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**THE USE OF VULGAR LANGUAGE IN FICTION FOR
YOUNG ADULTS**
BACHELOR THESIS

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INTRODUCTION

Fiction for young adults is constantly receiving more and more attention. This type of fiction often contains not only standard language but also non-standard, which savours the literary works with various slang words, vulgarisms and other types of *bad language*.

A great number of foreign linguists such as Battistella (2014), Andersson and Trudgill (1992), Allan and Burridge (2006), Ljung (2011), Stenström, Andersen, Hasund (2002), Doyle (2006), Androutsopoulos (2010), Danesi (1994, 2003), Rathje (2010), Hughes (1991) and others wrote about the language of young adults. Lithuanian linguists are also interested in this topic. Butkuvienė (2015) made a research on the translation of adolescent language. Vabalienė (2010) took interest in the specifics of the usage of slang and jargon. Dimavičienė (2012) studied the taboo subjects in Lithuanian literature for young people.

The **object** of a research is the use of vulgar language in Melvin Burgess's novel „Lady: my Life as a Bitch”.

The **aim** of the research is to analyse the particularities of the vulgar language in Melvin Burgess's novel „Lady: my Life as a Bitch”.

The **objectives** of the research are the following:

1. To present the theoretical background of issues concerning vulgar language.
2. To collect the cases of vulgar language.
3. To distribute the cases of vulgar language according to the selected classification system.
4. To present the functions of vulgar language used in the novel under analysis.

The following **scientific methods** have been applied:

1. The analysis of theoretical material provided an opportunity to review various issues concerning vulgar language.
2. The descriptive method enabled to explain the particularities of the use of vulgar language.
3. The statistical method allowed to systematize the cases of vulgar language and to display them graphically.

The **novelty** of the work. Although fiction for young adults has gained much popularity, not much research has been done what concerns the use of vulgar language in Melvin Burgess's novel “Lady: my Life as a Bitch”.

The **structure** of the final thesis. This Paper consists of the following parts: an introduction, the theoretical part, the practical part and the conclusions. The theoretical part

defines the vulgar language and focuses on its' types and functions. In the practical part the examples of vulgar language from Melvin Burgess's novel "Lady: my Life as a Bitch" are analysed.

The **scope** of the research is 153 examples from Melvin Burgess's novel "Lady: my Life as a Bitch".

The **practical value** of the work. The research will be valuable for those who are interested in literature for young adults and the use of vulgar language in it.

1 THE UNDERSTANDING OF VULGAR LANGUAGE

Vulgar language is an element of non-standard language and it is considered to be harsh, offensive and unintelligent. This type of language can also be called “street language”. It is highly related to other types of *bad language* such as slang, jargon, swearing, cursing, profanity, taboo, etc. In this part of the research, the definitions of standard, non-standard and vulgar language, as well as the types and functions of vulgar language will be presented.

1.1 Standard and Non-standard Language

Every language has two varieties: standard, which is generally considered to be official and formal, and non-standard, which is opposite to the standard language. According to Davies (2016), the standard language is “the dialect of a language that has been standardized and therefore has an agreed writing system, grammar, and dictionary. In addition, it is normally the variety used for official purposes, including education” (Davies, 2016: 124-125).

Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics (1996) provides the definition of standard language, which claims that it is “<...> the usual designation for the historically legitimated, panregional, oral and written language form of the social middle or upper class. Because it functions as the public means of communication, it is subject to extensive normalization (especially in the realm of grammar, pronunciation, and spelling), which is controlled and passed on via the public media and institutions, but above all through the social systems” (Bussmann, Trauth, Kazzazi, 1996: 451-452).

The definition found in the *Illustrated Oxford Dictionary* (2001) says that Standard English “is the dialect of English used by most educated English speakers and is spoken with a variety of accents. <...> Standard English is the form of English normally used for business dealings, legal work, diplomacy, teaching, examinations, and in all formal written contexts” (Metcalf, 2001: 1007).

Davies (2016) describes the Standard English as “the written dialect of the educated, accessible to all through detailed codification (in dictionaries, descriptive grammars etc.), education and the normative practices of publishers and government institutions” (Davies, 2016: 124). Therefore, the standard language is standardised and includes certain language rules. To be more precise, the standard language is the language which is taught in schools and used in textbooks.

As mentioned earlier, the non-standard language is opposite to the standard language. This means that this type of language does not have any strict language rules. It might be used freely, regardless of any language norms.

Davies (2016) defines the non-standard language as having “any systematic variation in terms of accent or dialect from Standard English” (Davies, 2016: 102). Therefore, Davies describes the non-standard language as any form of language that is different from the standard language.

According to Labov (1969), “the traditional view is that the non-standard or sub-standard form of speech used by children is an imperfect copy of standard English, marred by a number of careless and ignorant errors” (Labov, 1969: 1). This definition states that the non-standard language is the version of the standard language, which includes linguistic errors or mispronunciations that generally might be considered to be an incorrect language. Labov (1969) points out that this view of non-standard language has been argued for many years, but it still remains the same. He also indicates that “the non-standard language significantly varies from standard language as it is used in every day speech and does not satisfy any grammar, pronunciation and other rules” (Labov, 1969: 1). Therefore, one of the main features that differentiate these two types of language is its’ vocabulary – the standard language includes the formal vocabulary, while the non-standard language includes the everyday vocabulary. The following subsection will provide the definition of the vulgar language.

1.2 Definition of Vulgar Language

According to Ljung (2011), “vulgarity is a social construct determined by the views of polite society concerning what can and cannot be said. These views are linked to the notion of social class, in particular the idea that speakers belonging to the lower classes also use a ‘lower’ kind of language including swearing” (Ljung, 2011: 7). This definition emphasizes the distinction between social classes and the language used among them. It also points out that the vulgar language is generally used by the people from lower social classes.

Other definitions of the word *vulgar* and words of the same root found in *The Dictionary of the English Language, Containing the Pronunciation, Etymology, and Explanation of All Words Authorized by Eminent Writers: To which are Added, a Vocabulary of the Roots of English Words, and an Accented List of Greek, Latin, and Scripture Proper Names* (1857) are the following:

“Vulgar, a. (L. *vulgus*) pertaining to the common people; common; vernacular; coarse; rude” (Reid, 1857: 463);

“Vulgar-ism n. a vulgar phrase or expression” (Reid, 1857: 463);

“Vul-gar-i-ty, n. coarseness of manners or language” (Reid, 1857: 463).

These definitions reveal the basic features of the vulgar language, such as coarseness, rudeness and commonness. Therefore it becomes clear that the vulgar language is a branch of informal language, which might be crude, impolite, offensive and ignorant. It is also described as pertaining to common people, thus defining the speakers who use such language.

The definitions of words *vulgar*, *vulgarity* and *vulgarism* found in the *Illustrated Oxford Dictionary* (2001) are presented bellow:

“Vulgar adj. **1** a of characteristic of the common people. **b** coarse in manners; low (*vulgar expressions; vulgar tastes*). **2** in common use, generally prevalent (*vulgar errors*)” (Metcalf, 2001: 936);

“Vulgarity n. (pl. **-ies**) **1** the quality of being vulgar. **2** an instance of this” (Metcalf, 2001: 936);

“Vulgarism n. **1** a word or expression in coarse or uneducated use. **2** an instance of coarse or uneducated behaviour” (Metcalf, 2001: 936).

In fact, these definitions marginally differ from the definitions presented earlier. They also define the word *vulgar* as something coarse, low, common and uneducated.

Jay (1992) defines vulgar as “generally used, applied, or accepted: having an understanding in the ordinary sense: of or relating to common people: lacking in cultivation, perception, or taste: *coarse*: morally crude, underdeveloped, or unregenerate: gross. Vulgarity means the language of the common person, “the person in the street”, or the unsophisticated, unsocialized, or under-educated” (Jay, 1992: 6). The definition of Jay (1992) adds more peculiarities of vulgar language and defines that this language is commonly used in streets. Similarly as Ljung, Jay (1992) provides the definition which refers to the lower classes and under-educated people who are the main users of the vulgar language. The following subsection will provide the definitions of vulgar language and other non-standard varieties.

1.3 Vulgar Language and Other Non-standard Varieties

Vulgar language has many similar features with some other non-standard varieties; therefore, it might be difficult to distinguish between them. First of all, the vulgar language might be confused with slang, as both types of language are non-standard varieties and both

might be crude and offensive. According to Jay (1992), slang is “an informal nonstandard vocabulary composed typically of coinages, arbitrary changed words, and extravagant, forced, or facetious figures of speech” (Jay, 1992: 6). Another definition of slang found in the *Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics* (1996) defines slang as a “British or American variant of carelessly used colloquial language with explicitly social and regional variants. <...> slang is characterized by the innovative use of common vocabulary as well as newly coined words” (Bussmann et al., 1996: 437). Referring to Jay’s definition, Doyle (2006) describes slang as “very informal and sometimes offensive words that is used by a sub-groups of people, such as young people, drug dealers, baseball players, etc.” (Doyle, 2006: 3). Therefore, the main difference between vulgar language and slang is that slang is an informal language, newly coined words, which are used to speak on various topics, while vulgar language is considered to be more rude and coarse; it is usually used in scatological, related to a human body or sexual themes.

In addition, vulgar language may also be compared with swearing or cursing because these types of *bad language* might be offensive. *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2005) provides a definition of the word *curse* which defines it as “a swear word or words that you say because you are very angry” or “a word or sentence used to ask God or a magical power to do something bad to someone or something” (Summers, 2005: 385). *Illustrated Oxford Dictionary* (2001) provides a definition of a *swear word* which is a “profane or indecent word, esp. uttered as an expletive” (Metcalf, 2001: 838). According to Ljung (2011), “swearing often involves the use of four-letter words like English *fuck*, *shit* and the corresponding terms in other languages, and on account of this it is regarded by many as disrespectful, vulgar and offensive” (Ljung, 2011: viii). Crystal (1997) proposes the definition of cursing and swearing, stating that they can be found both in formal contexts and in the daily speech. He claims that a daily taboo speech might “express such emotions as hatred, antagonism, frustration and surprise” (cited in Ljung, 2011: 5-6). Hughes (1991) claims that “swearing shows a curious convergence of the high and the low, the sacred and the profane” (cited in Ljung, 2011: 6). According to Doyle (2006), *to curse* is “to call upon divine or supernatural power to send injury upon someone” (Doyle, 2006: 2). Vulgar language and swearing or cursing have many similar features: both include four-letter words, both are offensive, crude, disrespectful, harsh and both may express emotions. But the difference is that swearing and cursing are usually used to express the anger, whereas the vulgar language may be used to express both the positive and negative feelings. Also it might be used to make jokes or as a specific speech of cliques.

Notwithstanding the fact that jargon is a spoiled language, mainly used by particular groups, it slightly differs from the vulgar language. *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2005) defines jargon as “words and expressions used in a particular profession or by a particular group of people, which are difficult for other people to understand – often used to show disapproval” (Summers, 2005: 867). Another definition found in the *Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics* (1996) says that “jargon entails an extended and terminologically normalized vocabulary, and correspondingly different uses of morphological rules, i.e. compounds, special prefixed forms, foreign words, technical terms, metaphor are characteristic of jargon” (Bussmann et al., 1996: 245). On the basis of the provided definitions, it can be claimed that the vulgar language differs from the jargon, although both non-standard varieties are used by a particular group of people. But the difference is that the jargon may be used in some professions, while the vulgar language is used only in everyday life, mainly as a street language.

Moreover, the vulgar language might be confused with argot or cant, which have a special vocabulary and, same as vulgar language, might be used in the conversations of cliques. *Illustrated Oxford Dictionary* (2001) defines argot as “the jargon of a group or class formerly esp. of criminals” (Metcalf, 2001: 51). The same dictionary describes cant as “insincere pious or moral talk”; “ephemeral or fashionable catchwords” or “language peculiar to a class, profession, sect, etc.” (Metcalf, 2001: 123). In the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2005) argot is defined as “written expressions used by a particular group of people” (Summers, 2005: 65). *Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics* (1996) describes argot as “a secret language, roughly corresponding to cant, used by beggars and thieves in medieval France. More broadly, argot may refer to any specialized vocabulary or set of expressions used by a particular group or class and not widely understood by mainstream society, e.g. the argot of gamblers or the argot of the underworld” (Bussmann et al., 1996: 33). In the same dictionary, cant is described as “the jargon or secret language of a socially isolated and often “asocial” group that deviates from the standard language, especially in its specific vocabulary. Cants are intentionally meant to be unintelligible to those who have no command of them” (Bussmann et al., 1996: 33). The same feature of the vulgar language and the cant or argot is that they are used by groups of people. The difference is that argot and cant are used mainly by specific groups of people, such as criminals, beggars and thieves.

Vulgar language is not a dialect. According to *Illustrated Oxford Dictionary* (2001), a dialect is “a form of speech peculiar to a particular region” or “a subordinate variety of a language with non-standard vocabulary, pronunciation, or grammar” (Metcalf, 2001: 223).

Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics (1996) defines the dialect as “a linguistic system that (a) shows a high degree of similarity to other systems so that at least partial mutual intelligibility is possible; (b) is tied to a specific region in such way that the regional distribution of the system does not overlap with an area covered by another such system; (c) does not have a written or standardized form. i.e. does not have officially standardized orthographic and grammatical rules” (Bussmann et al., 1996: 125). Therefore, both vulgar language and dialect do not have standardized forms of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. The difference of these non-standard varieties is that the dialect is used in particular regions, while the usage of vulgar language is not bounded to a specific location.

Although profanities, blasphemies and oaths are regarded as offensive, insulting, disrespectful and inappropriate language, these types of non-standard language cannot be considered to be similar to the vulgar language. According to *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2005), profanity is an “offensive words or religious words used in a way that shows you do not respect God or holy things” or “formal behaviour that shows you do not respect God or holy things” (Summers, 2005: 1308). In the same dictionary, blasphemy is described as “something you say or do that is insulting to God or people’s religious beliefs” (Summers, 2005: 144). The *Illustrated Oxford Dictionary* (2001) defines the oath as “a solemn declaration or undertaking (often naming God)” or “a profane or blasphemous utterance; a curse” (Metcalf, 2001: 563). Referring to the provided definitions it becomes clear that these types of non-standard language differ from the vulgar language. The major difference is that these non-standard varieties are linked to religion, God and other holy (and contrary to the holy, that is damned, cursed or devilish) things, while vulgar language involves many other themes, including the religious theme, too.

There are several features of vulgar language, that is, obscenity and scatology. However, these types of non-standard language cannot be equated. Doyle (2006) defines obscenity as “disgusting to the senses; repulsive; indecent; abhorrent to morality or virtue; designed to incite lust or depravity” (Doyle, 2006: 3). According to *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2005), obscenity is “a sexually offensive language or behaviour, especially in a book, play, film etc.” or “a sexually offensive word or action” (Summers, 2005: 1130). The same dictionary defines an adjective *scatological* as being “too interested in or related to human waste, in a way that people find offensive” (Summers, 2005: 1464). According to *Illustrated Oxford Dictionary* (2001), scatology is “a morbid interest in excrement” or “a preoccupation with obscene literature, esp. that concerned with the excretory functions” (Metcalf, 2001: 737). According to Jay (1992), “vulgarisms are not necessarily obscene or taboo, they just reflect the crudeness of street language” (Jay, 1992: 6).

Therefore, these non-standard varieties have some similarities with the vulgar language since some similar topics are covered. But the vulgar language is related not only to the sexual and scatological themes but also to religion, diseases, death, killing, prostitution, narcotics, bodily effluvia and other themes. The further subsection (1.4) will present the types of vulgar language.

1.4 Types of Vulgar Language

Vulgar language is often described as inappropriate and not corresponding to the norms of standard language; it is considered to be an element of *bad language*. According to Andersson and Trudgill (1992), sociolinguists claim that there are many different classification systems for *bad language* (cited in Doyle, 2006). In addition, they have the same opinion about the need for the classification of *bad language*. Andersson and Trudgill (1992) claim that sociolinguists “<...> agree that the relative “badness” of this language is constantly changing; what is previously thought to be “bad language” may later become “standard English”” (cited in Doyle, 2006: 2). In his book *Teaching “Bad Language” in a Serious and Systematic Manner* Doyle (2006) represents the classification system, which is given by Jay (1992). This system subdivides *bad language* into cursing, profanity, blasphemy, taboo, obscenity, epithets, scatology, slang and vulgar language (cited in Doyle, 2006).

Bad language can also be defined as a set of dirty words, used to talk about specific topics. According to Stenström, Andersen and Hasund (2002), dirty words are used as slang or swearwords “<...> which are mainly related to sex, religion and excretion” (Stenström et al., 2002: 66). These are the main themes where dirty words occur. Stenström et al. (2002: 64) provide the types of usage of slang words, which are the following: taboo substitutes (piss somebody off), reflectors (fucked-off); and the types of usage of swearwords: intensifiers (fucking crap), abusives (you dickhead), expletives (for fuck’s sake). This classification shows that slang or swear words may have several different purposes and thus they are expressed in various ways. According to Ljung (1986), swearing is subdivided into two smaller categories: “<...> “aggressive swearing”, which reflects the speaker’s emotions, and “social swearing”, which speakers use to strengthen group affinity; the stronger the group affinity the more swearing” (cited in Stenström et al., 2002: 77). Therefore, the types of slang or swear words and the way they are used are highly related to the functions of *bad language*. Midjord (2013) claims that swear words are the same as taboo words. She introduces the

classification system by Rathje (2010), which is based on Allan and Burrige (2006) and Andersson (1985). The classification system is presented below:

1. *Bodies and their effluvia*
2. *The organs and acts of sex*
3. *Diseases, death and killing, physical and mental handicap*
4. *Religion and church, naming and addressing sacred persons, beings, objects and places*
5. *Food gathering, preparation and consumption*
6. *Prostitution, narcotics and criminal activity* (cited in Midjord, 2013: 22).

According to Midjord (2013), Rathje (2010) classifies taboo language in accordance with the topics in which it is usually used. This classification system of swear words indicates the main areas and themes of taboo language.

Another quite similar classification system of taboo language is presented by Ljung. According to Ljung (2011) “<...> taboos violated in swearing fall into two quite different major groups, one involving religion and the supernatural, the other bodily waste, the sexual act and the sexual organs” (Ljung, 2011: 5-6). The classification system by Ljung is presented below:

1. *The religious/supernatural theme*
2. *The scatological theme*
3. *The sex organ theme*
4. *The sexual activities*
5. *The mother (family) theme* (Ljung, 2011: 36).

This classification system is also based on the main topics of taboo language and does not have a considerable difference comparing to the classification system by Rathje. “Bodies and their effluvia” and “The organs and acts of sex” coincide with “The sex organ theme” and “The sexual activities”; “Religion and church, naming and addressing sacred persons, beings, objects and places” coincides with “The religious/supernatural theme”; “Prostitution, narcotics and criminal activity” partly coincides with “The scatological theme”. Both classification systems contain a type of taboo language, which does not coincide with the type of the other system.

Ljung defines swearing as the overall activity and distributes swear words into two groups: stand-alones and slot fillers (cited in Midjord, 2013). Midjord (2013) also states that sometimes it is difficult to distinguish the functions in this typology of swearing. Therefore, she presents a “new typology, inspired by Ljung (2011) and Andersson and Trudgill’s

presentation of how “swear-words may intrude into grammatical patterns”” (Midjord, 2013: 28). The classification system by Midjord is presented bellow:

1. Stand-alones

a. Interjections

b. Interjections loosely tied to a sentence

c. Curses and unfriendly suggestions

2. Emphasisers

a. Adverbs

b. Adjectives

c. After WH-words

d. Prefixation, suffixation and infixation in words or phrases

3. Idiomatic swearing

a. Adjectives

b. Verbs

c. Pronouns

4. Nouns (Midjord, 2013: 29-30).

This classification system varies from the previously presented classification systems as it is constituted in accordance with grammatical patterns, while other classification systems are based on the topics of *bad language*. According to Midjord (2013), the category stand-alones includes interjections (which are used to express feelings), interjections loosely tied to a sentence (which are used to show the importance of a discourse) and curses and unfriendly suggestions (which are offensive, rude and harsh; it is used to insult another person by using *bad language*). The second category – emphasisers – includes adverbs, adjectives and after WH-words. The category emphasisers “have the function of intensifying or placing emphasis on an adjective, adverb, noun or a statement” (Midjord, 2013: 30). According to Midjord (2013), the third category – idiomatic swearing – is divided into three subcategories: adjectives, verbs and pronouns. This category includes idioms, which are formed of curses and swear words. However, according to Ljung (2011), idiomatic swearing does not always carry the meaning which is considered to be swearing, but since this type of swearing contains swear words, it is considered to be a form of *bad language* (cited in Midjord, 2013). Moreover, Midjord (2013) claims that idioms may be found in other categories of swearing as well. For example “curses such as *Piss off!* and *Fuck you!* could form part of the subcategory idiomatic verbs” (Midjord, 2013: 31). But, according to Midjord (2013), curses have a different function from an idiomatic swearing and it is “<...> very difficult to categorise them according to word class only” (Midjord, 2013: 31). This is the reason why some of the word

classes might occur in more than one category of swear words. The final category presented by Midjord (2013) contains nouns, which do not fit any other category. The following subsection (1.5) will present the functions of vulgar language.

1.5 Functions of Vulgar Language

Vulgar language is widely used in today's society. There are several reasons for the occurrence of this phenomenon. Ljung (1986) claims that "<...> swearing is considered to reflect bad behaviour, lack of education and linguistic poverty <...>" (cited in Stenström et al., 2002: 77). Despite the fact that the vulgar language is considered to be inappropriate, the functions of this phenomenon are not only related to offensive behaviour, but it can express both positive and negative emotions.

First of all, the vulgar language is widely used as a specific speech of cliques, especially among young adults. Since the vulgar language of young adults is the fundamental point in this research, this aspect is of particular importance. Young adults use the non-standard language, which is peculiar only to a particular clique. According to Andersson and Trudgill (1990), teenager's words might indicate the group they belong to or to show the leaders of a group (cited in Doyle, 2006). In addition, Danesi (1994) points out that the language used by teenagers in cliques may provide the upper status for them. "An especially interesting aspect of discourse among teens is its use in attaining power within the clique. Over a decade ago, Maltz and Borker (1982) noticed that male teenagers in particular achieved relative status in the fluctuating hierarchy on their clique by learning how to manipulate their verbal interactions with peers" (Danesi, 1994: 113). Therefore, the specific language of cliques is meant not only to show their idiosyncrasy but it also might be used as a method to achieve the recognition in the clique.

Moreover, the function of vulgar language is to offend, derogate, abuse or defend. This can be proved by the statement of Danesi (2003), who claims that "<...> language can be used as another kind of tool – namely, a "weapon" that can be employed to defend oneself or to attack someone else" (Danesi, 2003: 55). Danesi (2003) also points out that the vulgar, offensive and abusive language is a common phenomenon in jokes. According to Allan and Burridge (2006), young adults tend to use abusive *bad language* in various ways, such as "comparing people to animals (*bitch*), insults derived from bodily organs (*asshole*) or bodily effluvia (*shit*) and sexual behaviour (*fucker*), pointing out people's physical characteristics as abnormalities (*fatty*, *four-eyes*), insults invoking subnormality or derangement (*retard*, *idiot*)

and racist insults (referring to Arabs as *towel heads*)” (cited in Midjord, 2013: 22-23). This function of vulgar language reveals the negative side of this type of communication, that is insulting, abusing and being offensive. In this case, the purpose is to make harm to some other person.

On the other hand, the function of vulgar language is not always related to bad behaviour. The vulgar language can be used to make fun or to express emotions. According to Kotsinas (1997), “innovative variants primarily have been used to express some kind of an emotion or attitude, for instance irony, distance, etc., i. e. to attract the attention of the hearer” (cited in Androutsopoulos, 2010: 1500). Although vulgar language is associated with ignorance and ill-treatment, it is also used to express certain feelings and emotions as well as to impart these feelings to the hearer. Ljung (2011) describes swearing as a language device, which gives “<...> additional emphasis to their speech, often in combination with other emphasizing techniques like stress, intonation and tone of voice, not to mention non-linguistic phenomena like gestures and facial expression” (Ljung, 2011: 4-5). Therefore, additional emphasis is created not only by using a different tone, stress, intonation, facial expressions or gestures, but also by using such type of *bad language* as the vulgar language, which is a device that may provide the emphasis on a particular part of a speech.

In overall, the vulgar language among young adults has several different functions. By using vulgar language adolescents show their belonging to some specific clique or their power in it. Another function of this type of language is to offend, abuse, attack or shock. Finally, the functions are not only related to bad behaviour and indignity; the vulgar language might also be used to amuse, express emotions and playfulness.

2 THE USE OF VULGAR LANGUAGE IN MELVIN BURGESS'S NOVEL "LADY: MY LIFE AS A BITCH"

After analysing the theoretical material related to the use of vulgar language (vulgar language and other non-standard varieties, types of vulgar language, functions of vulgar language), it is significant to accomplish the practical research on this topic. In this part of the Paper, the methodology of the research will be discussed, the classified examples of vulgar language will be introduced, discussed and presented graphically.

2.1 Methodology of the Research

The practical analysis of the use of vulgar language in fiction for young adults was actualized using the cases of vulgar language collected from Melvin Burgess's novel "Lady: my Life as a Bitch". This decision has been made because Melvin Burgess is a well-known British writer who is famous for his fiction for young adults. In addition, the novel "Lady: my Life as a Bitch" includes many cases of vulgar language. Firstly, the cases of non-standard varieties were collected starting from Page 1 and ending with Page 197. Generally, the cases of vulgar language occur in the speech among teenagers or the adults interacting with teens. The scope of the research is 153 instances.

The vulgar language was classified according to the classification system of Rathje. These cases were classified into six groups: "Organs and acts of sex" (41 instances); "Bodies and their effluvia" (39 instances); "Prostitution, narcotics and criminal activity" (32 instances); "Religion and church, naming and addressing sacred persons, beings, objects and places" (16 instances); "Diseases, death and killing, physical and mental handicap" (15 instances); "Food gathering, preparation and consumption" (no such instances were found). One more category, named as "Uncategorised cases" (10 instances), was necessary because there were some instances which could not be categorized in accordance with this classification system. The next step was to analyse the particularities of vulgar language used in this novel. It was necessary to determine the reasons why young adults use vulgar language. Thus, the functions of vulgar language were established. Finally, the conclusions on the use of vulgar language, its types, and functions were made.

2.2 Bodies and their Effluvia

As mentioned earlier, 39 instances of vulgar language related to bodies and their effluvia were found in the novel “Lady: my Life as a Bitch”. According to the number of collected instances, this is the second most frequent category. The vulgar language related to bodies and their effluvia is most commonly used to talk about the excretion of urine and faeces. This category contains 19 examples where the word *shit* (or any of its form) is used and 13 examples where the words *piss* and *pee* (or any of its form) are used. The used vocabulary creates an image of an adolescent language, which is usually considered to be obscene, profane and detestable.

Consider the following examples:

1. *The cars, the dustbins, the grass, the dog shit on the tarmac, the feet that had been and gone – everything left its taste on my tongue.* (Burgess, 2003: 9)
2. *She eats until she’s full, shits where she likes and communicates with her kind at both ends.* (Burgess, 2003: 135)
3. *Nappies and shit and exams and tests and work and forever and ever and ever amen.* (Burgess, 2003: 196-197)
4. *Two of them stinking of dog pee and the night air, with a fresh kill on their breath.* (Burgess, 2003: 28)
5. *They scared me so badly I actually peed a few drops.* (Burgess, 2003: 28)
6. *We spent ages trying to get Ed to wear it, and when he did for a little while we were dying to get him to do a widdle.* (Burgess, 2003: 50)

In *the Oxford Dictionary of Modern Slang* (1993), the definitions of the presented vulgar words are the following:

“**shit** Also **shite**. *coarse. verb 1 intr.* To defecate **2 trans.** **a** To excrete **b** To defecate in. **3** to shit oneself: **a** To make oneself dirty by defecating **b** To be afraid” (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 213);

“**pee** verb **1 intr.** To urinate **2 trans.** **a** To wet by urinating **b** To wet (oneself) by urinating; hence (chiefly metaphorically) **3** An act of urination **4** Urine” (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 163);

“**widdle** noun **1** An act of urination. **2** To urinate” (Ayto, Simpson, 1993 :286).

The dictionary provides the most common meanings of the presented vulgar language. For example, the word *shit* might have several meanings. The verb *to shit* means to defecate or excrete, but it also might be used to express fear. The given examples are directly related to bodily effluvia as it provides a full-scale image of the acts, such as the disposal of

excrement and urine. The removal of the substance from a body is described explicitly and sometimes even with a savour of humour. All these sentences are the words of the adolescent characters. Given this fact, it becomes clear that teenagers freely express their thoughts and do not restrict themselves by any rules of language culture and etiquette. These examples also reveal the young adult's comprehension of the world and surrounding environment.

However, the vulgar language related to bodies and their effluvia might be used not only to describe the functions of a body. In some cases the vulgar language of this category might be used to refer to some emotions. By using vulgar language both positive and negative feelings such as freight, surprise, nervousness, irony, anger or complaint might be expressed.

Consider the following examples:

7. *That cat nearly shat itself!* (Burgess, 2003: 16)
8. *What's this shit?* (Burgess, 2003: 23)
9. *But it had to be shitty, didn't it?* (Burgess, 2003: 6)
10. *Could-do-better, must-work-harder, must do this, must do that, all that shit.* (Burgess, 2003: 43)
11. *I began to remember how pissed off I'd been with seeing Simon every weekend, doing my homework so neatly every night, helping around the house, all that shit.* (Burgess, 2003: 189)

On the contrary to the previously presented examples, these instances of vulgar language are not directly related to bodily effluvia, because they do not actually refer to the excreta of a human body. Young adults usually use such taboo words as *shit* or *shitty* to express their feelings and emotions and to show their response to some action or event. With reference to the context it becomes clear that the vulgar language is used to express emotions and feelings (in the 7th example – surprise, in the 8th – anger and in the 10th – irony). In addition, the words *shit* and *shitty* might be used to describe an insufficient quality of some object. Therefore, young adults tend to use vulgar language as an easier way to express emotions and describe something they do not like.

Furthermore, the vulgar language related to bodies and their effluvia might have a function to offend or abuse. Here the most common swear word is also “*shit*”. It is used in different forms, that are the following: the plural form *shites*; the collocations *piece of shit* and *shite pack member*.

Consider the following examples:

12. *The little shit was up to the pipe and on to the conservatory roof next door before I could draw breath.* (Burgess, 2003: 61)
13. *“Selfish little shites,” growled Terry.* (Burgess, 2003: 100)

14. *He stood staring down at Terry as if he was a piece of shit on his shoe while the others explained.* (Burgess, 2003: 102)
15. *You've chosen Terry and Terry is a shite pack member to be with.* (Burgess, 2003: 117)
16. *"Go on then, smart-arse. Fetch!" she commanded.* (Burgess, 2003: 166)

These combinations of swear words are generally used to call the other person, who takes part in the conversation. The aforementioned expressions indicate the mood of a speaker and show how the speaker treats a person he communicates with. Swear words, addressed to other people, are popular among young adults. It mainly functions as insults or terms of abuse. Though such taboo words might be used without any malicious intents but simply as an inherent part of young adult's speech.

In addition, the vulgar language related to bodies and their effluvia might be used simply to refer to the parts of a body. These words do not carry any significant meaning or function, but still, they are considered to be vulgar.

Consider the following examples:

17. *It has four legs, teeth at one end, hair in the middle and an arsehole at the back.* (Burgess, 2003: 183)
18. *"My tail is attached to my arse," he yodelled, and I couldn't help it any more, I just cracked up.* (Burgess, 2003: 32)
19. *Mitch plunked his bum down next to him and had a good old scratch.* (Burgess, 2003:9)
20. *I remember lying there with my legs wide open and he was kneeling in between them, having a good look.* (Burgess, 2003: 129)

Words, such as *arsehole* and *arse* and word collocations, such as *legs wide open* refer to the parts of a body. No matter if these expressions consist of swear words (for example *arsehole*) or simply refer to parts of a body, speaking about a body, especially about intimate parts of it, is still sometimes considered to be taboo. In some cases, it is not necessary to use vulgar language in order to say something inappropriate. Consider Example 20: this sentence does not carry any vulgar words, but, with reference to the context, it is not difficult to understand that this sentence represents an intimate episode when a male watches at the genitals of a female.

2.3 Organs and Acts of Sex

As it has been previously mentioned, there are 41 instances of vulgar language related to organs and acts of sex. (18 instances related to male's genitals and 23 instances related to sexual intercourse). This category contains the biggest amount of instances, as the sex theme is very popular among young adults.

First of all, the vulgar language related to organs of sex mainly covered the parts of a male's body. Female's parts were not mentioned. This might be done due to the fact that the main character is a female teenager. This is not surprising that the main topic of the young girl's conversations are boys.

Consider the following examples:

1. *They're too scared to even talk about their dicks in case it turns they've got a small one.* (Burgess, 2003: 24)
2. *We were doing nets that day, and she was cracking me up by going on about doing a net of her boyfriend's willy and seeing if our teacher could work it out and put it back together again.* (Burgess, 2003: 73)
3. *But still, that was then, and me calling him Little-Willie this time really drove her mad.* (Burgess, 2003: 79)
4. *His face was too high, so I did what I've always done in a fight: I went straight to his knackers.* (Burgess, 2003: 103)
5. *He'll have nads like a pair of burgers!* (Burgess, 2003: 104)
6. *He stood up over me, and I had this view of him above, past his knob to his face sort of leering down at me, and that's when I went.* (Burgess, 2003: 128)
7. *I got the whole goose and her eggs in my jaws and I clenched right up.* (Burgess, 2003: 103)

The Oxford Dictionary of Modern Slang (1993) provides the following definitions of the presented vulgar words:

“**knackers** *noun pl.* The testicles” (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 121);

“**dic**k *noun* The penis” (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 50);

“**knob 2** The penis” (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 121).

The definitions show that almost all swear words of this subcategory are directly related to male genitals. They are usually referred to organs of sex. These instances of vulgar language are presented both literally and figuratively. The most commonly used swear word related to organs of sex is *willy*. This word was made up by the main character and used in a

humorous and ironic way. The main character uses this word in order to sneer at her best friend's boyfriend. Other swear words referring to male genitals are *dick*, *knackers*, *nads*, *knob*, *goose* and *her eggs*.

Acts of sex are none the less popular topic among young adults. Teenage years is the time when the topics related to sex organs and sexual activities receive the highest interest of young people. Young adults are not ashamed to explore the taboo topics related to sex; they do not ascribe it to inappropriate or unacceptable themes.

Consider the following examples:

8. *They spent hours and hours wanking in their bedroom and then they're too embarrassed to even mention it to their best friends.* (Burgess, 2003: 24)
9. *Which ones had I snogged?* (Burgess, 2003: 89)
10. *We were planning doing it properly in a big double bed, but the only double beds we had available belonged to our parents and who wants to christen your sex life in your parents' bed?* (Burgess, 2003: 125)
11. *On the other hand I don't want to do it in the back of a car or have a knee trembler up against a tree or anything like that.* (Burgess, 2003: 125)
12. *I remember thinking that at this rate, I was going to turn into the dreaded sixteen-year-old virgin unless I ended up shagging Simon on the living room floor while my mum was watching "EastEnders".* (Burgess, 2003: 127)
13. *I wanted to sleep with those rough boys and hang out with those rough girls.* (Burgess, 2003:130)
14. *He made me think of Simon when we'd done it doggy fashion.* (Burgess, 2003: 131)
15. *I thought it must be something really kinky, but when she did tell me later, all it was, was for her to wrap her legs around his waist and squeeze hard while they were at it.* (Burgess, 2003: 128)
16. *I mean – having a diddle down there.* (Burgess, 2003: 52)

The Oxford Dictionary of Modern Slang (1993) provides the following definitions of the presented vulgar speech items:

“**shag** *coarse. verb trans. and intr.* **1** To have sex (with). **2** Used in curses and exclamations. **3** An act of copulation” (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 209);

“**diddle** *verb now mainly US* **1 trans. and intr.** To have sex (with). **2 intr. and refl** To masturbate” (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 50);

“**snog** *Brit. verb intr.* **1** To kiss and cuddle” (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 228);

“**knee-trembler** *noun* An act of sexual intercourse between people standing up” (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 121);

“**wank** *noun* **1** An act of (male) masturbation. **2** = WANKER *noun* **2**; also an objectionable thing. **3** To masturbate; often followed by *off*” (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 280).

The definitions show that the language used to talk about sexual relationships is usually vulgar, harsh and lewd. Such language is usually ascribed to curses and oaths. The presented examples show that sexual activities might be described by using vulgar language and taboo words. The most frequently used words and word combinations referring to sexual activities are the following: *to wank*, *to snog*, *to have a knee trembler*, *to shag*, *to sleep with rough boys*, *to do it doggy fashion*, *to be at it* and *to have a diddle*. On the other hand, there are some cases when sexual relations are presented without using any swear words. For example, the word combinations, such as *to have a knee trembler*, *to sleep with rough boys* or *to be at it* do not contain any vulgar words or expressions, but still it is easy to recognize the main idea of these expressions.

2.4 Diseases, Death and Killing, Physical and Mental Handicap

15 instances of vulgar language related to diseases, death and killing, physical and mental handicap were found. The most commonly used word of this subcategory was *bastard*. The vulgar language of this subcategory is mostly used to characterize someone as having some mental disability or illness. To be more precise, this type of vulgar language is usually used to humiliate someone by using abusive and inappropriate language.

Consider the following examples:

1. “*Why, what have you done?*” said the alchie, and he gave me this shitty little smile. (Burgess, 2003: 5)
2. *I was like a dummy, I watched the oil spilling out in a silver flash <...>*. (Burgess, 2003: 10)
3. *The bastard slammed the door in my face*. (Burgess, 2003: 11)
4. *I’d turn into a stupid, pointless dog*. (Burgess, 2003: 20)
5. *The thing is, although Julie thinks Mum’s a bit of a dodo, she feels sorry for her because she thinks she has a hard life*. (Burgess, 2003: 25)
6. *He’s too guilty about what he’s done, poor sod*. (Burgess, 2003: 42)
7. *<...> they’re too dopey to think it’s anything more than a trick*. (Burgess, 2003: 99)

8. “<...> *That’s illegal!*” said Adam, that little twat. (Burgess, 2003: 170)
9. *I might have known his contribution would be something barmy like that.* (Burgess, 2003: 185)

This subcategory of vulgar language includes the following words: alchie, dummy, bastard, stupid, dodo, sod and dopey. *The Oxford Dictionary of Modern Slang* (1993) provides the definitions of these vulgar words:

“**alky** *noun* Also **alchy**, **alki(e)** **2** A drunkard or alcoholic” (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 3);

“**bastard** *noun* **1** Used as a term of abuse, esp. for a man or boy. **2** A fellow, chap. **3** Something bad or annoying” (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 13);

“**dummy** *noun* **1** A stupid person. **2** A deaf-mute; a tramp or beggar who pretends to be deaf and dumb” (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 61);

“**twat** *noun* Also **twot** **1** The female genitals. **2** A despicable or foolish person” (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 272);

“**sod** *noun* **1 a** A despicable or contemptible person, typically male. **b** A fellow, chap (often used affectionately or in commiseration). **2** A person who practices sodomy; a male homosexual” (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 231).

The definitions indicate that the presented vulgar language contains swear words, which usually function as offense or humiliation. The used language is not as lewd and rough as the language related to bodies and their effluvia and organs and acts of sex. The language of this subcategory does not necessarily consist of swear words. Also, there are some diminutives used. The vocabulary used is mainly related to mental disabilities. However, the speech items are considered to be harsh and offensive, because these items are used in order to insult or humiliate.

2.5 Religion and Church, Naming and Addressing Sacred Persons, Beings, Objects and Places

The subcategory of vulgar language related to religion and church, naming and addressing sacred persons, beings, objects and places was the least popular of all subcategories of vulgar language found in the analysed novel. This subcategory includes only 16 cases of vulgar language.

Consider the following examples:

1. *Your mouth, your feet under you – the whole goddamn thing!* (Burgess, 2003: 45)

2. *I hung on a bit longer, swinging with him and growling like a fiend, before I finally let go.* (Burgess, 2003: 103)
3. *I could have opened the door and got in, but the bloody place was only closed, wasn't it?* (Burgess, 2003: 7)
4. *"Call the police and get the bloody thing put down!"* (Burgess, 2003: 162)
5. *What right did they have to decide who I bloody was?* (Burgess, 2003: 188)
6. *In fact, life as a dog was pretty bloody good.* (Burgess, 2003: 189)
7. *No, I was stuck here at home weeping and wailing because my bloody family couldn't accept me as I was.* (Burgess, 2003: 189)
8. *Not with Terry – sod him – but running with the pack <...>* (Burgess, 2003: 189)
9. *Oh no, I had to be so good as well, so bloody good, and if I wasn't good enough then I was out on my bloody ear.* (Burgess, 2003: 193)

According to Midjord (2013), "An English swear word whose etymology is difficult to establish is the adjective *bloody*, which is sometimes linked to the religious category" (Midjord, 2013: 25). This statement of Midjord clearly defines that this swear word belongs to the currently analysed subcategory of vulgar language.

The Oxford Dictionary of Modern Slang (1993) provides the definitions of vulgar language related to religion and church, naming and addressing sacred persons, beings, objects and places:

"**bloody** *adjective* **1** Expressing annoyance or antipathy, or as an intensive **2** Bad, unpleasant, deplorable" (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 21);

"**sod** **5** *trans.* Used as a more forceful alternative to "damn" in various expressions" (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 231).

It is obvious that the most common swear word of this subcategory is *bloody*. The definition explains *bloody* as an adjective, which is used either to express the negative emotions and feelings or to refer to something miserable and pitiable. It is related to religion because the swear word *bloody* is related to devilish, unholy and infernal objects, which are opposite to religion, church and sacred things. The expression *sod him* refers to some character who is participating in the conversation and functions as an imprecation.

2.6 Prostitution, Narcotics and Criminal Activity

According to the frequency of the use of vulgar language related to prostitution, narcotics and criminal activity this subcategory was the third most popular from all

subcategories. This subcategory contains 32 cases of vulgar language. The vulgar language of this subcategory is mainly related to prostitution (for example, *bitch*, *slut*, *scum*, *tart* and *slapper*). The most commonly used swear word of this subcategory was *bitch* (21 instances). The vulgar language related to prostitution, narcotics and criminal activity might be used with the aim to express emotions and feelings or lust and to offend or devalue.

Consider the following examples:

1. *“All those boys,” my mum said, and she looked at me as if I was the Great Slut of Withington. (Burgess, 2003: 78)*
2. *“You little bitch!” he yelled, so full of anger I was terrified. (Burgess, 2003: 8)*
3. *“Oh, yes, you’re one sweet-smellin’ little bitch,” said Fella. (Burgess, 2003: 34)*
4. *“You sniffy, licky, shaggy little bitch!” he yelled. (Burgess, 2003: 123)*

The Oxford Dictionary of Modern Slang (1993) provides the following definitions: “**bitch** *noun* **1** Something outstandingly difficult or unpleasant. **2** A malicious or spiteful woman. **5** *trans.* To be spiteful or unfair to” (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 19).

The definition provides several different meanings of the swear word *bitch*. In this case, the most appropriate is the second definition. The presented vulgar language is mainly used to express emotions and feelings, which are usually negative. In Example 1, the word *slut* is used by the main character who often uses ironical expressions in her speech. This case is not an exception, because, by using irony, the main character seeks to mock at her mother’s words. Example 2 presents a slightly different situation when the negative emotions such as anger and fury are expressed by using vulgar language. In this case, the swear word *bitch* is used in order to offend another person, that, for some reason, enraged the speaker. In Example 3 and Example 4 the swear word *bitch* is used to express completely different feelings, such as lust and sexual attraction. In these cases, swear words do not carry any negative connotations – they are used to evoke passion and to cause the desire of an intimate intercourse. Therefore, these examples demonstrate that the vulgar language might be used to express various feelings and reactions to certain things and phenomena.

In addition, vulgar language related to prostitution, narcotics and criminal activity might also function as an offense or humiliation. This type of language is usually directed to another character who participates in the conversation, or it is used simply to express the negative attitude towards someone.

Consider the following examples:

5. *But cats were just scum as far as he was concerned, not worth hunting – something only the dregs would put an effort into killing. (Burgess, 2003: 117)*
6. *“We’re earning our money, you silly tart,” he growled. (Burgess, 2003: 121)*

7. *“Bit of an old slapper. Eh, girl? Bit of a bloody old slapper.” (Burgess, 2003: 147)*
8. *Then he nodded at me and said, spitefully, “And your girlfriend’s a slut, so what?” (Burgess, 2003: 5)*
9. *You’re a slut, you’re no good, you’re worth nothing! (Burgess, 2003: 188)*

The Oxford Dictionary of Modern Slang (1993) provides the definitions of the following vulgar language:

“**tart** *noun* **1** A girl or woman, *spec* someone’s girlfriend or wife. **2** A promiscuous woman; a prostitute; also *loosely*, as a term of abuse for any girl or woman” (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 257);

“**scum** *noun* *mainly US* Semen” (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 206).

The definitions show that the language which functions as an offense or humiliation is usually considered to be nasty, insulting and degrading. If compared with the earlier presented vulgar language, related to diseases, death and killing, physical and mental handicap and used to offend or humiliate, the vulgar language of the currently analysed subcategory is considered to be more harsh and obscene. The vocabulary includes such swear words as *scum*, *tart*, *slapper* and *slut* and they are very offensive.

2.7 Uncategorized Cases

Several instances of vulgar language could not be attributed to any of the formerly presented subcategories. Therefore, it was essential to create a new subcategory that includes the uncategorised cases of vulgar language found in the novel under analysis. This subcategory includes 10 various instances of vulgar language; the most commonly used swear word of this subcategory was the verb *to piss*.

Consider the following examples:

1. *Did you know that once a person has children they can never sleep peacefully at night again for the fear of something happening to their brats? (Burgess, 2003: 37)*
2. *We sat there and told each other all these stories about all the things Mum had done to piss us off and you know what? (Burgess, 2003: 25)*
3. *Just go, you’ve been going all fucking day, go, go, go!” screamed my mum <...> (Burgess, 2003: 55)*

4. “*Straight on to the next nag, see?*” (Burgess, 2003: 81)
5. *This old bugger won’t touch them.* (Burgess, 2003: 95)

The Oxford Dictionary of Modern Slang (1993) provides the definitions of presented vulgar language, which are the following:

“**to piss off:** **a** *intr.* To go away or leave (often in the imperative: **piss off!**) **b** *trans.* to annoy or irritate; to depress” (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 169);

“**fuck** *coarse. verb* **1** *intr. and trans.* To copulate (with). **2** *trans.* Used in curses and exclamations, indicating strong dislike, contempt, or rejection” (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 75);

“**bugger** *noun* **1 a** A despicable or unpleasant man. **b** A fellow; usu. with defining word” (Ayto, Simpson, 1993: 28).

Some expressions are particularly offensive and harsh, while others are not extremely defamatory. For example, the word *brat* is certainly less vulgar than the swear word *fuck*. The presented words are used in Example 1 and Example 3, from which it becomes evident that the usage of coarser vulgar language creates the more unpleasant mood. Example 3 presents the expression of feelings such as anger and fury and shows that a coarser vulgar language might impart some negative emotions to the reader. Example 1 consist of less coarse vulgar language which is used simply to refer to another person. The word *brat* is considered to be slightly derogatory, but still, this instance of vulgar language do not indicate any negative emotions and feelings. The used swear words such as *brat*, *nag*, *bugger* refer to some other characters; it is usually used to express an opinion or an attitude towards someone.

2.8 Statistical Analysis

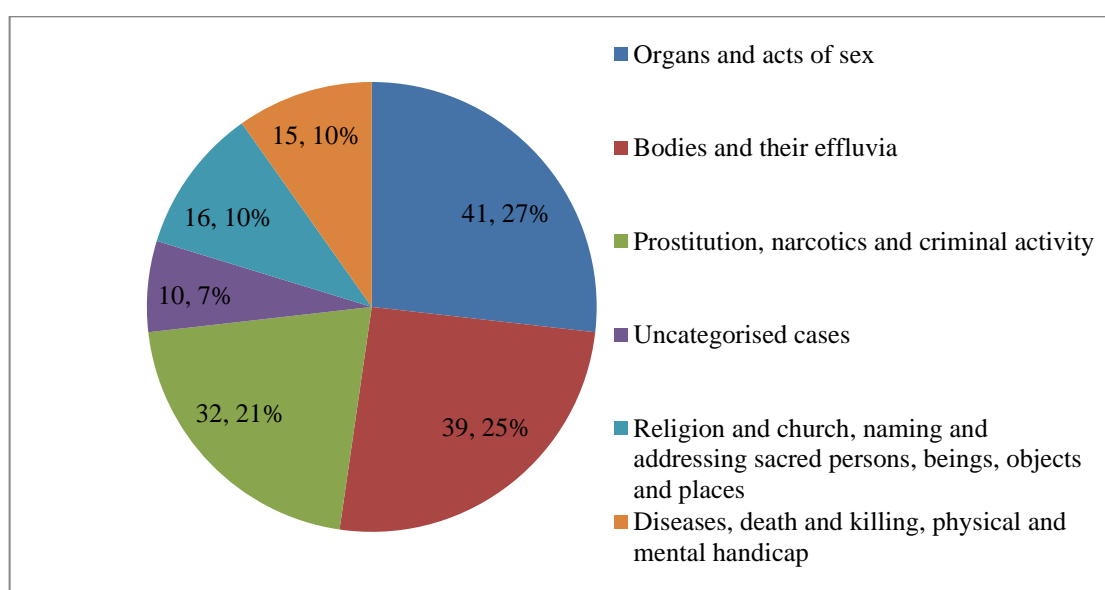
After the analysis of the use of vulgar language in Melvin Burgess’s novel “*Lady: my Life as a Bitch*”, the statistical presentation of the collected instances of vulgar language is important. Out of 153 instances of vulgar language found in the novel under analysis 41 examples are assigned to the category “Organs and acts of sex”, 39 – “Bodies and their effluvia”, 32 – “Prostitution, narcotics and criminal activity”, 10 – “Uncategorised cases”, 16 – “Religion and church, naming and addressing sacred persons, beings, objects and places”, 15 – “Diseases, death and killing, physical and mental handicap”. All collected instances of vulgar language are presented in the appendix of the paper. Table 1 presents the frequency of occurrence of the instances of vulgar language found in the novel under analysis:

Table 1. Distribution of the Instances of Vulgar Language in Melvin Burgess’s Novel “Lady: my Life as a Bitch”

Type of Vulgar Language	Number of Cases	Percentage (%)
Organs and acts of sex	41	27%
Bodies and their effluvia	39	25%
Prostitution, narcotics and criminal activity	32	21%
Diseases, death and killing, physical and mental handicap	15	10%
Religion and church, naming and addressing sacred persons, beings, objects and places	16	10%
Uncategorised Cases	10	7%

The graphical presentation of the percentage distribution of semantic categories of vulgar language is presented in the pie graph (**Figure 1**):

Figure 1. The Percentage Distribution of Semantic Categories of Vulgar Language in Melvin Burgess’s Novel “Lady: my Life as a Bitch”



As Table 1 and Figure 1 demonstrate, the two most common types of vulgar language in the novel under analysis are ascribed to the categories “Organs and acts of sex” (27%) and “Bodies and their effluvia” (25%). This shows that young adults are particularly interested in these topics. They use vulgar language in order to talk about intimate parts of body, sexual relations and removal of urine and faeces. Adolescence is a period when young adults become especially interested in the sexuality of the opposite sex and the ways of expressing it. They usually use a specific speech, which is known only to a particular clique

and cannot be understood by outsiders. The least frequent types of vulgar language were speech items ascribed to these subcategories: “Religion and church, naming and addressing sacred persons, beings, objects and places” (10%); “Diseases, death and killing, physical and mental handicap” (10%) and “Uncategorised cases” (7%). These subcategories of vulgar language were less popular than the subcategories “Organs and acts of sex” and “Bodies and their effluvia”, because young adults are mostly interested in such topics as intimate relations, parts of the body, and bodies and their effluvia. The vulgar language related to religion and church, naming and addressing sacred persons, beings, objects and places was mainly used to express irritation or anger, while the vulgar language related to diseases, death and killing, physical and mental handicap was commonly used to abuse, offend and derogate.

To sum up, the statistical analysis has shown that the most common topics that interest young adults are related to the description of parts of a body, acts of sex and bodily waste.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the present paper was to investigate the particularities of the vulgar language used in Melvin Burgess's novel "Lady: my Life as a Bitch". The aim was achieved depending on the objectives, which are presented in the introductory part of a research. Finally, the following conclusions have been drawn:

- Vulgar language, a common phenomenon in young adult's speech, is considered to be a variety of non-standard language that usually includes inappropriate, offensive and poor vocabulary or "bad language" such as curses, oaths and swear words. Other non-standard varieties such as slang, swearing, cursing, jargon, argot, cant, dialect, profanity, blasphemy, oath, obscenity and scatology have some similarities with vulgar language, though they can not be regarded as equal. Vulgar language can be classified according to various classification systems. In this study, the classification systems of Rathje (2010), Ljung (2011) and Midjord (2013) are presented. To accomplish the research, the classification system of Rathje was used.
- In total, 153 cases of vulgar language used in the novel "Lady: my Life as a Bitch" (2003) were collected. According to the semantic characterisation, vulgar language was divided into the following subcategories: organs and acts of sex (27% and 41 examples); bodies and their effluvia (25% and 39 examples); prostitution, narcotics and criminal activity (21% and 32 examples); uncategorised cases (7% and 10 examples); religion and church, naming and addressing sacred persons, beings, objects and places (10% and 16 examples); diseases, death and killing, physical and mental handicap (10% and 15 examples).
- The distribution of the use of vulgar language showed that young adults are particularly interested in such specific topics as intimate parts of body, sexual relations and bodily effluvia.
- Vulgar language tends to be a frequent phenomenon in young adults speech. This might occur because of the following reasons: young adults use vulgar language as a specific speech of cliques which is incomprehensible to other people; they use it in order to talk about taboo topics; to offend, derogate, abuse the other person who participates in the conversation, to defend themselves or simply to make fun and to express various emotions and feelings.

Finally, it is important to point out that further investigation of the use of vulgar language in fiction for young adults is significant, since there is not much research on this topic. The present paper could be useful for those, who are interested in particularities of the

use of vulgar language in fiction for young adults (especially in Melvin Burgess's fiction) and also for those who are currently making an investigation on this topic.

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APPENDICES

1. Bodies and their Effluvia

1. But it had to be shitty, didn't it? (Burgess, 2003: 6)
2. The cars, the dustbins, the grass, the dog shit on the tarmac, the feet that had been and gone – everything left its taste on my tongue. (Burgess, 2003: 9)
3. That cat nearly shat itself! (Burgess, 2003: 16)
4. But shit! (Burgess, 2003: 17)
5. Julie used to say she was a man with tits. (Burgess, 2003: 21)
6. What's this shit? (Burgess, 2003: 23)
7. Two of them stinking of dog pee and the night air, with a fresh kill on their breath. (Burgess, 2003: 28)
8. They scared me so badly I actually peed a few drops. (Burgess, 2003: 28)
9. Hmm – hot treacle, piss, warm grease, burnt cabbage and perfume. (Burgess, 2003: 29)
10. “My tail is attached to my arse,” he yodelled, and I couldn't help it any more, I just cracked up. (Burgess, 2003: 32)
11. Mitch plunked his bum down next to him and had a good old scratch. (Burgess, 2003: 35)
12. Could-do-better, must-work-harder, must do this, must do that, all that shit. (Burgess, 2003: 43)
13. You couldn't miss it – sweet sweat, beer and pee, same as all drunks <...> (Burgess, 2003: 48)
14. We spent ages trying to get Ed to wear it, and when he did for a little while we were dying to get him to do a widdle. (Burgess, 2003: 50)
15. I offered to let her change him if he did a poo, but she said no, so I said I'd do the widdle as well, then, so I got her then, didn't I? (Burgess, 2003: 50)
16. The little shit was up to the pipe and on to the conservatory roof next door before I could draw breath. (Burgess, 2003: 61)
17. Then of course the shit hit the fan. (Burgess, 2003: 76)
18. “You don't need that sort of shit to enjoy yourself.” (Burgess, 2003: 81)
19. He stank of beer and piss. (Burgess, 2003: 86)
20. “Selfish little shites,” growled Terry. (Burgess, 2003: 100)
21. He stood staring down at Terry as if he was a piece of shit on his shoe while the others explained. (Burgess, 2003: 102)
22. Then I walked over a tree, just about staying upright, put my paws down to my you-know-what and looked down as if I was peeing. (Burgess, 2003: 108)
23. Where they really going to put me down just because I took the piss? (Burgess, 2003: 110)
24. You've chosen Terry and Terry is a shite pack member to be with. (Burgess, 2003: 28)
25. All we did each day was walk from place to place, up and down the streets, and round and round, looking for places to sit, eat, sleep and piss. (Burgess, 2003: 119)
26. And oh, they stank, they stank of wild dog and raw meat and piss and sex sex sex! (Burgess, 2003: 122)
27. I remember lying there with my legs wide open and he was kneeling in between them, having a good look. (Burgess, 2003: 129)
28. Dog shit and hot fur, spit, grass and breath! (Burgess, 2003: 134)

29. She eats until she's full, shits where she likes and communicates with her kind at both ends. (Burgess, 2003: 135)
30. Run up to my mum and sniff her bum? (Burgess, 2003: 150)
31. No more peeing and crapping in public, I was going to use the toilet. (Burgess, 2003: 154)
32. I sat back on my bum, put my paws up under my chin, wagged my tail and whined. (Burgess, 2003: 161)
33. "Go on then, smart-arse. Fetch!" she commanded. (Burgess, 2003: 166)
34. "Shit!" (Burgess, 2003: 172)
35. It has four legs, teeth at one end, hair in the middle and an arsehole at the back. (Burgess, 2003: 183)
36. I was just some little piece of shit stuck to their heel. (Burgess, 2003: 188)
37. I began to remember how pissed off I'd been with seeing Simon every weekend, doing my homework so neatly every night, helping around the house, all that shit. (Burgess, 2003: 189)
38. I pulled the duvet off my bed, I peed on the carpet <...> (Burgess, 2003: 190)
39. Nappies and shit and exams and tests and work and forever and ever and ever amen. (Burgess, 2003: 196-197)

2. Organs and Acts of Sex

40. "In your knickers," said Waine <...>. (Burgess, 2003: 2)
41. I'd shagged him up against the wall for a bag of jelly beans a month ago but times were changing. (Burgess, 2003: 4)
42. They're too scared to even talk about their dicks in case it turns they've got a small one." (Burgess, 2003: 24)
43. They spent hours and hours wanking in their bedroom and then they're too embarrassed to even mention it to their best friends. (Burgess, 2003: 24)
44. I mean – having a diddle down there. (Burgess, 2003: 52)
45. We were doing nets that day, and she was cracking me up by going on about doing a net of her boyfriend's willy and seeing if our teacher could work it out and put it back together again. (Burgess, 2003: 73)
46. And I said, "What, with Little-Willie? (Burgess, 2003: 79)
47. What do you know, if that's your idea of sex? (Burgess, 2003: 79)
48. She told me not so long ago that she thought that her boyfriend had a little willy, but she didn't know if it was true <...> (Burgess, 2003: 79)
49. But still, that was then, and me calling him Little-Willie this time really drove her mad. (Burgess, 2003: 79)
50. I thought, I'll shag about if I want to. (Burgess, 2003: 83)
51. "Snog me." (Burgess, 2003: 83)
52. Which ones had I snogged? (Burgess, 2003: 89)
53. His face was too high, so I did what I've always done in a fight: I went straight to his knackers. (Burgess, 2003: 103)
54. I got the whole goose and her eggs in my jaws and I clenched right up. (Burgess, 2003: 103)
55. "Me knackers!" howled George. (Burgess, 2003: 103)
56. "She knackered his knackers!" someone shouted. (Burgess, 2003: 103)
57. He'll have nads like a pair of burgers! (Burgess, 2003: 104)

58. I started patting down round where my willy would be if I was a boy. (Burgess, 2003: 108)
59. “My willy was fallen off,” I cried. (Burgess, 2003: 108)
60. Has anyone seen my willy, I can’t find it, it’s only a teeny tiny weenie willy, but it’s the only one I’ve got! (Burgess, 2003: 109)
61. I’m No-Knob! (Burgess, 2003: 109)
62. Annie half hid behind Little-Willie and they began to back off. (Burgess, 2003: 109)
63. He bounded right up, great tail swinging, head back, eyes on me, smelling of sex. (Burgess, 2003: 121)
64. The first time I had sex was with Simon. (Burgess, 2003: 125)
65. We were planning doing it properly in a big double bed, but the only double beds we had available belonged to our parents and who wants to christen your sex life in your parents’ bed? (Burgess, 2003: 125)
66. On the other hand I don’t want to do it in the back of a car or have a knee trembler up against a tree or anything like that. (Burgess, 2003: 125)
67. I remember thinking that at this rate, I was going to turn into the dreaded sixteen-year-old virgin unless I ended up shagging Simon on the living room floor while my mum was watching “EastEnders”. (Burgess, 2003: 127)
68. He stood up over me, and I had this view of him above, past his knob to his face sort of leering down at me, and that’s when I went. (Burgess, 2003: 128)
69. Doing it with Simon must be like having sex with Mr Nobody. (Burgess, 2003: 128)
70. I thought it must be something really kinky, but when she did tell me later, all it was, was for her to wrap her legs around his waist and squeeze hard while they were at it. (Burgess, 2003: 128)
71. I never minded sex on the floor on cushions after that, and I never cared about the telly being on. (Burgess, 2003: 129)
72. I wanted to sleep with those rough boys and hang out with those rough girls. (Burgess, 2003: 130)
73. People say sex for animals isn’t as good, but they don’t know nothing. (Burgess, 2003: 130)
74. He made me think of Simon when we’d done it doggy fashion. (Burgess, 2003: 131)
75. Then I caught another whiff of rabbit and took few steps, and of course he had to hobble backwards after me, his dick bent in half. (Burgess, 2003: 131)
76. And oh, they stank, they stank of wild dog and raw meat and piss and sex sex sex! (Burgess, 2003: 122)
77. Hunting, playing, chasing, shagging. (Burgess, 2003: 132)
78. Fella was right, it was just one thick, misty soup of hormones and sex. (Burgess, 2003: 132)
79. Living out of dustbins, hanging around on the street, shagging on the road and chasing cats as if I was worth nothing. (Burgess, 2003: 152)
80. “More like about thirty thousand million quid,” he told me, and he was on me like a randy old dog. (Burgess, 2003: 129-130)

3. Diseases, Death, Killing, Physical and Mental Handicap

81. I was twisting round to look at him and that’s why I ran into the alchie. (Burgess, 2003: 4)
82. “Why, what have you done?” said the alchie, and he gave me this shitty little smile. (Burgess, 2003: 5)

83. “Get away! You bastard!” I screamed. (Burgess, 2003: 8)
84. I was like a dummy, I watched the oil spilling out in a silver flash <...>. (Burgess, 2003: 10)
85. The bastard slammed the door in my face. (Burgess, 2003: 11)
86. I’d turn into a stupid, pointless dog. (Burgess, 2003: 20)
87. The thing is, although Julie thinks Mum’s a bit of a dodo, she feels sorry for her because she thinks she has a hard life. (Burgess, 2003: 25)
88. He’s too guilty about what he’s done, poor sod. (Burgess, 2003: 42)
89. And Mum said, “Give the bastard a round of applause,” and she started clapping. (Burgess, 2003: 55)
90. “Turn me back, you bastard, turn me back or I’ll eat you!” (Burgess, 2003: 93)
91. “... barked like bastards, he means. <...>” (Burgess, 2003: 94)
92. <...> they’re too dopey to think it’s anything more than a trick. (Burgess, 2003: 99)
93. I waited a bit, but within the hour the poor sod was out cold. (Burgess, 2003: 104)
94. I might have known his contribution would be something barmy like that. (Burgess, 2003: 185)
95. “<...> That’s illegal!” said Adam, that little twat. (Burgess, 2003: 170)

4. Religion and Church, Naming and Addressing Sacred Persons, Beings, Objects and Places

96. I could have opened the door and got in, but the bloody place was only closed, wasn’t it? (Burgess, 2003: 7)
97. Your mouth, your feet under you – the whole goddamn thing! (Burgess, 2003: 45)
98. <...> look, a new wife, a new family, a new bloody everything already. (Burgess, 2003: 56)
99. Just the same thing as my bloody mum. (Burgess, 2003: 78)
100. I don’t want to get bloody married, you know what I mean? (Burgess, 2003: 81)
101. Isn’t it totally bloody brilliant? (Burgess, 2003: 98)
102. I hung on a bit longer, swinging with him and growling like a fiend, before I finally let go. (Burgess, 2003: 103)
103. “Call the police and get the bloody thing put down!” (Burgess, 2003: 162)
104. What right did they have to decide who I bloody was? (Burgess, 2003: 188)
105. In fact, life as a dog was pretty bloody good. (Burgess, 2003: 189)
106. No, I was stuck here at home weeping and wailing because my bloody family couldn’t accept me as I was. (Burgess, 2003: 189)
107. I chewed my school books – no more bloody work for me! (Burgess, 2003: 190)
108. Oh no, I had to be so good as well, so bloody good, and if I wasn’t good enough then I was out on my bloody ear. (Burgess, 2003: 193)
109. Sod them! (Burgess, 2003: 64)
110. I thought, Sod it, I’m going too fast. (Burgess, 2003: 161)
111. Not with Terry – sod him – but running with the pack <...> (Burgess, 2003: 189)

5. Prostitution, Narcotics and Criminal Activity

112. Then he nodded at me and said, spitefully, “And your girlfriend’s a slut, so what?” (Burgess, 2003: 5)
113. “My bitch, you little drunk, My bitch!” (Burgess, 2003: 6)
114. Wayne started laughing, because he got bitch and drink mixed up, but then he lifted his hand to grab me and I had to step back quick. (Burgess, 2003: 6-7)
115. “You little bitch!” he yelled, so full of anger I was terrified. (Burgess, 2003: 8)
116. Out hunting for rabbits or rats or some little bitch, but they’d found me instead. (Burgess, 2003: 28)
117. I remembered what they’d said earlier about me being the new bitch <...>. (Burgess, 2003: 33)
118. “Oh, yes, you’re one sweet-smellin’ little bitch,” said Fella. (Burgess, 2003: 34)
119. He said the bad man kept calling his mother a bitch over and over again, wich explained the connection about dogs. (Burgess, 2003: 38)
120. Just my luck – to have two men as parents, one of them disguised as a horrible ugly old bitch. (Burgess, 2003: 21)
121. “All those boys,” my mum said, and she looked at me as if I was the Great Slut of Withington. (Burgess, 2003: 78)
122. People think less of a girl if she sleeps around a bit, and of course I don’t want people to think of me as a slut, or a bit of a bike. (Burgess, 2003: 79)
123. Even Julie thought I was a big blob of scum, same as the rest of them. (Burgess, 2003: 80)
124. I thought about that phrase – bitch on heat. (Burgess, 2003: 95)
125. “She’s a bit of a slut, isn’t she?” she said. (Burgess, 2003: 107)
126. I was only being friendly – how did that make me a slut? (Burgess, 2003: 107)
127. That’s what you fell in love with in the first place, you silly bitch. (Burgess, 2003: 116)
128. But cats were just scum as far as he was concerned, not worth hunting – something only the dregs would put an effort into killing. (Burgess, 2003: 117)
129. Half of them are bitches and half the rest of them have had their balls cut off. (Burgess, 2003: 120)
130. “We’re earning our money, you silly tart,” he growled. (Burgess, 2003: 121)
131. You stupid little bitch! (Burgess, 2003: 122)
132. “You sniffy, licky, shaggy little bitch!” he yelled. (Burgess, 2003: 123)
133. “Bitch on heat! Bitch on heat!” barked Fella. (Burgess, 2003: 123)
134. “Me! Me – I’ll do it anywhere with you, you gorgeous bitch!” shouted Mitch <...> (Burgess, 2003: 124)
135. “You pretty, pretty little bitch.” (Burgess, 2003: 131)
136. “Bit of an old slapper. Eh, girl? Bit of a bloody old slapper.” (Burgess, 2003: 147)
137. I was just useless, stupid bitch, who couldn’t talk properly, couldn’t bark properly, couldn’t do anything properly. (Burgess, 2003: 162)
138. Sandra’s great and you’re just a stupid, stupid little bitch! (Burgess, 2003: 177)
139. You’re a slut, you’re no good, you’re worth nothing! (Burgess, 2003: 188)
140. It’s like I’ve spent half the last year, girl and bitch, being threatened. (Burgess, 2003: 194)
141. Oh, you pretty little bitch! (Burgess, 2003: 195)
142. Jump, jump, jump you silly bitch! (Burgess, 2003: 196)
143. Wagging my tail like a slut for a few free sausages? (Burgess, 2003: 152)

6. Uncategorised Cases

144. Did you know that once a person has children they can never sleep peacefully at night again for the fear of something happening to their brats? (Burgess, 2003: 37)
145. “He’s a brat,” said Julie. (Burgess, 2003: 23)
146. We sat there and told each other all these stories about all the things Mum had done to piss us off and you know what? (Burgess, 2003: 25)
147. Just go, you’ve been going all fucking day, go, go, go!” screamed my mum <...> (Burgess, 2003: 55)
148. I was pissed out of my head and I’d had some puff, and I’d walked half the way home with this lad. (Burgess, 2003: 75)
149. Basically, she was pissed off because I wasn’t living the life she wanted me to live. (Burgess, 2003: 76)
150. “Straight on to the next nag, see?” (Burgess, 2003: 81)
151. This old bugger won’t touch them. (Burgess, 2003: 95)
152. That just pissed me off. (Burgess, 2003: 107)
153. “Just piss off, will you, little freak!” and Mum was threatening me <...> (Burgess, 2003: 171)