALUDE]"), sincopa este relativ puțin productivă: *bloomer*¹ n. [Slang, Chiefly Brit.] a foolish or stupid mistake [short for *blooming error*]; **pix*² n.pl.1. motion pictures. 2. Photographs. [shortened < *pictures*]. În mod asemănător, acronimele sunt relativ puține în corpusul cercetat: *bs*, *BS* [Vulgar Slang] bullshit; *DA* or *D.A.* n. DUCKTAIL [< *d(uck's) a(ss)*]; *d.t.'s* n.pl. delirium tremens: usually preceded by *the*: often *D.T.'s*; *H* abbrev. 6. heroin; *OD* "n. an overdose, esp. of a narcotic vi. "to take an overdose, esp. a fatal overdose of a narcotic"; *OJ / oj* "n. orange juice; *sa / SA* sex appeal; *snafu* (*s(ituation) n(ormal), a(ll) f(ucked) u(p)*). Apar și cuvinte formate din false acronimii, de ex. **yippie* "n. any of a group of young people in the U.S. loosely

HOMOSEXUAL"; **hood*² "n. short for HOODLUM"; *info* "n. short for INFORMATION"; *intro* "n. short for INTRODUCTION"; *lolly* "n. [Brit. Slang] 1. money. 2. piece of hard candy [contr. < LOLLYPOP]; *mitt* "n. *4. a hand [contr. < MITTEN]; *mag* "n. short for MAGAZINE"; **nabe* "n. a neighborhood movie theater [altered < NEIGHB(ORHOOD)]; *Paki* "n. [Brit. & Cdn. Slang] any East Indian person or any dark-skinned person thought to be an East Indian: a term of hostility and contempt [shortened < PAKISTANI]; *pash*² "n. an ardent, usually shallow enthusiasm or affection; infatuation. [short for PASSION]; *prelim* "n. short for PRELIMINARY"; *reg* "n. short for REGULATION"; **simp* "n. short for SIMPLETON"; *stew*² "n. short for STEWARDESS"; *suss* "vt. [Slang, Chiefly Brit., etc. (exc. Cdn)] to figure out; grasp, as a result of investigation, study, or intuition: often with *out* [shortened < SUSPECT]; *trank / tranq* "n. short for TRANQUILIZER".

Like shortening through apheresis (e.g. *lude* "n. a methaqualone pill [< QUAALUDE]"), syncope is a relatively unproductive WF mechanism, e.g. *bloomer*¹ n. [Slang, Chiefly Brit.] a foolish or stupid mistake [short for *blooming error*]; **pix*² n.pl.1. motion pictures. 2. Photographs. [shortened < *pictures*]. Similarly, the acronyms are relatively scarce in the corpus under research, e.g. *bs*, *BS* "[Vulgar Slang] bullshit"; *DA* or *D.A.* "n. DUCKTAIL [< *d(uck's) a(ss)*]; *d.t.'s* "n.pl. delirium tremens: usually preceded by *the*: often *D.T.'s*"; *H* "abbrev. 6. heroin"; *OD* "n. an overdose, esp. of a narcotic; vi. to take an overdose, esp. a fatal overdose of a narcotic"; *OJ / oj* "n. orange juice"; *sa / SA* "sex appeal"; *snafu* "*(s(ituation) n(ormal), a(ll) f(ucked) u(p))*". Interestingly enough, there can occur words formed through false or jocular acronyms, e.g. **yippie* "n. any of a group of young people in the U.S. loosely organized in 1968 as radical activists [< *Y(outh) I(nternational) P(arty)*, a supposed, but nonexistent group + (HIP)PIE]".

Things are radically different when it

organized in 1968 as radical activists [*Y(outh) I(nternational) P(arty)*, a supposed, but nonexistent group + (HIP)PIE]”.

Nu la fel stau lucrurile cu alterarea / coruperea corpului sonor al cuvintelor aflate, etimologic, la baza unora dintre argotismele analizate: *all-fired* “*adj.* extreme; complete. *adv.* extremely; completely. [altered < *hell-fired*]”; **baloney* “*n.* 2. foolish or exaggerated talk or behavior; nonsense *interj.* nonsense! how absurd! [altered < *bologna*, sausage]”; *Chink* “*n.* a Chinese person: a vulgar term of hostility and contempt [prob. altered < CHINA or CHINESE]”; *dago* “*n.* [also *Dago*] a person, often dark-skinned, of Spanish, Portuguese, or, now esp., Italian descent: a vulgar term of hostility and contempt [prob. altered < earlier *diego* < Sp *Diego*, James]”; *dyke*² “*n.* a lesbian, esp. one with physical characteristics traditionally thought of as belonging to men: a term of contempt and hostility [contr. < *morphodyke*, *morphodite*, altered < HERMAPHRODITE]”; **foofaraw* “*n.* 1. unnecessary things added for show; frills. 2. stir or fuss over something trivial [altered < Fr *fanfaron*, a swaggering < Sp *fanfarrón*: see FANFARONADE]”; *gawp* “*vi.* to stare open-mouthed; gawk or gape [dial., altered < ME *galpen*, to yawn, gape]”; *hunky* “a person from EC Europe; esp., a person of Hungarian extraction: a vulgar term of hostility and contempt: also sp. *hunkie*, *hunkey* [? altered < HUNGARIAN]”; **razzmatazz* “*n.* 1. lively spirit; excitement. 2. flashy quality or display; showiness [prob. altered < *razzle-dazzle*]”.

Derivarea regresivă (engl. *back(-)formation*) nu ne-a pus la dispoziție decât un număr limitat de exemple: **ditz* “*n.* a person thought of as being flighty, eccentric, silly, etc. [back-form. < *ditsy* / *ditzy* “silly, inane, disorganized, eccentric, etc.”]”; *rear*¹ “*n.* *4. the buttocks [prob. back-form. < REAR(WARD)¹, REAR (GUARD)]”; *sleaze* “[back-form. < *sleazy* “1. flimsy or thin in texture or substance; lacking firmness. 2.

comes to the phonetic alteration / corruption of the words etymologically related to some of the slang(y) terms analyzed – which is another characteristic feature of English slang, e.g. *all-fired* “*adj.* extreme; complete. *adv.* extremely; completely. [altered < *hell-fired*]”; **baloney* “*n.* 2. foolish or exaggerated talk or behavior; nonsense *interj.* nonsense! how absurd! [altered < *bologna*, sausage]”; *Chink* “*n.* a Chinese person: a vulgar term of hostility and contempt [prob. altered < CHINA or CHINESE]”; *dago* “*n.* [also *Dago*] a person, often dark-skinned, of Spanish, Portuguese, or, now esp., Italian descent: a vulgar term of hostility and contempt [prob. altered < earlier *diego* < Sp *Diego*, James]”; *dyke*² “*n.* a lesbian, esp. one with physical characteristics traditionally thought of as belonging to men: a term of contempt and hostility [contr. < *morphodyke*, *morphodite*, altered < HERMAPHRODITE]”; **foofaraw* “*n.* 1. unnecessary things added for show; frills. 2. stir or fuss over something trivial [altered < Fr. *fanfaron*, a swaggering < Sp *fanfarrón*: see FANFARONADE]”; *gawp* “*vi.* to stare open-mouthed; gawk or gape [dial., altered < ME *galpen*, to yawn, gape]”; *hunky* “a person from EC Europe; esp., a person of Hungarian extraction: a vulgar term of hostility and contempt: also sp. *hunkie*, *hunkey* [? altered < HUNGARIAN]”; **razzmatazz* “*n.* 1. lively spirit; excitement. 2. flashy quality or display; showiness [prob. altered < *razzle-dazzle*]”.

Back(-)formation (also called by some *reverse / false derivation*) failed to provide our research with many examples, e.g. **ditz* “*n.* a person thought of as being flighty, eccentric, silly, etc. [back-form. < *ditsy* / *ditzy* “silly, inane, disorganized, eccentric, etc.”]”; *rear*¹ “*n.* *4. the buttocks [prob. back-form. < REAR(WARD)¹, REAR (GUARD)]”; *sleaze* “[back-form. < *sleazy* “1. flimsy or thin in texture or substance; lacking firmness. 2. shoddy, shabby, cheap, morally low, etc.”]”; *wonk* “*n.* *1. a student who studies very hard; grind; *2. any very studious or hard-working person, often, specif., one preoccupied with a

shoddy, shabby, cheap, morally low, etc.”); *wonk* “n.*1. a student who studies very hard; grind; *2. any very studious or hard-working person, often, specif., one preoccupied with a particular subject or field [back-form. < *wonky* “shaky, tottery, feeble, etc.”].”

Surse certe de expresivitate în ceea ce privește forma termenilor argotici din corpusul studiat se vădesc formațiunile onomatopoeice de tipul: *barf* vi., vt.to vomit; **pizazz* or *pizzazz* n. [Colloq.] 1. energy, vigor, vitality, spirit, etc. 2. smartness, style, flair, etc. *pizazzy* or *pizzazzy* adj. [orig. echoic of engine roar]; **blooper* n.1. a foolish or stupid mistake; blunder. [*bloop*, echoic + -ER]; **chug* vt. / **chug-a-lug* vt., vi.to drink in continuous gulps or in a single, long gulp; swill; guzzle [echoic]; *clunk* n. 3. a dull or stupid person [echoic]; **guff* n.1. foolish talk; nonsense. 2. brash or insolent talk [echoic]; **hooey* interj., n. nonsense; bunk [echoic]; *jimjams* n.pl. 1. delirium tremens. 2. a nervous feeling; jitters: usually with *the* [arbitrary echoic formation]; **oomph* n.1. sex appeal. 2. vigor; energy [echoic of involuntary expression of approval]; *prang* vt., vi. [Slang, Chiefly Brit., etc.] 1. to cause (an aircraft, vehicle, etc.) to crash. 2. to collide with. 3. to bomb heavily; n. [Slang, Chiefly Brit., etc.] 1. a collision. 2. a bombing raid [echoic]; **ring-a-ding* adj.wildly exciting; lively. n.1. wild excitement; razzle-dazzle. 2. a wildly exciting person or thing [echoic]; *whiz* or *whizz* vi. 3.to urinate. n. *2. [see WIZ] a) a person who is very quick, adroit, or skilled at something; expert [a *whiz* at football] b) [Old Slang] something strikingly excellent, attractive, etc. [a *whiz* of a car]. 3.the act of urinating: often in the phrase *take a whiz* [echoic]; **yuk* “n. a loud laugh of amusement, or something causing it”.

Există forme “exotice” / pitorești cu totul remarcabile, cum ar fi: *buttinsky* / *buttinski* “n. a person who is constantly butting in or meddling in the affairs of other people”; **lollapalooza* or *lollapaloosa* “n.

particular subject or field [back-form. < *wonky* “shaky, tottery, feeble, etc.”].

Such echoic and onomatopoeic formations as the ones listed below proved to be clear, indubitable sources of expressiveness as far as the form of the slang(y) terms belonging to the corpus studied is concerned: *barf* vi., vt.to vomit; **pizazz* or *pizzazz* n. [Colloq.] 1. energy, vigor, vitality, spirit, etc. 2. smartness, style, flair, etc. *pizazzy* or *pizzazzy* adj. [orig. echoic of engine roar]; **blooper* n.1. a foolish or stupid mistake; blunder. [*bloop*, echoic + -ER]; **chug* vt. / **chug-a-lug* vt., vi.to drink in continuous gulps or in a single, long gulp; swill; guzzle [echoic]; *clunk* n. 3. a dull or stupid person [echoic]; **guff* n.1. foolish talk; nonsense. 2. brash or insolent talk [echoic]; **hooey* interj., n. nonsense; bunk [echoic]; *jimjams* n.pl. 1. delirium tremens. 2. a nervous feeling; jitters: usually with *the* [arbitrary echoic formation]; **oomph* n.1. sex appeal. 2. vigor; energy [echoic of involuntary expression of approval]; *prang* vt., vi. [Slang, Chiefly Brit., etc.] 1. to cause (an aircraft, vehicle, etc.) to crash. 2. to collide with. 3. to bomb heavily; n. [Slang, Chiefly Brit., etc.] 1. a collision. 2. a bombing raid [echoic]; **ring-a-ding* adj.wildly exciting; lively. n.1. wild excitement; razzle-dazzle. 2. a wildly exciting person or thing [echoic]; *whiz* or *whizz* vi. 3.to urinate. n. *2. [see WIZ] a) a person who is very quick, adroit, or skilled at something; expert [a *whiz* at football] b) [Old Slang] something strikingly excellent, attractive, etc. [a *whiz* of a car]. 3.the act of urinating: often in the phrase *take a whiz* [echoic]; **yuk* “n. a loud laugh of amusement, or something causing it”.

Similarly, we have come across a number of absolutely remarkable “exotic” / picturesque forms, e.g. *buttinsky* / *buttinski* “n. a person who is constantly butting in or meddling in the affairs of other people”; **lollapalooza* / *lollapaloosa* “n. something or someone very striking or exceptional”. Other (notable) picturesque, graphical sound effects are supplied by the terms that begin with the clusters *sch-*, *schm-*, *sl-*, *sn-* (e.g. **schlock*;

something or someone very striking or exceptional". Alte sonorități pitorești deosebite prezintă termenii care au secvențele inițiale *sch-*, *schm-*, *sl-*, *sn-* (de ex. **schlock*; *schlump*; **schmaltz / shmaltz*; **schmuck / shmuck*; **schnook / shnook*, etc.).

Se poate afirma că sunt extreme, ca pitoresc al formării și ca formații / creații fanteziste cu certe valențe expresive, cuvinte ca: **wiseheimer* "n. [Slang] a wiseacre or wise guy. Etymology [WIS(E)¹ + *-enheimer*, as in Ger family names, e.g., *Oppenheimer*, *Altenheimer*]; **hellacious* "adj. [Slang] very great, bad, unbearable, etc. Etymology [prob. fanciful formation from HELL OF A (see HELL) + *-ACIOUS*]; **hornswoggle* "vt. [Slang] to swindle or hoax; trick Etymology [fanciful coinage]; **humdinger* "n. [Slang] a person or thing considered excellent of its kind Etymology [fanciful coinage]; până și cuvinte sau segmente fără niciun sens au fost folosite pentru a crea termeni de o mare expresivitate: **zilch* "n. [Slang] nothing; zero Etymology [nonsense syllable, orig. used in the 1930's as name of a character in the magazine *Ballyhoo*]"

Concluzia de ordin general a modestei analize pe care am întreprins-o este că, la modul absolut, dar și comparat (chiar și în treacăt) cu situația din limba română, vocabularul argotic al limbii engleze este de o bogăție tipologică și semantic-stilistică într-adevăr remarcabilă. Ne propunem ca, într-o contribuție ulterioară, să întreprindem un studiu mai amănunțit privitor la mecanismele de formare, la încărcătura semantico-expresivă și la contextualizarea stilistică a termenilor de argou din cele două limbi.

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schlump; **schmaltz / shmaltz*; **schmuck / shmuck*; **schnook / shnook*, etc.).

Such words like the ones listed below can be said to be extreme coinages in point of make-up picturesqueness; their fanciful graphicality endows them with obvious expressive powers: **wiseheimer* "n. [Slang] a wiseacre or wise guy. Etymology [WIS(E)¹ + *-enheimer*, as in Ger family names, e.g., *Oppenheimer*, *Altenheimer*]; **hellacious* "adj. [Slang] very great, bad, unbearable, etc. Etymology [prob. fanciful formation from HELL OF A (see HELL) + *-ACIOUS*]; **hornswoggle* "vt. [Slang] to swindle or hoax; trick Etymology [fanciful coinage]; **humdinger* "n. [Slang] a person or thing considered excellent of its kind Etymology [fanciful coinage]". Even nonsensical words or phonetic segments were used to coin highly expressive terms, e.g. **zilch* "n. [Slang] nothing; zero Etymology [nonsense syllable, orig. used in the 1930's as name of a character in the magazine *Ballyhoo*]"

The overall conclusion of our modest contribution, based on the above-mentioned analysis, is that, in an absolute manner, but also compared (be it tentatively and rather cursorily) with the situation typical of Romanian, the slang(y) vocabulary of English has a really remarkable typological and semantic-stylistic richness. Therefore, in the near future we intend to conduct a more detailed study of the word-formation mechanisms, the semantic and expressive load, and the stylistic contextualization of the slang terms in the two languages.

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¹ Într-o lucrare ulterioară, care să continue seria preocupărilor noastre legate de argou.

² În articolele despre slang consultate, am constatat că se fac distincții adesea foarte fine, pe de o parte între slang, jargon și techspeak, iar pe de altă parte între diversele *subculturi* reprezentate (de pildă, practicanții ciclismului, ai surfingului, fanii muzicii rock, hackeri etc.).

³ Și în românește se utilizează exprimări de tipul “Ia morții (ăștia) de-aici / de pe masă!” – cu exact același sens ca în argotismul anglo-american citat.

⁴ Demonstrația nu cuprinde, firește, termeni foarte vechi. Pentru comparație, mulți termeni din vocabularul de bază al unor limbi romanice au fost, la bază, argotisme, de ex. *testa*, *bello*, etc.

⁵ In a future contribution devoted to slang terms, which will further our preoccupations in that field.

⁶ English translation: *Slang, slangy and (sub)colloquial terms originating in the “shoptalk” and traditional handicraft vocabularies*

⁷ In the articles and studies dealing with slang that we have consulted, we have often come across such subtle, strict distinctions between, on the one hand, *slang*, *jargon* and *techspeak*, and, on the other hand, the various *subcultures* those idioms represent (e.g. bikers, surfers, rock fans, hackers, etc.).

⁸ Similar expressions are currently used in Romanian, too, e.g. “Ia *morții* (ăștia) de-aici / de pe masă!” – in the selfsame sense as that of the Anglo-American slang item mentioned.

⁹ The demonstration fails to include, for understandable reasons, very old terms. For the sake of comparison, let us say that lots of words belonging to the basic lexicon of the Romance languages were originally slang(y) terms, e.g. *testa* “head”, *bello* “beautiful / handsome”, etc.