

The Buzz Among Youth in Baku



by Aynura Huseinova

What's going on in the minds of youth? Listen to their slang and you'll get some good clues. We did, and we discovered that some of their deepest concerns are quite similar to youth, coming of age, anywhere in the world. As young people venture into adulthood, making consequential choices on their own, they are particularly sensitive about being perceived as stupid or doing anything that would be considered inappropriate.

Slang is an extremely dynamic verbal form. Expressions can become immensely popular, then totally disappear overnight. But as barometers of cultural values, we thought it would be interesting to identify some of the slang expressions that are being used by the youth in Azerbaijan 13 years after the country gained its independence. These examples have been collected from university friends, though most young people in Baku are likely to understand them. Perhaps, girls traditionally may be shyer in using some of them, especially the more aggressive expressions.

Two things to watch particularly for in analyzing slang: what images appear as metaphors, and what broader issues and patterns seem to be repeated. Characterized by succinctness and humor, slang also has the capability of being cruel. Ask anyone who has been a target among their peers. Often the use of slang is deliberately intended to shape another person's behavior. It can be extremely didactic.

In this collection, we noticed some terms that might be more associated with the post-Soviet period, now that youth have more access to electronics and cars, as in antennas and spare parts of cars. Also, Russian terms are still being incorporated into Azeri discourse here in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

We hope that some of the foreigners who are attempting to learn Azeri will enjoy these samples. Learn them quickly before they disappear! Note that some terms appear only in spoken Azeri, not the literary form, such as "qatıgıvı" instead of "qatıqım" (your yogurt). Enjoy!

ANNOYING

Beynimin qurdlarını tərətəm.

Literal: Don't move / wake up the worms in my brain.

Meaning: Don't get on my nerves!

Beynimin qurdlarını tərətəm, yoxsa sənə pis olar.

Literal: Don't wake up the worms of my brain, or it will be bad for you.

Don't get on my nerves or you'll be sorry.

ATTRACTIVE

Maska

Meaning: Good looking

Boys often use this term when referring to a girl that they think is very attractive. On occasion, girls refer to boys this way, too.

Ora bax, ora bax, maska gəlir.

Literal: Look, look, maska is coming.

Meaning: Look, look, a good-looking guy / gal is coming.

JANA

This word is derived from "jan", which in Azeri and Farsi means "soul". This

term can also be used to describe someone who is good-looking. Boys use this term to say that a girl is attractive and beautiful.

BOASTFUL

Risovka

Meaning: Showing off (Russian)

Telefonla risovkəliq eləmə.

Don't show off with your mobile phone.

BOTHERSOME

Qabırğa

Literal: Rib

Meaning: an unwanted person who always hangs around and pesters you.

Qabırğalıq eləmə.

Literal: Don't act like a rib.

Meaning: Don't bother me. Let me alone.

BUSYBODY

Həşərat

Insect

Going into detail too much, knowing too much, being nosy. This expression can be used both in the positive and negative sense of the word. It just depends to whom it is addressed and in what tone it is spoken. Here, mostly, it has positive meaning.

Zalım oğlu, lap həşəratsan, aaa!

Literal: Son of a cruel guy, you're a real insect!

Positive meaning: Bloody you (British expression)! you're a real go-getter.

You're really something.

O həşəratdır, deyin, tapsın sizin üçün!

Literal: He's an insect, ask him, and he gets it for you.

Positive meaning: He's a go-getter, ask him and he gets it for you.

Həşəratı görürsən, stolda heç nə qoymadı, hamısını içəri ötürdü.

Literal: Look at him, he's an insect, he didn't leave anything on the table, he swallowed everything.

Negative meaning: Describing somebody who loves to eat.

Həşəratlıq eləmə, mənə də öyrət.

Don't act like an insect. Tell me as well.

Meaning: Don't be sneaky.

Negative meaning: Don't be greedy, don't be stingy, teach me, too.

CHATTER BOX

Çənə

Literal: Chin

Meaning: Talkative

Bilmirdim, filankəs çənə imiş ki.

Literal: I didn't know that she is absolutely chin.

Meaning: I didn't know that person is so talkative.

COMPETENT

Sökür

Meaning: To destroy, to disassemble. To express that somebody has mastered something.

İngilis dilini daha sökürsən.

Literal: You are already disassembling English.

Meaning: You know English very well.

CONSENSUS

Təmiz söhbət

Clear conversation.

Meaning: Term used when everybody is in agreement.

Vəssalam da, təmiz söhbət, oldu-qurtardı.

All done. That's it, clear conversation, everything is sorted out.

COOL GUY

Qaqas

Like "bro" in English. Short for "brother"

Originally, a term used in baby talk for baby brother in Baku.

Qaqasın hərəkətinə bax, özünü tutub.

Literal: Look at this bro's behavior, he held himself.

Meaning: Look at the cool guy's behavior, he made an improvement.

DEEP TROUBLE

Eşşəyin öldü.

Literal: Your donkey is dead.

Meaning: You're in serious trouble.

İmtahana hazırsan?

Yox?

Onda eşşəyin öldü!

Are you prepared for your exams?

No?

Then your donkey is dead!

DUMB, NOT INTELLIGENT

Tormoz

Brake

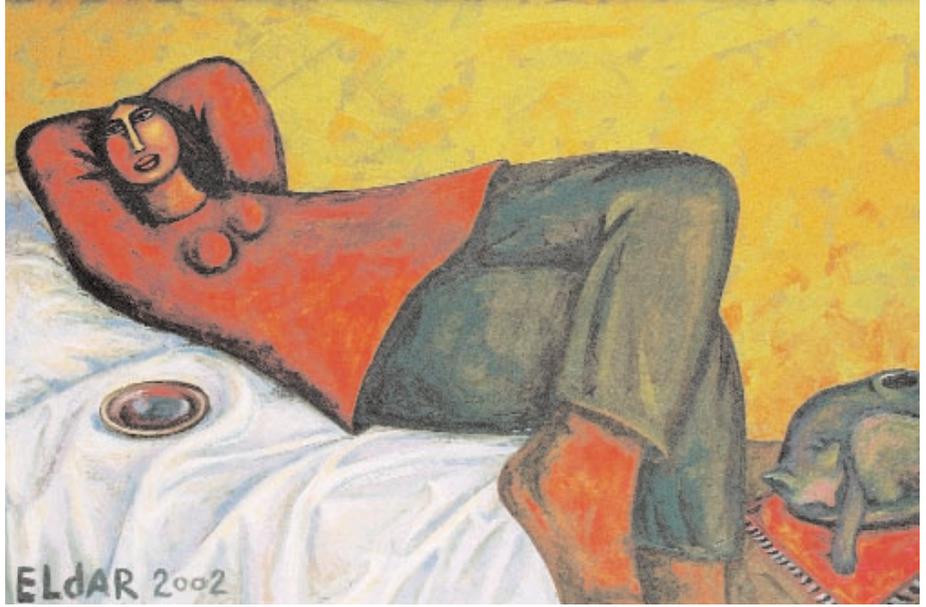
Meaning: A Russian word, referring to people who are slow at comprehending something.

Yenə tormozu tutdu.

Literal: Again he put on the brakes.

Meaning: His brain is stuck.

Əziyyət çəkib təkrar eləmə, onsuz da o tormozdur.



Teenager by Eldar Babazade. See AZgallery.org. Contact Eldar in Baku at his studio: (994-12) 76-26-86, home: 71-18-15, or mobile: 353-1293.

Literal: Don't bother to repeat it, anyway, he's a brake.
Don't bother to repeat it; besides, he won't get the meaning anyway.

EXAGGERATE, DECEIVE

Basıb-bağlama

Don't pack and tie.

Meaning: Don't lie / bullshit.

When somebody exaggerates what he / she had done.

Yenə özünün qəhrəmanlığından nə basıb-bağlayırsan?

What! You're bullshitting again about your heroism?

EXCELLENT

Yeri var.

Literal: It has a place.

Meaning: It's worthwhile, something very good.

Bayram necə idi, xoşuva gəldi?

Aaaa! Yeri var!

How did you like the party?

Ohhhhh! It has a place!

Meaning: It was a great party!

EXHAUSTED

Zapçasta dönmüsən

Derived from "Zapchast", a Russian word.

To stress that somebody seems too tired.

Literal: You resemble the spare parts of a car.

Meaning: You seem too tired.

INSPIRATION, MUSE

Həyatımın antenası

The antenna of my life

Meaning: The meaning of my life (Intended as humorous.)

Həyatımın antenasısan, məni tərk etmə.

You are the antenna of my life, don't leave me.

INTRUSIVE

Get qatıgıvı çal

Go and make your own yogurt.

Meaning: Mind your own business.

Don't bother somebody, leave them alone.

This expression may be used when an unwanted, third person intrudes into a conversation.

Sənnən

The literary form, not spoken form, is: *səninlə*, or *sənin ilə*.

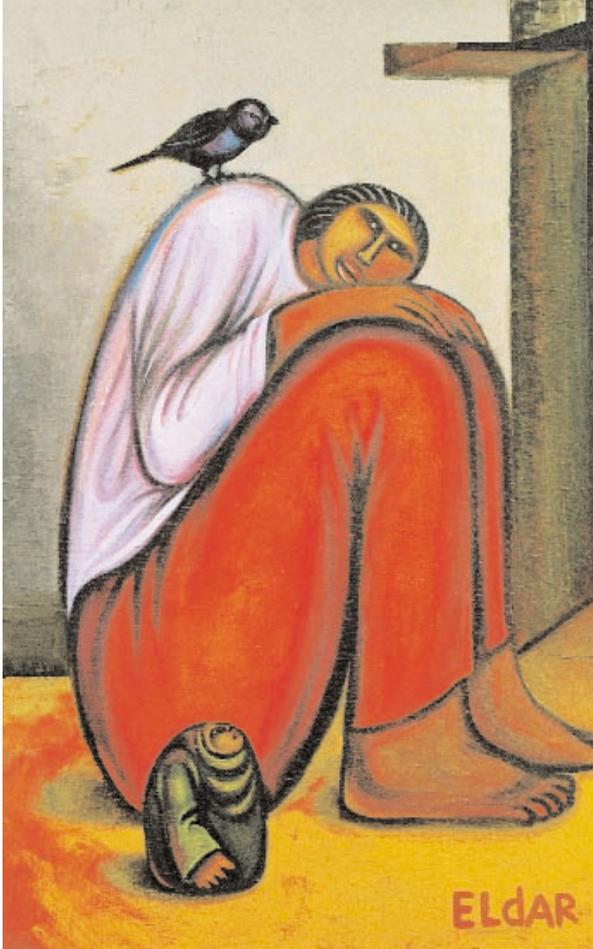
Sənnən danışan yoxdur, get qatıgıvı çal.

Nobody is talking to you, go make your own yogurt.

Also used when somebody says something stupid or inappropriate.

Boş-boş çərənləmə, get qatıgıvı çal.

Literal: Don't talk nonsense, go make your own yogurt.



Art by Eldar Babazade. See AZgallery.org. Contact Eldar in Baku at his studio: (994-12) 76-26-86, home: 71-18-15, or mobile: 353-1293.

JUST FOR FUN

Mırt

This word comes from “mırt vurmaq” (verb form) and means “to chat”. But as a noun, it means to do something different for a change or just for fun.

Dünən tutub arvadın başını keçəlləmişəm.

Niyə?

Elə mırta.

Last night I shaved my wife's head.

Why?

Just for chat. (Meaning: just for a change).

This example is from the TV show, “Odd Sneeze” (Tək Səbir).

PROBLEM SOLVER

Day-day

(Rhymes with bye-bye!)

This term comes from the word “uncle” (dayı) and refers to a person who is always holding you, supporting you and helping you solve problems. For example, Day-day could be the person who finds a job for you.

Day-dayımın canın allah sağ eləsin, yəqin bir gün ağlayar.

Literal: May God save my uncle, he probably will cry out for me.

Meaning: May God save my uncle, he probably will be able to sort out my problem for me.

Tapış/Tapş

Derived from the word “tapşırmaq” (asking for) and used similarly to “day-day”.

Tapışın/Tapşın kimdir?

Literal: Who is your “asking for”?

Meaning: Who is supporting you? Who's behind you? Who speaks up for you?

Krışa

Roof

Russian word

Exactly the same as “day-day” or “tapış/tapş”

Krışan yoxdursa, vəziyyətin ağırdır.

Literal: If you don't have a roof, you're in trouble.

Means: If you don't have someone to support you, you're in trouble.

SENSATIONAL

Bomba

Bomb

Meaning: Something or somebody is so cool.

Bomba qızdır, yaman xoşuma gəlir.

Literal: She's a bomb, I really like her.

Meaning: She's cool, I really like her.

Ayaqqabularım xoşuva gəlir?

Hə, bombadır.

“Do you like my shoes?”

Yes, they're a bomb.

Meaning: They're cool.

SMART

Kəllə

Skull

Meaning: Bright, smart

Onunla danışanda görürsən ki, həqiqətən kəllədir.

Literal: When you talk to him, you see that he's a real skull.

Meaning: When you talk to him, you see that he's really bright.

STUPIDITY

Balqabaq / yemiş / qaşqaldaq / dolma

Pumpkin / melon / coot / dolma

Stupid, idiot, meaningless, silly...

These words are used to describe a person or action that is meaningless or inappropriate. These terms, more frequently used by guys, rather than girls, may be used in swearing or in teasing close friends. A coot is a bird that looks like a black chicken but has semi-webbed feet and can swim like a duck. In Azeri, the word itself (**qaşqaldaq**) sounds very funny and comes across as derogatory and humiliating if used to refer to a person. Dolma are stuffed grape leaves—traditional cuisine.

Qaşqaldaq, çaşma.

Literal: Coot, don't be confused.

Meaning: Stupid, behave yourself.

Yemişin biri, mənə məsləhət vermə.

Literal: You melon, don't give me advice.

Meaning: You idiot, I don't need your comment.

Xəstə

Sick, stupid, idiot

Onun danışığına qulaq asdın? Xəstədir.

Did you hear the way he talked? He's sick.

Ağzını yaxala

Wash /Rinse your mouth.

This term may be used when somebody says something stupid or inappropriate.

Sən mənim gülməyimə lağ eləyirsən? Get ağzını yaxala.

Literal: Are you making fun of the way I laugh? Go and rinse out your mouth.

Meaning: Are you making fun of the way I laugh? Don't criticize me.

Cibinə daş qoy

Literal: Put a stone in your pocket

Meaning: Behave yourself. Don't say or do anything stupid.

Yekə adamsan, bəsdir yüngüllük elədin, cibinə daş qoy.

Literal: You're a big man, enough of being light, put a stone in your pocket.

Meaning: You man, don't act silly, behave yourself. Grow up. (In Azeri being "light" means not behaving appropriately, or doing or saying stupid things.)

SUCCESSFUL

Özünü tutmaq

Holding oneself

Meaning: Making improvement (mostly related to money)

Bunun maşınına bax, özünü tutub.

Literal: Look at his car, he held himself.

Meaning: Look at his car, he made improvement. He pulled himself together.

This expression is commonly used when referring to people who become arrogant after making money.

Özünü tutub, daha saymır bizi.

Literal: He held himself, he doesn't count us any longer.

Meaning: He made improvement, he doesn't pay attention to us anymore. He's snubbing us.

Bərk gedən / xod gedən

Literal: A person going at high speed

Meaning: Somebody who is always successful (or pretends to be successful). "Xod" is Russian and is combined with the Azeri verb "gedən" to make "xod gedən", which is widely used in Azeri discourse as well and has the same meaning. **Bərk gedən / Xod gedən**

Dünən televizorda gördün onu? Yaman bərk gedənlik eləyir.

Literal: Did you see him on TV yesterday? He's going at high speed.

Meaning: Did you see him on TV yesterday? He's advancing / climbing.

SHAMELESS

Sifa

Impudent, jerk.

The origin of this word comes from **sifət** (face) and implies humor.

Qonşum əməlli-başlı sifadır.

Literal: My neighbor is totally face.

Meaning: My neighbor is totally impudent.

SKIN AND BONE

Soku çəkilmis

Nectar drained.

Meaning: A person is too thin.

Sən hələ də dietadasan? Sokun lap çəkilib ki.

Are you still on a diet? You're already nectar-drained.

TALKING NONSENSE

Qatıq

Yogurt

Refers to people who don't pay attention to what they are saying, who talk nonsense.

Qatıqlama.

Don't make yogurt.

Don't talk nonsense.

Filankəs lap qatıqdır.

Literal: He is absolutely yogurt.

Meaning: Refers to people who always say stupid things.

Rastamoşka / Rastamozhka

Meaning: Clearance at customs

Literal: "Rastamozhka" is a Russian word, which is used quite frequently in Azeri discourse. It means to intentionally check and censure yourself and your ideas before you speak so that your conversation will not offend anybody and won't sound stupid. In other words, think before you speak.

Sözü ağzında rastamoşka elə, sonra çıxart.

Before saying something, "rastamozhka" your mouth.

Meaning: Think before you speak.

WEALTHY

Cırr

Tearing off

Meaning: Too cool

İmkan cırr

Literal: Opportunity is tearing off.

Being too wealthy

Maşına bax: imkan cırr.

Literal: Look at that car: opportunity is tearing off.

Meaning: Look at the make of that car, the owner is so wealthy.

Gündə bir şey geyinir: imkan cırr.

Literal: He / she wears new clothes every single day: opportunity is tearing off.

Meaning: He / she wears new clothes in every single day: he / she is so wealthy.

WEARISOME

Gözlərim mazol oldu

My eyes got blisters.

To express that you're tired of looking at something.

Hər gün onu görməkdən gözlərim mazol olub.

Literal: My eyes got blisters from seeing him everyday.

Meaning: I'm tired of seeing him everyday.

Aynura Huseinova gathered these examples of slang from classmates and friends at Baku State University where she is graduating this year in International Relations. She is a staff member of Azerbaijan International. In 2000, she was a recipient of a U.S. grant FSA Undergraduate fellowship as an exchange student in 2001 to Lincoln, Nebraska. ■