Cockney rhyming slang and other argots

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Koknijevski rimujući sleng i ostali argoti

Završni rad

Mentor: izv.prof.dr.sc. Tanja Gradečak Erdeljić

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Abstract

This paper is about different argots used by various groups of people, and will focus on Cockney rhyming slang in particular. Firstly, to be able to comprehend the topic fully, those terms must be explained and defined.
Also, in numerous cases it can be seen that people tend to confuse argot with jargon or slang, and in this thesis those terms will be differentiated.

The reader will be introduced to argot as a secret language used by different groups to prevent people outside those certain groups from understanding what they are saying. Argot is commonly connected with groups such as criminals, thieves and students, but it is not limited to only those. Most of the words that develop in a certain argot are not a part of standard speech. There are many subtypes of argots that have developed in different countries and out of different needs of people when they needed privacy, but they still wanted to communicate orally.

The major part of this paper focuses on Cockney rhyming slang, which is a well-known argot that originated in the East End of London. Cockney rhyming slang phrases are obtained from using an expression or a name that rhymes with a word which is supposed to be replaced, and then using that expression instead of the original word. Numerous expressions have gone from being used by only Cockneys into usage in common language. Also, the creation of new phrases and expressions is no longer restricted to just Cockneys.

Key words: *argot, cockney, slang*

1. Introduction

The main objective of this paper is to understand the importance and the influence of argots on the language and speaker's ways of communicating with argots.

Chapter 2 defines argots, and it gives an overview of the origins of argots.

The main purpose of Chapter 3 is to define Cockney rhyming slang, and to explain and understand its great influence on the English language, not only in London, but around the world, as well. This chapter also deals with some taboo terms that can be found in Cockney rhyming slang, as well as with the modern or popular usage of Cockney.

In Chapter 4, a reader is introduced to other subtypes of argots. Whilst Cockney rhyming slang is the best well known and used argot, there have been many argots developing throughout the history and around the world.

2. Argot in general

Argot (French, Spanish and Catalan for "slang") is a secret language used by different groups to prevent people outside those certain groups from understanding what they are saying. Argot is commonly connected with groups such as criminals, thieves and students, but it is not limited to only those. Those groups mostly use it to prevent authorities from understanding their conversations. The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language explains argot in a following way: “The argot words are sometimes of unknown origin but often they are distortions of everyday words or common words that have been given a special meaning. Secret names for numbers are especially common because of their role in financial transactions… The most noticeable kinds of criminal argot, or “speech disguise” as it is sometimes called, are those where utterances are totally or partially unintelligible to the outsider because of the distinctive sounds, grammar, or vocabulary. But a great deal of argot occurs that appears to be in ordinary language, though in fact the utterances have a special meaning.” (Crystal, 58).

The origins of argot can be traced as early as the Antics' period (even though is was shaped somewhat differently in older periods), but one of the first to research argot extensively was Victor Hugo. The results of his research can be tracked in his novel *Les Miserables*, where he says: “What is argot, properly speaking? Argot is just the language of misery.” Hugo also says: “Argot is subject to perpetual transformation – a secret and rapid work which ever goes on. It makes more progress in ten years than the regular language in ten centuries.” (Hugo, 980).

The first known mention of the term argot in that context can be found in a document, which dates back to 1628. As stated in Pierre Guiraud’s *L’Argot*, it is assumed the term comes from '*les argotiers'*, a name given to a group of thieves at the time.

Argot can be considered as an actual language with its own style and its own grammar. Since users of certain argots usually speak the same public language, and since argot is based on

that language, other secret languages, which are at the same time so complete, are very hard to find. In most cases, such argots are just variations of a different language, where a speaker replaces parts of sentences with other words unfamiliar to the people not included in the group.

Argots do not have to have only dark, serious connotation. There is a lighter side of argots, too, and a streak of humor runs through the traditional argot. For example, prisons were often described as 'schools', as in the contemporary 'College of Correction', and the hulks used to accommodate prisoners were 'floating academies'. Brothels were called 'convents' or 'nunneries', the prostitutes who worked there were 'nuns', and the madam was an 'abbess'.

3. Cockney rhyming slang

3.1. Definition, history and development

Cockney rhyming slang is a form of English slang, which consists of many phrases. It emerged from the East End of London and it is still used by Cockneys. Numerous expressions have gone from being used by only Cockneys into usage in common language. Also, the creation of new phrases and expressions is no longer restricted to just Cockneys. Rhyming slang was also frequent in Australian slang up until the end of 20th century, most likely due to the influence of Cockney on Australian English.

According to some of the strictest definition, a real Cockney can only be someone born and raised within the sound of Bow Bells (St. Mary-le-Bow Church in Cheapside, London). On the other hand, the term Cockney can nowadays be used for anyone of Cockney heritage, or even Cockney accent. The accent can be heard quite frequently in outer boroughs of London, as well as London suburbs and even further away across South East England.

Rhyming Slang originated from obscuring the meaning of parts of sentences to those who were not a part of a certain community, although it is not confirmed if that was a linguistic accident, or if it was created with the purpose of serving criminals or maintaining certain communities. Rhyming slang phrases are obtained from using an expression or a name that rhymes with a word which is supposed to be replaced, and then using that expression instead of the original word. One example of that is the word ‘feet’, which rhymes with 'plates of meat'. In some cases the rhyming word from the phrase is eliminated, so not many Cockneys will be heard saying their ‘plates of meat hurt’, but they will most likely say their ‘plates hurt’. On the other hand, the rhyming word is not always excluded from the phrase, so expressions really do vary. It is just a matter of convention in which way the expressions are used. So, for example, ‘mate’ would be replaced by ‘china’, because ‘mate’ rhymes with ‘china plate’. In the same way ‘look’ becomes ‘butcher’s’ (because look rhymes with ‘butcher’s hook’), and ‘money’ is ‘bread’ (very commonly used; from ‘bread and honey’). In some cases the full phrase is used. An example would be ‘Adam and Eve’ to mean ‘believe’. Since there is no rule whether a particular expression is always shortened, never shortened, or if it can be both shortened or not, a person simply has to be familiar with Cockney rhyming

slang.

3.2. Geographical variations

Even though Cockney rhyming slang is used mostly in London, it can still be understood to some degree in other parts of the United Kingdom. However, some Cockney expressions greatly depend on particular regional or local accents for the rhymes to make sense. One example is ‘Joanna’ for the word ‘piano’, and it works only because in this case, users of the expression pronounce ‘piano’ as ‘pianna’. Another example is the term ‘Charing Cross’, which is a place in London, and which is used to mean ‘horse’ since the mid 19th century. It does not make sense for a speaker without the lot-cloth split. Lot-cloth split is a phonemic split in some varieties of English, which was very usual in language at that time, but it is not very used nowadays. Another specific formations can be found in the East Midlands, for example, where they use the expression ‘Derby Road’ for ‘cold’, which rhymes perfectly when pronounced by the locals.

Rhyming slang is also used in the majority of English-speaking countries in the Commonwealth of Nations, and in Australia, as well, but the origin of Australian rhyming slang is somewhat unclear. Some theories state that it most likely came with the original slangs in general were at the time considered to be very vulgar.
As an example, sentence ‘Hello friend, here is the money I owe you, put it in your pocket and give it to your wife’ could be said in the following way using Australian rhyming slang: ‘Ello china, got some bugs for ya, sky ‘em, give ‘em to ya cheese.’.
Other examples of Australian rhyming slang are:
‘Al Capone’ for ‘telephone’, ‘Gary Jack’ for ‘back’, after a famous Australian Rugby League player, ‘Onkaparinga’ for ‘finger’, after a the place in South Australia and a blanket manufacturer, ‘Warwick farm’ for an ‘arm’, after a racecourse in Sydney.
Rhyming slang is not in often used in the United States, even though some noteworthy exceptions can be found. Americans do use ‘bread’ for ‘money’ (which rhymes with ‘bread

and honey'), 'blow a raspberry' for 'fart' ('raspberry tart' rhymes with 'fart'), or 'put up your dukes' for 'fists' (Duke of York = fork, which is a Cockney rhyming slang term for 'fist').

3.3. Taboo terms

The term taboo indicates that something is forbidden to do or to talk about because it might be disapproved of. For example, taboo would be engaging in normally private activities in public, wearing certain colors to funerals, or some behaviors such as incest. If observed in language, taboo denotes words and subjects that could possibly be interpreted as inappropriate in social discourse. Words that the society considers secular, obscene gestures, topics about sexual acts or fantasies, some body parts or functions, as well as certain diseases or death are a good example of language taboo. But, not to be misunderstood, not every such topic can be generally considered taboo, but it depends where and when a person chooses to bring it up. For instance, if a person chooses to speak about sexuality in front of their grandparents or at the family gathering, it would be considered socially inappropriate, i.e. taboo. On the other hand, if the same person chooses the same topic in front of their gynecologist or in a Human Sexuality course, such topic would be considered appropriate. So, just like with knowing in which way to use Cockney rhyming slang phrases, a person just has to know when certain subjects and topics are acceptable to be used.

Every way of speaking involves attitude to the speaker. Most of the people will not be very impressed by a person who swears a lot, or who speaks with a lot of mistakes. Also, every special language leaves different impression. This is what Gumprez says on this subject: "The attitude to pidgins, trade languages and similar intergroup media of communication tends to be one of toleration. Here little attention is paid to linguistic markers of social appropriateness. It is the function of such languages to facilitate contact between groups without constituting their respective social cohesiveness; and, as a result, communication in these languages tends to be severely restricted to specific topics or types of interaction. They do not, as a rule, serve as vehicles for personal friendship." (Gumprez, 227)

Cockney rhyming slang is often used to replace the words which are considered to be taboo. As with some other phrases, people used Cockney slang so much instead of inappropriate words that over time the association with the original word became unknown.
Joe Pasquale, the winner of TV series *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!,* became widely known for his constant use of 'Jacobs', which is shortened version of 'Jacob's Crackers', a term that stands for 'knackers', i.e. testicles.

Some other taboo terms are: 'berk', which is frequently used to describe a foolish person, comes from a well known fox hunt - the 'Berkley Hunt', which rhymes with 'cunt'. Next one is the term 'hampton', which originates from 'Hampton Wick' (a place in London) and stands for 'prick', as in penis. Another example of taboo words is the term 'cobblers' which is mostly used in the context of saying that whatever a person said is nonsense, and originates from 'cobbler's awls', meaning 'balls', i.e. testicles.
There are many other examples including terms that are not considered as such of a taboo as previously stated ones. Some of those are: 'pony and trap' for 'crap' (to express low quality of something), 'Jimmy Riddle' for 'piddle', i.e. urinate, 'Bristol Cities' for 'titties', 'taking the Mick' for 'taking the piss', which originated from 'Mickey Bliss', then the term 'J. Arthur Rank' or 'ham shank' for 'wank', 'D'Oyly Carte' for 'fart' etc.
Also, rhyming slang has some terms for Jewish people that may be considered taboo. Cockneys would call a Jew a 'Chelsea Blue', 'Stick of Glue', 'Four by Two', ' Buckle my shoe' or 'Front Wheel Skid' (the latter being sort of concealed, mysterious version of the insulting term 'Yid', which is a Yiddish word for Jewish person).

3.4. Modern and popular Cockney

Modern Cockney rhyming slang that is being created nowadays usually only rhymes words with the names of famous people or with the constantly developing technology, and there are not many new Cockney slang expressions that differ from that instance. The one that has recently become very popular and common, and that follows this trend is ‘Wind and Kite’, that stands for ‘Web site’.

When it comes to modern literature, Cockney rhyming slang is used quite a lot by Kim Newman in his novels and short stories, such as his collections *Secret Files of the Diogenes Club* and *The Man from the Diogenes Club*. In those short story collections the rhyming slang that is used is explained at the end of each book. Cockney can also be found in the novel *Moving Pictures* by Terry Pratchett.

In music, Spike Jones and his City Slickers based his song *So ‘Elp me* on rhyming slang. Then, the song *Harry Rag* by The Kinks was named after a Cockney rhyming slang term Harry Wragg, which stands for ‘fag’, i.e. a ‘cigarette’. Smiley Culture also mentioned the idiom in the reggae music hit *Cockney Translation*. Few years after that, the same idiom could be found in *Cockney and Yardie* by Domenick and Peter Metro. Many other artists based in London use Cockney rhyming slang in their lyrics, but the true influence of Cockney slang on English in general can be seen when even artist from other parts of the United Kingdom use it in their music. Good example would be The Streets from Birmingham.

In movies, for example in *Mr. Lucky*, character played by Cary Grant teaches his female partner rhyming slang. Next, in the movie *The Italian Job*, many rhyming slang expressions can be heard in the closing song. When it comes to modern, present-day movies, rhyming slang is mostly used to depict a character or a setting in East End, London. One of the examples is movie *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*. That example is interesting due to the translation of the rhyming slang via subtitles in one scene. Another example is the movie *It's All Gone Pete Tong*, which was named after BBC radio DJ Pete Tong. His name is used as rhyming slang for 'wrong'. In the movie *Margin Call*, a character played by Paul Bettany,

an actor born in London, asks someone “How's the trouble and strife?”, meaning to ask about his wife.

Cockney rhyming slangs' big comeback happened in the 1970s due to increased use in some London-based television series and programs, such as *Not on Your Nelly* which got its name from the rhyming slang expression 'not on your Nellie Duff', meaning 'not on your puff', i.e. not on your life. Other shows and series that used a lot of Cockney rhyming slang were *Mind Your Language*, *The Sweeney* (shortened rhyming slang term from 'Sweeney Todd', which stands for 'Flying Squad', a unit of London's Metropolitan Police), *Only Fools and Horses* and *East Enders*. The series *Minder* used many unclear terms, so it was quite difficult to a non-Cockney viewer to always understand the meaning of certain terms, such as 'iron' for 'male homosexual' ('iron' = 'iron hoof' = 'poof' = a homosexual).

3.5. Cockney alphabet

"The Cockney Alphabet, also known as the Surrealist Alphabet, is a humorous recital of the alphabet, parodying the way the alphabet is taught to small children. The humor comes from forming unexpected words and phrases from the names of the various letters of the alphabet." ("Cockney Alphabet", *Wikipedia.org*. 2016. http://en.wikipedia.org (3 July 2016))

A for Horses (or A for Gardener)

B for Mutton

C for Miles (or Seaforth Highlanders or C for Yourself)

D for Dumb (or D for Ential) (or D for Kate)

E for Brick

F for Lump (or F for Vescence)

G for Police (or G for Get It)

H for Consent (or H for Bless You)

I for Novello (or I for the Engine)

J for Nice Time (or J for Oranges)

K for Restaurant

L for Leather

M for Cream (or M for Sis)

N for Lope

O for the Wings of a Dove (O for the Rainbow)

P for Relief

Q for the Loos (or Q for the Pictures)

R for Mo (or R for English)

S for you, you can take a hike (or S for Rantzen)

T for Gums (or T for Two)

U for Me (or U for Mism)

V for Espana

W for a Quid (or W for the Winnings)

X for Breakfast

Y for Mistress

Z for Moiles (or Z for Wind)

4. Other argots

Whilst Cockney rhyming slang is considered to be the most known and used argot, there are also many other subtypes of argot:

Barallete was argot coined in the 12th century's Spain, and it was used by traditional knife-sharpeners and umbrella holders. It substituted everyday words with invented ones of no linguistic connections.

Bargoens arose in the 17th century in the Netherlands. Its name is supposed to have been derived from two Breton words 'Bara' and 'Gwin', literally meaning 'Bread' and 'Wine', which were used a lot by Briton soldiers to order food and drink. It was mostly used by criminals, travelling salesmen and prostitutes in order to insult someone or to talk about subjects concerning crime, money or sex.

Bron was a specific type of argot originating from France and Spain, and was used by itinerant coppersmiths and fabric merchants to talk about the employer without him (or her) being able to know what they are actually talking about.

Caló is a specific argot mostly reserved for Spanish speaking groups on both continents, and the main division would be the following:

Pachuco originated in the Southwestern United States in the first half of the 20th century and it was used by so called 'zoot suit' or Pachuco culture. Since it was used by Mexicans, it became not only completely alien to the Americans, but with the smooth use of Mexican Spanish, it also became reserved for the aforementioned culture. It mostly relies on various rhymes.
Eg. *"Nel, Pastel“ (literally "No, Cake“) - "No way“*

Zincaló, or *Spanish Romany* is combined of native Romany vocabulary with a mixture of Spanish grammar. It is reserved for Spain, and it's spoken by the Gitanos or Zincarli (also

calés, meaning "dark ones“), and by Spanish gypsies. It entered into popular culture and various other speaking entities, thus becoming also part of slang.
E.g. *chaval ("boy", originally "son"), now a cognate of English chav*

Cant could be taken as a synonym for the whole topic, since it bears almost the same meaning, but the true type in the English speaking countries originated in Elizabethan England. Most popular and known is 'thieves' cant', also called 'rogues' cant', as well as peddler's French, and it was a secret language previously used by thieves and beggars, mostly in Great Britain and some other English-speaking countries. It consisted of vernacular used in the criminal underworld. Today, thieves' cant is mostly out of use, even though certain terms can still be heard in some criminal subcultures.

E.g. English: The fast man runs slowly.
Cant: Obok sen koma ark.
Literal translation: Slowness run speed man.

English: I went yesterday.
Cant: Labne bano.
Literal translation: Yesterday go-I.

English: Steal a box!
Cant: Te ken kal!
Literal translation: You steal box!

Carny, or *Carnie*, is type of argot spoken by carnival employees. It originated in the first half of the 20th century. Even though it originated in Europe, it truly bloomed in the United States. It's highly connected to carnival slang and terms, and usually also cares about such topics. Most carnies no longer use this argot, but some owners or operators and "old-timers" still use some of the classic terms, especially when the employee runs a food stand (so called 'grab' or 'popper'), game ('joint'), or ride at a carnival. In Australia, the term translates to 'showie' instead of 'carnie'.
E.g. *Lot Lizard - Describes a carny (usually female) who has multiple sexual partners (also carnys): or one who tends to "sleep-around" or cheat with other carnys on the lot.*

Doublespeak, or *Double Talk* is one of the modern argots, and it originated in the writing world, coming first from Orwell's *1984*. It purposely distorts or reverses the meaning of the words or phrases, or it sometimes takes the form of euphemisms (e.g. 'big-boned' for overweight or 'economical with the truth' for liar). Doublespeak sometimes inverts the meaning of the words and disguises the truth. Many politicians can often be heard using doublespeak.

Edward S. Herman, described the main characteristics of doublespeak and also gave some examples in his book called *Beyond Hypocrisy*:

"What is really important in the world of doublespeak is the ability to lie, whether knowingly or unconsciously, and to get away with it; and the ability to use lies and choose and shape facts selectively, blocking out those that don't fit an agenda or program. " (Herman, 3)

E.g. *pretty – non-pretty*

I just want you to know that, when we talk about war, we're really talking about peace.

Fala dos aricinas, or *jerga de los canteros* was formed mostly of Basque words and grammar. It originated in the Spanish region of Galicia and was used by stonecutters.

Gacería was used by trilleros and briqueros in the Spanish province of Sergovia. It can be translated from basque as "nonsense". Gacería consists of a mixture of words from Galician, French, Basque and Arabic. It consisted of 353 words and was shaped by Spanish rules of pronunciation and phonetics. By the number of words, we can see that it was reserved for work topics mostly. Gesticulation is very important when speaking Gacería, since without it, one word could have many different meanings due to limited vocabulary. One scholar has written: "In Gacería eyes speak more than words", and "A simple gesture is enough to change the meaning of the word". Gacería still lives somewhat amongst people who sell ancient farm tools as collectors' items.

Gail or *Gayle* was used by English and Afrikaans-speaking gay population, originating in the urban areas of South Africa in 1950s. It took a lot of basics from Polari, such as 'varda' for 'to see', and relied on alternative formations using women's names. Some examples for those are 'Hilda' for 'hideous', 'Beulah' for 'beauty' and 'Priscilla' for 'police'. Besides its main

function, i.e. to be used as a secret language, Gayle was used to entertain members of the gay society where verbal wit is highly appreciated.

E.g. *Varda that Beulah! Vast mitzi. She's a chicken and probably Priscilla and I don't need Jennifer Justice in my life right now.*
"Look at that beauty! Very me. He's young and probably a policeman, and I don't need trouble with the law in my life at the moment.“

Germanía or *Jerigonza* originated in Spain in the 15th century. Criminals and similar groups used it in jails, mainly to plan escapes and similar acts. The term 'germanía' stands for 'brotherhood' in Catalan.

Klezmer-Ioshn, translated from Yiddish as *Musician's Tongue*, was used by travelling Jewish musicians known was klezmorim (klezmers). It is and extinct derivative of the Yiddish language, and it originated in Eastern Europe in the first half of the 20th century. It was used to discuss business, plans, or to even mock others. It consisted of Yiddish words combined with some loanwords from other European languages and it often substituted words using rhyme or association. It is not known if this argot is in existence today, since it unfortunately mostly disappeared with Holocaust. A glossary of Klezmer-loshn of more than 600 words can be found in *The Book of Klezmer: The History, The Music, The Folklore from the 14th Century to the 21st* by Yale Strom.

A *Language Game*, also called *Secret Language*, or *Ludling*, is used all over the world in various formations, which cannot be brought in certain relations. The only connection would be the formation of such languages (which reside on native grammar and rules). It is based on manipulating and twisting words to make them incomprehensible. A difficulty with Ludling is that it is passed down orally, because written translations spelling can often vary. There are few examples of Ludling, which are famous all over the world, like Pig Latin; or Verlan, which is spoken in France.
E.g. *Pig Latin – Igpay Atinlay*

Leet, or *Leetspeak* is used primarily on the Internet. It uses certain characters that look similar to the ones that are supposed to be replaced. It relies on resemblance or reflections of the

characters. The term ‘leet’ comes from the word ‘elite’, implying that leet is used only by computer experts. However, leet has recently become a widespread part of the Internet culture and slang, and is now used also to describe an accomplished person when it comes to computer hacking or online gaming.

E.g. *Leet – 1337*

speaker = $p34I<3r

Louchébem, or *loucherbem* is French butchers' slang, specifically used in Paris and Lyon. It originated in the mid-19th century and was in use until mid-20th century. It is very similar to Pig Latin and Verlan. In Louchébem, each word is transformed by moving the first consonant to the end; and suffixes such as -ème, -ji, -oc, -muche are added at the end; the letter "L" is placed at the beginning of the new word. Louchébem is an oral language, whilst spelling is phoneticized. Some words from Louchébem are still used nowadays among people working in the meat retail industry.

E.g. *la femme – lemmefé (lady)*

pardon – lardonpem (excuse me, sorry)

patron – latronpuche (manager)

Polari (from Italian *parlare*, "to talk") was a form of slang used in the gay subculture in Britain, but also used by criminals, prostitutes, actors, and circus showmen. It can be traced back possibly to the 16th century. It was revived in the 1950s and 1960s by its use by camp characters Julian and Sandy in the popular BBC radio show *Round the Horn.* Polari is a mixture of Romance, Romani, London slang, backslang, sailor slang, thieves’ cant and rhyming slang. Later it also incorporated some Yiddish words and then from 1960s words from the drug subculture slang. It had a very small core lexicon of about 20 words, even though it was constantly developing.

E.g. *bona – good*

ajax – nearby

eek – face

cod – bad (in sense of tacky)

naff – bad (in sense of dull)

lattie – room, house, flat

nanti – not, no
omi – man
palone – woman
riah – hair
TBH – 'to be had', sexually accessible
trade – sex
vada - see

Rotwelsch, or *Gaunersprache* was used in the past by travelling craftspeople. The language is built mostly on German, but it also contains a great number of Yiddish words, as well as some words from other German dialects and Romany languages. What is interesting about Rotwelsch is that it has no terms for abstractions. This is probably because it was a mean of communicating about goods and transactions. For example, Rotwelsch has no direct translations for the seasons, but uses *'Bibberling'* which literally means "shivering" for autumn, and *'Hitzling',* which literally means "heat" for spring and summer. Toned down variants of Rotwelsch can sometimes still be heard from travelling craftspeople, as well as from beggars. Many Rotwelsch terms have entered the everyday language in southwestern and western parts of Germany.

Verlan is the inversion of syllables in a word found in French slang and youth language. It is based on a French tradition of interchanging syllables of a word to create a new, slang word. An example is the word 'français', which in verlan becomes 'cèfran'. The syllables are spelled in a way they would sound before the switch, and that is why the syllables may look different to a person who does not speak French.
Some verlan words have become a part of common French language and they bring certain connotations that changed their meaning. One of such words is 'meuf', which can be used to refer to any woman, but it can also refer to the speaker's girlfriend when used in the possessive form. In the same way, original word 'femme' can refer to any women, but when it is used in a possessive form, then it changes its meaning to the speaker's wife. Not many verlan expressions are used in the common language, even though, theoretically, every French word can be translated in verlan. It is not very easy to study verlan since it is passed down orally.

The name *verlan* is itself an example: *verlan = lan ver = l'envers (meaning 'the inverse').*

Xíriga is an occupation-related argot created in the 18th century. It was mostly taken from the Basque language and developed by the *tejeros* in Asturias. The *tejeros* were poor migrant workers in brick or clay, who mostly went to work in distant towns, and who were frequently mistreated by their supervisors. Due to the mistreatment, they developed xíriga as a private language to be able to talk in front of their employers/masters. Xíriga had no written form, because those workingmen who used it were mainly illiterate. The argot began to disappear with the decline of the *tejeros,* although it can still be heard occasionally used by relatives or descendants.

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Sažetak

U radu se govori o različitim tipovima argota koje su koristile različite grupe ljudi te se osobito fokusira na koknijevski rimujući sleng. Svi pojmovi su definirani i objašnjeni, te se naglašava razlika između žargona, slenga i argota.

Argot je posebno objašnjen kao jedna vrsta tajnog jezika kojim se služe različite govorne skupine kako bi ljude koji su izvan njihova kruga spriječili u razumijevanju izgovorenog. Argot se uobičajeno povezuje s kriminalcima, lopovima i studentima, ali nije ograničen samo na ove skupine govornika. Većina vokabulara unutar argota nije dio standardnog jezika i postoje unutar raznih jezičnih sustava, većinom kao govoreni jezik.

Rad daje iscrpan opis koknijevskog tipa argota koji je nastao u londonskom predgrađu East End I tipično korisit izraze koji se međusobno rimuju s riječi na koju se izraz zapravo odnosi. Navodi se i brojne primjere koji su iz koknija ušle u suvrmeni svakodnevni engleski jezik te se objašnjava kako se tvorbeni uzorak proširio i na ostale govorne zajednice.

Ključne riječi: argot, kokni, sleng