

Deviations in the Verbal Behavior of the Students: Sources and Mechanisms of Counteraction

(Materials based on research)

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Abstract— This article analyzes the sources of such deviations as foul language in the verbal behavior of the students. The study of social behavior of a person and, in particular, speech, i.e., verbal, the identification of mechanisms to counteract deviations in this behavior which determine the dynamics of transformations in the context of the Russian sociocultural space, is becoming one of the most important tasks of management sociology. Students of high schools, colleges and universities are chosen as the object of study, as they are outgoing generation change. Studying the speech behavior of this social group not only represents the situation of the current moment but also provides an opportunity to see the trends of the future without which management is impossible. This is particularly true for negative trends.

Keywords— education, students, youth, verbal behavior, deviations, speech culture, swearing, sources and factors of foul language, mechanism, counteraction.

I. INTRODUCTION

We constantly face various manifestations of socially undesirable behavior – aggression, bad habits, illegal and obscene actions. This includes foul language which has become one of the signs of the cultural and social catastrophe that has befallen us. The “swearing virus” spreads very quickly. Every day we hear a lot of abusive words. Foul expressions are taken up not only by children but even by adults. No lectures about this style of communication work because theory is not confirmed by practice.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODOLOGICAL INSTRUMENT

The paper is based on the following research methods:

1) theoretical methods (analysis of literary sources on social psychology, sociolinguistics, psychology of deviant behavior, linguistics for the purpose of generalizing domestic and foreign experience),

2) empiric methods including a sociological survey method with a specially developed methodological instrument aimed at studying the relationship of propensity to non-normative speech behavior and value preferences of the individual; method of focus groups for the purpose of determining group verbal attitudes and orientation of students; in-depth

interviews with individual categories of students to clarify their positions and behavior.

The methodological basis includes the principles of social determinism, philosophical provisions on the dialectical relationship of language and thought, sociological theories about social behavior, the theory of symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology.

The methodological instrument includes the author's sociological questionnaire aimed at ascertainment the attitude of young people towards deviant speech behavior; a focus group program; a questionnaire by S. Schwartz and U. Bilski for revealing the hierarchy of personal values [1]; test “Sense - life orientations”, D.A. Leontiev to determine the personal meaning of life, as well as internality – externality [2].

To collect primary sociological information, the questionnaire method and interview were used. DA-system (Determination data analysis, version 5.0) was used to analyze the survey results. The main mode of data processing was obtaining and visual analysis of distribution. “One-dimensional tables output” and “two-dimensional tables output” have been the auxiliary modes of the program used to process and analyze the data. To group the responses by the key topics we used qualitative analysis of the survey results. These topics include the following: state and dynamics of verbal deviations; sources of verbal deviations and factors of their distribution; the attitude of students to verbal deviations; methods of countering verbal deviations among students.

III. DETERMINATION OF THE TERMS

Students – in this article “students” means students of high schools, colleges and universities.

Swearing – in this article “swearing” is used as a synonym to “foul language”, “obscene language”.

IV. STUDY OF DEVIATIONS IN THE VERBAL BEHAVIOR OF THE STUDENTS; SOURCES AND MECHANISMS OF COUNTERACTION TO DEVIANT VERBAL BEHAVIOR

In contemporary Russia, as I.A. Sternin points out, there has been a change in the communicative paradigm, i.e., the dominant type of communication. To replace the monologue communicative paradigm of a totalitarian society when one speaks and everyone listens and fulfills, the dialogue paradigm

of a pluralistic society has come. The communicative core of the Russian language has changed – the aggregate of the most frequent and significant words and expressions is used in communicative spheres. Unfortunately, specific criminal and law enforcement vocabulary and vocabulary of show business were activated in this core along with the lexical market economy. A new subsystem like national slang was formed in the stylistic system of the Russian language. It takes place between colloquial and so-called reduced vocabulary (words and expressions that do not correspond to the literary norms and the linguistic standard) [3]. There was a substitution of the concept of “freedom of speech” (“what do you want”) for the notion of “your speech” (“speak as you like”) in the mass consciousness. The speech of youth becomes an indicator of a condition of the society. As S.V. Leorda notes, “students (youth) quickly notice various changes in language and react to them” [4].

Foul language, according to the monolingual dictionary of S.I. Ozhegov, is a speech filled with nasty, obscene words [5]. In the dictionary of V. Dal, it is said: “Filthiness is an abomination, filth, all geek, disagreeable, disgusting, indecent, which is filthy and spiritually tortured; uncleanness, filth and rot, decay, corpse, eruptions, feces; belching, stench; lasciviousness, debauchery, moral corruption; all ungodly” [6]. Foul language historically arose as a protective tool against emotional shocks. The use of obscene expressions is due to various reasons: insult, humiliate, defame; to signal about one's own belonging to a particular social group; to demonstrate rejection of social prohibitions, taboos; to show “freedom”, looseness; to strengthen the emotional capability of speech; to relieve psychological stress [7].

In the youth environment the problem of obscene vocabulary becomes particularly acute, because in the eyes of a teenager foul language is a manifestation of independence, the ability not to obey the prohibitions that is the symbol of adulthood. In many ways, the use of non-normative vocabulary is due to the process of imitation. Imitation in adolescence is directed at the external (and sometimes internal) identification of a teenager with a certain concrete personality (group) that is significant to him [8]. Sometimes it is an imitation of youth idols, for example, a popular TV hosts, actors, singers.

As the young people say their freedom is restricted by parents and teachers. The only thing that remains is “freedom of speech”. Thus, the sociocultural functions that foul language performs in the communication of teenagers are very multifarious. Either it's just giving expressive speech or self-defense from attacks of the outside world, both in the process of working life, and in interpersonal conflicts. Some young people use obscene language because it helps them in communication, it is understandable, and can be applied in all situations.

The results of our sociological survey among students (students of high schools, colleges and universities), more precisely, their answers to the question “What, in your opinion, are the deep sources of the use of obscene expressions?” are indicative (in %):

- costs of education (lack of understanding of the need for speech etiquette and the formation of a speech culture) - 51.9;
- insufficient level of culture and education – 42.4;

- man's incompetence to control oneself – 44.2;
- the desire to defend oneself against external aggression – 21.2;
- the need to express one's emotional states and address to other people – 24.1;
- immoral lifestyle – 20.4.

Judging by the respondents' answers, the tendency of foul language does not set for optimism. 30.2% of university students, 36.8% of college students and more than half (52.5%) students of high schools say that swearing has increased in recent years.

In the course of the study the opinion of respondents about the reasons for the swearing was also revealed. The following distribution of answers was received (in %):

- social crisis – 20.9;
- general deterioration in human relationships – 32.7;
- fall of morals – 36.5;
- inefficient system of upbringing of the younger generation – 29.4;
- widespread indifference – 22.3.

The fall of speech culture has been observed everywhere: in everyday communication, public speech, fiction and journalism. The culture of speech on television and radio, in newspapers and magazines fell sharply, and, accordingly, there was a decline in the linguistic and general culture of the population. There is an opinion that today's youth is not up to the speech culture, in fact, it's not true. Moreover, students not only pay attention to the state of the speech culture, but also are not indifferent to this state. Asking the question “How do you assess the current state of the speech culture in society?” a negative assessment was made in 73% and a positive evaluation of 10% of respondents. Accordingly, we can draw conclusions that we must fight for the purity of our language, our speech together – adults, youth, children.

It should be noted that invective and obscene vocabulary exists in many languages and cultures. From words of this kind, a lexical composition of foul language, or a swearing, is formed.

The phenomenon of swearing, like no other, characterizes the moral degradation of the society in which such main values as love, beauty and good are lost. At all times verbal abuse, curse was a symbol of aggression and weakness at the same time. The use of obscene expressions without any reason (59.5%), “for a bunch of words” is a trend of recent times. Foul language began to perform the function of hesitation – the filling of pauses in colloquial speech [9]. Experts called this phenomenon as “abusive epidemic”, “virus of swearing”.

It is clear that the younger generation as a whole has a negative attitude towards swearing associating it with dirt, impairment, degradation from the results of the sociological survey. The question “How do you feel about using obscene language?” was asked. All respondents answered – “with condemnation”. At the same time, the overwhelming majority of respondents (79.8%) noted the negative consequences of using obscene language. The nature of these negative consequences is expressed in the following (in %):

- deterioration in the relationships of people – 48.7;
- growth of irritability, aggressiveness – 46.2;
- vulgarization of the language of communication – 44.9;

–deterioration of the moral and psychological atmosphere in society – 35, 8.

On the other hand, foul language becomes a completely legal language of communication in very broad sections of the population. To be in one's mind, "theirs", to be "on the wave" adolescents and young men tend to keep up with the use of obscene vocabulary. According to the American psychologist A. Fromm, many children sooner or later begin to utter abusive words because they tend to absorb new and unexplored information very quickly [10].

It is necessary to note that the distribution of public space among adolescents and young people is facilitated by physiological factors too: 1) hormonal changes in the body manifested in increased excitability, emotional instability provoking difficulties in relationships, various types of deviant behavior; 2) puberty, a desire to find recognition from the opposite sex and sometimes, according to the testimony of I.S. Kon, leading to the use of immoral ways of behavior [11]; 3) discrepancy of biological data with the social status of a teenager or a young man, in which he is physiologically an adult, and his social and psychological capabilities are limited (there is no life experience, a world view has not formed, defensive mechanisms have not been formed). The desire to overcome this contradiction leads to the adoption of external attributes of adulthood, such as smoking, drinking, foul language.

Students note that they hear obscene expressions in their families in conflict situations (57%), in particular, to "throw out negative emotions" (31.7%). Respectively, children create a false idea that swearing is an invariable feature of the "adult" life which allows them to join the world of adults quickly. Adults do not create conditions for humanizing the lives of children, but they actively eradicate their kindness and compassion. "Children learn a certain vocabulary from friends in games and directly from us," says A. Fromm, referring to the parents [10].

In the educational institutions of Belgorod, as well as in many other Russian cities, work is being done to limit and exclude swearing. The majority of respondents consider it possible to prohibit the use of non-normative vocabulary and expressions in public places. Such attempts are undertaken. 51.9% of university students, 59.5% of college students and 40.4% of high school students speak about the presence of such work. Judging by the data of the sociological survey a set of preventive and corrective measures is developed and implemented in educational institutions, including (in%):

- warning of possible punishment – 43.5;
- conducting conversations, class hours – 37.9;
- administrative punishment, up to expulsion from the educational institution – 15.6;
- creation of a public atmosphere of intolerance to swearing – 14.3.

As social and pedagogical practice shows, not all measures applied achieve their goal. It is becoming increasingly obvious the need, first, to expand these measures; second, to ensure their diversity; thirdly, their targeted use. Such change cannot occur unexpectedly. But if everyone is fully aware of the seriousness and danger of foul language the recovery of society can begin. In this connection, the opinion of the students surveyed is of interest as to what measures could be

effective in combating foul language. Among the most effective measures are indicated (in%):

- conviction on the part of friends – 32.2;
- condemnation by the staff of the class, the training group – 30.5;
- administrative punishment, up to expulsion from the educational institution – 37.2;
- high fines for violation of public order – 46.5;
- a positive example of senior comrades (teachers, leaders) – 21.6;
- accessibility of education for the great masses of population – 13.1;
- tightening of social and moral censorship for the media, television, the Internet – 11.7.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it should be noted that the moral and psychological atmosphere in certain families, whose adult members use obscene language in the presence of children, also needs a serious correction. "Sensual perception is the unconditional basis of the knowledge, in other words ... knowledge must come from sensory perception and be able to return to ... Any training of the man is nothing more than the art of promoting the striving of nature to its own development...It is important that children, as far as it is possible, acquire knowledge from their own observations of the things of the surrounding world, and not from scholastic books and strangers, perceived by faith words [12]." Attitude to the word is an indicator of the morality of the man and society. That is why we seek to change this attitude: some – with the goal of destroying this morality and replacing it, in essence, with immorality, and then society will destroy itself; others – in order to preserve morality, which allows us to develop society, preserve its best traditions and thereby ensure its continuity in the future.

The task of teachers is to confront mistakes, to inspire children that personal autonomy and solvency can be confirmed only by socially valuable deeds and socially responsible behavior. It is impossible to be accepted and respected in a society whose norms you violate [13].

Acknowledgement

The article was prepared within development program of the Flagship Regional University on the basis of Belgorod State Technological University named after V.G. Shoukhov,

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