

## **Criminological and Linguistic Characteristics of the Slang of Convicts**

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Convict slang is a non-standard variety of language. As a kind of "language within a language", its main features are the incomprehensibility of the formal system in prisons and the creation of conditions for unhindered communication between convicts. The subject of the work is the analysis of the linguistic and criminological characteristics of convict slang. During this analysis, the convict slang shall be observed in the context of the resistance that the convict community, as an informal system, provides to the formal prison system and its representatives. Since convict slang cannot be viewed in isolation from the informal code of convicts, the paper also presents its basic characteristics. The subject of the work defined in this way clearly explains its objective. Studying the slang of convicts can contribute to a better understanding of the convict community, its penological characteristics, as well as criminogenesis within the prisons themselves, which is a prerequisite for improving treatment while serving a prison sentence.

**Keywords:** *Convict slang, Convict Community, Criminogenesis, Penological Treatment*

### **Introductory remarks**

In the textbook literature in the field of criminology, as a separate, complete and comprehensive science, with a specially determined subject, method and theoretical basis of research, one separate part, or even several separate parts, depending on the author's determination, are always devoted to questions of the causation of criminal behavior, as individual phenomena, or criminality as a mass, social phenomenon. All these theoretical foundations are most often divided according to the history of their origin, respecting the order of their appearance, or according to geographical, or

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spatial criteria, where referring to strict European or American criminology, most often carries with it the risk of insufficient understanding of their mutual conditioning. Observing, through many years of pedagogical practice, the way in which the academic population approaches the study of criminological theories, on the one hand, as well as the constant insistence on collecting statistical indicators of criminological/victimological phenomena, on the other hand, it seems that the thread of sociological reflection on the causes of the origin of criminality, their unraveling, and proposing adequate measures for their suppression has been lost (Kostić & Mirić, 2016, p. 430). Looking at the social factors that cause or create the conditions for the occurrence of criminality is extremely important for understanding the entire process of criminogenesis, primarily due to the multifactorial conditioning of criminality itself. It is precisely the sociological approach to the study of criminality that is made possible by forensic linguistics and the study of convict slang, as one of its main tasks, which shall be discussed in more detail later in the paper.

Forensic linguistics is a branch of linguistics that deals with the analysis of language issues relevant to court proceedings. Within forensic linguistics there is also a special discipline that studies the language of criminal groups and individuals with delinquent behavior, with the objective of easier detection of criminal acts and their perpetrators. This is criminal linguistics. Criminal linguistics is a type of criminological scientific discipline that deals with the discovery, study and interpretation of the language and script used by the perpetrators of criminal acts, especially the interpretation of certain usable terms and expressions, with the objective of better and more successful detection of the commission of intended and planned criminal acts, i.e. to prove already committed criminal acts (Jovašević, 2006, p. 263). In the simplest terms, forensic linguistics studies the application of linguistic knowledge and techniques in the elucidation of those criminal acts committed exclusively by the use of language. Forensic linguists can help solve all those cases where the meaning of a word, sentence or text, the author of the text or the speaker is in dispute, regardless of the type of dispute (criminal or civil), court proceedings (pre-criminal, criminal or appellate), or the party engaging it (Manojlović & Nikolić-Novaković, 2009, p. 109). Unfortunately, the potential of this scientific discipline in Serbia is not used enough. There are many reasons for such a situation. One of the most important is the fact that there are very few experts in this field in our country, and that, according to the information we have, it is not studied at any of the faculties in the Republic of Serbia. The fact that forensic linguistics still does not have its place in

legal and especially in criminal and police theory and practice in Serbia speaks for itself. The absence of specialists in this field in the police is a consequence of the inability to understand what is meant by open problem systematization for the progress of modern police activity. The introduction of modern methods to fight against crime necessarily requires the employment of specialists in this field. Transcribing or describing the intercepted conversation from electronic form to/on paper by officers of other profiles, and not forensic linguists, does not contribute to the efficiency of either the criminal or the criminal-law procedure (Manojlović & Nikolić-Novaković, 2009, p. 126). All of these are areas where the work of forensic linguists is extremely helpful to the police, prosecution and courts in the fight against increasingly sophisticated forms of crime, such as various forms of organized or high-tech crime.

Deprivation of liberty and isolation in a special institution lead to a series of psychological consequences for convicted persons. While serving their sentence, convicts are denied freedom of movement, they are subjected to a strictly formal system of life in an institution that they cannot influence, they are separated from family members, relatives and friends, all of which leave deep consequences for most convicts (Mirić, 2017, p. 38). Of particular importance is the study of convict slang. Slang is a non-standard special speech of a certain group of people (Vujaklija, 1986, p. 308). Convict slang is a non-standard variety of language. As a kind of "language within a language", its main features are the incomprehensibility of the formal system in prisons and the creation of conditions for unhindered communication between convicts. The subject of the work is the analysis of the linguistic and criminological characteristics of convict slang. During this analysis of convicts, the analysis of slang shall be observed in the context of the resistance that the community of convicts, as an informal system, offers to the prison system, the formal system and its representatives. The study of convict slang cannot be carried out without analyzing the informal code of the convict community, so some attention shall be paid to this issue as well. The subject of the work defined in this way clearly explains its objective. Studying the slang of convicts can contribute to a better understanding of the community of convicts, its penological characteristics, criminogenesis within the prisons themselves, which is a prerequisite for the improvement of treatment during the execution of the prison sentence. In the continuation of the work, the most important linguistic and criminological characteristics of convict slang shall be presented.

## **Linguistic features of convict slang**

The basic function of convict slang is to ensure the secrecy of their mutual communication in relation to representatives of the formal system. Therefore, this slang belongs to the so-called cryptolects (Kubiček, 2024).<sup>16</sup> The most important linguistic characteristics of this non-standard language variety derive from this function. In the prison community, there are daily secret conversations between prisoners, which are mostly related to their criminal behavior and activities, the conditions of prison life and future plans. The topics of conversation are, apart from everyday events and activities from prison life, mostly related to political and sports events. Information about events outside the prison facility is available to them daily through the media and other means of information, visits by family, going on leave, etc. During the conversation, prisoners use numerous expressions that originated within the prison community - prison jargon. Based on the division of jargon, prison jargon can be classified as a subcultural type of jargon. The research and study of convict jargon is made much more difficult by its secrecy.

Apart from secrecy, there are numerous other characteristics of convict slang. One of them is identity-related, because through specific slang they try to preserve their identity, which is threatened due to numerous prison deprivations (Kubiček, 2024). In addition, through the slang of convicts, the innovativeness of the convicts themselves is manifested and the influence of foreign languages (English, German, Italian, etc.) can be observed in it, which makes it an important subject of studying for sociolinguistics, a scientific discipline that combines sociology and linguistics (Kubiček, 2024).

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<sup>16</sup>Although the words slang and jargon are used in the paper as words whose meanings partly overlap, some differences should be highlighted. Namely, slang represents the specific speech of a group of people (Vujaklija 1986, p. 855), while jargon is the corrupt and incomprehensible speech of a group of people (Vujaklija 1986, p. 209). We believe that the language of convicts contains elements of slang and jargon, and that is how it was observed for the purposes of this paper. We are talking about different sociolects. It should be noted that there are numerous differences between cryptolects and other forms of jargon. Cryptolects have the function of secrecy and are commonly used by social groups exhibiting antisocial behavior, while jargon can have a number of other functions. Namely, jargon can also be related to non-criminal groups and refers to the way of speaking of certain professions (lawyers, doctors, sailors, masons, etc.). See more about different sociolects in Kubiček, 2021. pp. 9-82; Kubiček, 2024.

Nevertheless, certain linguistic characteristics can be distinguished that can be observed through the slang of drug addicts, which is often part of the slang of convicts. Narcotic slang also plays a significant role in the process of identification with the subculture of drug addicts and represents a kind of pass, or a sign of recognition in a group of drug addicts. The future drug addict, at the same time as he starts taking drugs, also accepts the drug addict slang, and the drug addict slang becomes his guardian. Nevertheless, the language of persons who abuse psychoactive substances is suitable for communication in front of undesirable persons, and ensures conspiratoriness in all types of communication, especially in telephone conversations (Savić & Macanović, 2020, p. 295).

The general rules of slang also apply in drug slang. Some of the rules applied are: secrecy (for example: white is cocaine), double wordplay (do you have a vespa - vespa is a vesparakseta/sleep aid), associativity, pejorativeness (the postman is a kangaroo), surrealistic compounds ("slogged cactus" or "sour head"), meaninglessness ("accidental rape"), sonority ("džidžibudžiti"), imagery ("crnjak" - a strong opium), contrast ("terrible" or "bloody" is wonderful). From a syntactic point of view, the sentences in the speech of drug addicts are short, practically elliptical, whose only objective is to convey the linguistic message as quickly as possible and thus reduce the possibility of detection and narrow the space for the action of the police and the judiciary (Mirić, 2020, p. 10-11; Mirić, 2016, p. 559-560; Mirić, 2017, p. 492-493). Although the slang of drug addicts does not differ much from the slang of other convicted persons in terms of linguistic characteristics, this type of slang is particularly characterized by its dynamism, which is reflected in the rapid change in the meaning of words, which is quite understandable considering the illegality of possessing narcotic drugs. With all this in mind, the observation of Angela Devlin, the author of the famous dictionary of prison slang published in 1996 entitled *Prison Pattern - A dictionary of Prison Words and Slang*, that "nothing changes faster in prison than junkie slang" seems quite justified (Devlin, 1996, p. 13). The slang of convicts is wider than the slang of drug addicts, since the slang of drug addicts is only one part of the slang of the wider convict community. In the following, the basic criminological characteristics of convict slang according to the available criminological literature shall be presented.

## Criminological characteristics of convict slang

Similar to the aforementioned linguistic characteristics, the criminological characteristics of convict slang reflect their language, but are basically aimed at maintaining the coherence of the convict group itself, which allows for the smooth functioning of the convict community and the communication of its members. Knowing all the peculiarities of convict slang contributes not only to the prevention of criminality within institutions for the execution of criminal sanctions, but also to a better understanding of the process of criminogenesis itself. It should be emphasized that theoretical and empirical research on the slang of convicts in the Serbian-speaking area is still very rare. At this point, for the sake of illustration, some examples of convict slang will be listed, according to the results of research conducted by Savić and Macanović (2020):

- Director – *kaponja, glava, tata, Šerif Konjević, babo, Papa Štrumf*;
- Deputy director – *zamjenik Šerifa Konjevića, nije do mene*;
- Head of the guard – *super drot, glavni zvezdaš*;
- Guard supervisor – *nasilnik, zvezdaš*;
- Guard – *ključar, žbir, drot, vucibatina*;
- Guard in the yard – *avlijaner*;
- Female educator – *rospija, beštija*;
- Male educator – *ćoško, smor, smlata, kvarnjak*;
- Social worker – *baba, Majka Terezija, socijalna jadnica*;
- Psychologist – *Frojd*;
- Admissions department – *karantin, odmaralište, rizort*;
- Scheduled conversations – *ispiranje mozga*;
- Unplanned conversations – *neplanirano ispiranje mozga*;
- Medical technician – *doktor Mengele*;
- Instructor – *Baltazar*;
- C ward (closed ward) – *kavez, kazamat, ceca*;
- Phone – *žica, veza, fonte*le;
- Guardhouse – *paščara*;
- Solitary confinement – *samuraj, visinske pripreme, prdekana, buvara, staklara*;
- Clock – *čuka*;
- Therapy – *bombonice*;
- Hideout – *štek*;
- Watchtower – *čardak*;
- Room for an intimate visit – *soba za skok, vesela soba*;
- Homosexual – *curica*;
- Dagger – *šaber*;

- Baton – *čarobni štapić, Daliborka, maser, Halida*;
- Video surveillance – *veliki brat, oko*;
- Security officer– *garib*;
- Split– *zipa*;
- Prisoners– *robovi, miševi*;
- One month of imprisonment– *metar*;
- Walking circle – *avlija*;
- Room for work clothes and shoes – *smrdara, komora*;
- Parole Board – *igra na sreću loto, braća po profesiji, džeparoši, komisija za klepanje*;
- Corruption – *bakšiš*;
- Cigarettes – *garaci*;
- Cook – *mađioničar*;
- Laundry – *peglaona, ring*;
- Salary – *sića, socijala*;
- Beatings – *porcija*;
- Gym – *mišičana, čeličana*;
- To steal – *odraditi, ispaliti, zapaliti, šana*;
- Being caught – *pasti, zaglaviti*;
- Search – *pretres*;
- Baštovan – *person who grows marijuana*;
- Čistak – *good drug*;
- Dealer - *petty drug dealer*;
- Dop, dops, gudra – *drug*;
- Duvati – *smoking marijuana, inhaling glue fumes*;
- Džoint – *a hashish or marijuana cigarette (usually combined with tobacco)*;
- Fleš – *euphoria after taking drugs*;
- Flipnuti – *become unbalanced under the influence of drugs*;
- Kriza, zikra – *discomfort during abstinence*;
- Raditi – *sell drugs etc. (cited according to Savić & Macanović, 2020, p. 296-298).*

The aforementioned research was created for the purposes of the scientific paper entitled "Prisoner jargon as a feature of criminogenic subculture", authored by Aleksandra Savović and Dr. Nebojsa Macanović. Since Dr. Macanović was employed in the Banja Luka Penitentiary for several years as an educator and was in daily contact with convicts who were serving their prison sentences in the aforementioned penitentiary, he had the opportunity to become familiar with the most important characteristics of the convict community, as well as with the peculiarities of their slang,

which, according to the author, represents the greatest advantage of such research.

Based on the above examples, it can be concluded that prison slang reflects the tendency to create language constructions in which words are given a different, completely new meaning, pejorative expressions dominate and almost all words refer to concepts that are part of everyday prison life. From a criminological point of view, a good knowledge of slang can contribute to the prevention of the commission of various criminal acts in institutions for the execution of criminal sanctions and to a better understanding of criminogenesis, which, in addition to the practical, has theoretical and scientific importance, especially when it comes to the development of penology and criminology.

Convict slang reflects a large number of alternatives for the same term. This characteristic is a necessary consequence of its secrecy because different morphemes and lexemes arise because the previous ones were discovered by the representatives of the formal system. This feature reflects the lexical diversity of this language variety. It should be noted that in the slang of convicts, you can also find words with a derogatory meaning, which can be explained by the different and often conflicting interests of the formal and informal system in institutions for the execution of criminal sanctions. Often, words acquire a completely new meaning in relation to the literary language, which can also be seen in the previously mentioned examples (Savić & Macanović, 2020, pp. 298-299). Convict slang is a very dynamic form of language, which makes it very challenging to follow and study. Convict slang can be traced back through history. Traces of the existence of criminal slang in the area of the former Yugoslavia (in the area of the Serbian and Croatian language areas) are as old as systematic philological research (Kubiček, 2021, p. 81). At the end of the 19th century (in 1897), a few words of criminal slang were recorded in the "Pokicijanski Glasnik". A decade later (in 1935), Munir Šahinpašić Ekremov's *Riječnik Jugoslavenskih Šatrovaca* appeared in Zagreb, as part of the Moderna Policija library. However, for a better understanding of this topic, the article "Zločinački ili Šatrovački Jezik" written by the lawyer Mato Malinar in 1912 in the *Mjesečnik Pravničkoga Društva* in Zagreb, but which deals with a place of essential importance for the history of crime in the Republic of Serbia: Sremska Mitrovica (Marković, 2021, p. 146; Kubiček, 2021, pp. 81-82). According to our knowledge based on the literature and on the few researches on the slang of convicts in the language area of Serbian and Croatian languages, no differences have been established when it comes to slang in relation to different penitentiary institutions and in relation to whether it is about female or male convicts.



Slang always refers to a specific language, but comparative linguistic research in this area is also very important. Further research in this area would certainly contribute to the development of philology, linguistics, but also criminology and penology and provide valuable knowledge that could be used when creating various programs with the aim of resocializing convicts after serving their prison sentence.

### **The informal code of convicts and its influence on the functioning of the convict community**

Finally, it is important to note that convict slang should not be observed and studied outside the informal convict community. A kind of informal "code" of behavior for convicts functions in it. In institutions for the execution of criminal sanctions, two systems function in parallel - formal and informal. And while the formal system functions in accordance with the corresponding legal norms, the informal system (community of convicts) functions according to some other, unwritten rules of a customary character. The study of that specific convict code is extremely important, not only for maintaining security in the institutions themselves, but also for achieving the objectives of convict treatment. Linguistically, the norms of this code are actually command sentences and are aimed at preserving the solidarity of the convicts themselves and resistance to the representatives of the formal system.

For the reasons stated, special attention should be devoted to the code of convicts, as a set of unwritten rules of the informal community of convicts. The development of the convict code is greatly influenced by the value of the convict community. The behavior of convicts is influenced by the value systems of the convict community itself. The most important values of the convict community are group cohesion and mutual solidarity. Values and norms conceived in this way aim to alleviate prison deprivations and frustrations and prevent the emergence of prison psychoses. All convicts strive to achieve the greatest possible degree of loyalty to the community, mutual solidarity, absence of violence and exploitation of convicts. The main objective is to preserve the stability of the prison society. Only in this way can the convict community and all its members be protected from the action of the formal system. In addition to this, the solidarity of convicts has an objective and subjective component, which is reflected in helping in need, in case of illness, old age or disciplinary punishment of community members. It is measured by the willingness to help other convicts in all incident situations that may arise in contacts with administrative authorities (Mirić, 2020, p. 181). Another significant value of the convict community

is the constant resistance to the prison staff and the refusal to carry out appropriate penological treatment. In this way, the convicted persons themselves express their negative attitude towards the values of the rest of society, thereby making their own resocialization more difficult. Closely related to this norm are the resistance to treatment and the rejection of society that occur in most convicts (Konstantinović-Vilić & Kostić, 2006; Mirić, 2020, p. 181).

Another important value is the effort to preserve personal autonomy. Namely, by coming to prison, convicts lose not only their freedom of movement, but also a whole series of social roles they had before. This often leads to feelings of worthlessness, lack of self-confidence and self-esteem. It is through the convict social system that they can regain some of their earlier influence in the community. There is a widespread belief among convicts that if they cannot change the conditions of life in prison, they can channel and control their actions and thus contribute to preserving some degree of integration.

No matter how paradoxical it sounds, one of the values of the convict community is the preservation of peace and stability in the prison. At first it seems that this is a socially acceptable value, but in reality it is not so. Preservation of peace here has a completely different objective, which is to prevent possible conflicts with the formal system, which would threaten the functioning of the community itself.

In addition to these collective values, certain individual values may appear in the prison community that are in conflict with the group values. Most often, it is about the desire of individual convicts to control and exploit others. Personal power is conditioned by the possession of certain material goods, which are a strong source of satisfaction for all convicts (drugs, mobile phones, money, etc.). On the basis of values, certain rules of conduct are created, which form a code of conduct for convicts, which has the force of customary rules among the convicts themselves. These rules can basically be reduced to the following:

A group of norms that regulate the relationship between prisoners and the administration. Disclosure of information to representatives of the formal system and exploitation of convicts among themselves is prohibited. In prison slang, these rules are expressed in the form of short requests such as "don't betray another prisoner", "don't bark", "don't do anything to the man behind his back";

Norms that control affects tend to reduce the conflicts between convicts to the minimum possible ("don't lose your head", "mind your own business"); Convicts should not exploit each other ("don't be an extortionist", "don't steal", "don't exploit");

Norms that affect the preservation of the dignity and morals of convicts ("don't be weak", "don't whine", "be a man");

Norms prohibiting recognition of the reputation of prison staff (cited according to Konstantinović-Vilić & Kostić, 2011, p. 227-228).

Although these norms are not written down anywhere, convicts must respect them. *Opinio iuris* is the protection of the values of the convict community. For the violation of the mentioned norms, there are punishments that are carried out by the members of the convict community themselves and range from ridicule and boycott, all the way to the use of physical force, all depending on which norm was violated (Mirić, 2012). This "code" also applies to convicts who did not participate in its adoption, which once again shows the customary nature of the aforementioned rules. In the analysis and interpretation of the norms of this "code", we can, once again, be helped by the determination of grammatical and linguistic rules. Namely, based on a brief description of some of its norms, it can be concluded that it is dominated by short imperative sentences. In this way, commands are transmitted to all members of the convict community in an extremely quick and simple manner, which affects the preservation of solidarity among its members.

As it was already said before, knowledge of the convict code is extremely important for studying the functioning of the convict community. The convict code is implemented verbally, since it represents a set of unwritten rules. As it is a linguistic creation, it is best to study it in direct contact with convicted persons. And that's exactly where a problem arises that makes research on the convict code and the convict community in general more difficult. Namely, it is very difficult to study the characteristics of the informal system "from the inside" with participation. That would be very dangerous for the researcher himself. This problem can be solved by carefully designing the research, its subject matter, sample objectives and appropriate research instruments. Research of the available criminological and penological literature has shown that there is a lack of theoretical and especially empirical research in this area. We believe this fact will be an inspiration for the work of numerous criminologists and penologists in Serbia in the coming time (Mirić, 2020, p. 185).

Prison gangs are very active in prisons, which are the main generators of violence. In addition to general characteristics, individual characteristics can be observed in the activities of convict gangs, depending on the country and the social milieu from which its members come. Each of these gangs has a specific code of conduct for its members. Such is the case with the gang in the USA - Texas Syndicate. Folsom State Prison in California is mentioned as the place where this gang of prisoners originated. The gang

was formed due to increasing pressure on certain convicts by the Mexican Mafia and La Nuestra Familia. Gang members have a built-in almost military discipline, being ready to be patient for days in order to retaliate at the right moment, for attacking gang members or for violating the gang code (Mays & Winfree, 2009, p. 208). According to Walker, during the formation of the gang, members could also be non-Hispanic convicts. Međutim, vrlo brzo došlo je do toga da članovi bande Texas Syndicate mogu da budu samo Španci. The code of conduct for members of this gang includes the following rules: 1) be a Texan; 2) always remain a gang member; 3) put the gang's interests above all else; 4) the gang is always right; 5) tattoo a gang sign; 6) never let gang members down; 7) respect other members and 8) do not give information about the gang to others (Kostić & Dimovski, 2013, p. 225). Even in the case of the code of this gang of convicts, norms aimed at maintaining group solidarity among its members and ensuring conspiratoriness in relation to representatives of the formal system are noticeable. Therefore, two codes of norms function in parallel in prisons: one is written, conventional, comes from the formal system and is directed towards the realization of the principles of rehabilitation and resocialization, and the other is unwritten, comes from the informal prison system and is directed towards resistance to the formal system. That is why it is considered deviant. However, a good knowledge of the informal code of behavior of convicts can contribute to the process of resocialization of convicts if positive elements are taken from it, which there certainly are. The convict code should be used to strengthen pro-social bonds among the convicts themselves. By strengthening convict self-management through its partnership with the formal system in achieving treatment objectives, many deviant and delinquent phenomena that occur behind prison walls can be suppressed. To many, this idea seems too utopian to be achievable. Skepticism related to the positive action of the convict community is certainly related to the fact that there are many more convict groups with antisocial actions compared to prosocial ones. Of key importance for the good functioning of any institution for the execution of criminal sanctions is the achievement of good communication between representatives of the formal and informal system despite the well-known "law of silence", as one of the basic rules of the code of the convict community. Communication with convicted persons represents the largest and most specific segment of re-educational work and is a prerequisite for achieving the ultimate goal - resocialization of the convicted person (Potkonjak, 2009, p. 180; Mirić, 2020, p. 183-184).

As a feature of the informal system, prisoner jargon has a certain role in the functioning of the prison and the way of communicating in it. At the same

time, it is inseparable from the formal system. Jargon, as well as the prisoner's code, have, we have established, several characteristics that relate primarily to the functioning of the informal system - it, first of all, represents communication that should be incomprehensible to those outside the group. Also, its objective is defense against the system, i.e. resistance to the system, because with it the prisoners try to overcome all the deprivations that are present during the serving of the sentence, but it also serves as a screen through which they come to an agreement when committing some illegal and punishable acts while serving their sentence (Savić & Macanović, 2020, p. 303; Ciechanowska, 2015, p. 8).

It is quite clear, taking into account the basic linguistic and criminological characteristics of the convict's slang, that its more complete study can contribute to a better understanding of the functioning of the convict's community and therefore to the realization of the purpose of the treatment and the successful resocialization of the person after serving the prison sentence.

## **Conclusion**

The basic function of convict slang is to ensure the secrecy of their mutual communication in relation to representatives of the formal system. The most important linguistic characteristics of this non-standard language variety derive from this function.

In the prison community, there are daily secret conversations between prisoners, which are mostly related to their criminal behavior, prison life conditions and future plans. The topics of conversation are, apart from everyday events and activities from prison life, mostly related to political and sports events. Information about events outside the prison facility is available to them daily through the media and other means of information, family visits, leaves, etc. During the conversation, prisoners use numerous expressions that originated within the prison community - prison jargon. Based on the division of jargon, prison jargon can be classified as a subcultural type of jargon. The research and study of convict jargon is made much more difficult by its secrecy. Convict slang always refers to a specific language, but comparative linguistic research is also very important, and precisely future research into convict slang in different languages can be very important for the improvement of the program for the resocialization of male and female convicts while serving a prison sentence.

For the study of convict slang, the existence of an informal code of the convict community based on the values of the convict community is particularly significant. The study of these values can contribute to the creation of adequate penological treatments. A more complete study of

convict slang, the convict code and the informal community of convicts would contribute to the development of sociolinguistics, criminology and penology, and this process can be viewed much more widely, from the perspective of the development of social and humanities and scientific disciplines. Unfortunately, in our opinion, special attention was not paid to these issues in Serbia, and they represent a kind of scientific and professional challenge for scientists of social and human sciences and scientific disciplines.

Convict slang reflects the tendency to create language constructions in which words are given a different, completely new meaning, pejorative expressions dominate and almost all words refer to concepts that are part of everyday prison life. A good knowledge of the slang of convicts is the key to understanding the functioning of the convict community. But also much more than that. Slang reveals the ways and rules of communication between the convicts themselves, their way of thinking and value systems. Ensuring the conditions for the smooth functioning of institutions for the execution of criminal sanctions and the prevention of the execution of criminal acts within them therefore also implies understanding and monitoring language changes and the rules of slang of convicts. Achieving this objective requires a multidisciplinary approach and a synergy of the actions of experts from various sciences and scientific disciplines (penologists, criminologists, lawyers, sociologists, social workers, special pedagogues, andragogues, etc.). This approach has, apart from practical, theoretical scientific significance as it paves the way for the development of numerous sciences and scientific disciplines, primarily criminology and penology.

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