

Features of virtual communication as a new field of communication

Yanina Morozova^{1,*} and *Oksana Rozhnenko*¹

¹ Don State Technical University, Gagarina sq., 1, Rostov-on-Don, 344000, Russia

Abstract. The Internet has brought into our life previously non-existent ways of communication and new forms of language existence. With the growing popularity of social networks, the functioning of the English language has attracted the interest of many linguists. Modernization of the linguistic personality takes place in conjunction with the development of a virtual picture of the world, which reproduces life in the vastness of the Internet. Values replace each other. If earlier language education was popular, today it is computer education. That is why a tendency has arisen to explain in a simplified language, which contradicts the norms of traditional communication. Moreover, the leading role in virtual communication belongs to the English language, since the birthplace of the Internet and the main supplier of network terminology is English-speaking America.

1 Introduction

Nowadays, the consideration of the language features of communication on the Internet deserves special attention, since language has always been the main means of communication between people. In the era of active development of information technologies, a new environment is emerging, which is called "virtual space" within which communication occurs using a computer, mobile devices and other gadgets. Such communication can be regarded as a completely different type of communication. The speech that we are used to using in the process of virtual communication has a number of distinctive features:

- changes in the generally accepted rules of punctuation, syntax and spelling;
- the absence of texts belonging to the written or oral types of speech.

The uniqueness of the phenomenon of virtual communication, its status, structure, and language features determine the continuing interest of psychologists, sociologists, philosophers, and linguists in this phenomenon [4].

The study of this phenomenon is actively engaged in two leading American specialists in the field of linguistics – D. Crystal and S. Herring. They define virtual communication as a new sphere of communication that has special socio-psychological characteristics [3].

In the virtual world, a person puts on a mask, which greatly simplifies communication, removes psychological barriers. So, such forms of communication on the Internet as

*Corresponding author: yanina.frost@mail.ru

forums, various types of chats, social networks, blogs are one of the most popular means for self-expression. The instantaneous nature of such communication greatly simplifies the communication process and thus removes the burden of responsibility for the long-term consequences. A new way of life in the world of the Internet requires "new" language means of communication. Slang, which is produced by Internet users, is converted into common vocabulary.

The Internet draws the attention of users to the language tools that are used in its space. As a result, individuals in the virtual world turn into creators of new nonverbal and verbal means of communication, i.e. they are not only creators of the virtual space, but also of the language in which this society communicates. Individuals in the virtual world are often able to communicate with each other only through written texts. Texts are created in real-time conditions, and are also influenced by spontaneous oral colloquial vocabulary [7].

First of all, it is worth noting that it is better not to abuse "contactless" communication, but in our world, there are a huge number of those who simply cannot find another way of communication [10]. An example can be people with disabilities, or people who are in different countries. It is not just a means of communication, but also an inexhaustible source of information. Especially given the fact that on the Internet we can get for free what we are interested in, or what is not in the library [8]. As numerous studies show, the trend of using virtual writing is also inherent in people with higher education. The fact is that, according to the majority of educated people, this form of communication allows them not to make unnecessary efforts on grammar; as a result, the use of this style of speech provides them with the opportunity to "relax". However, these same people in everyday life are able to correctly and constructively express their thoughts. Also, some of them are philologists by education and have an excellent command of their native language. Foreign experiments show that the more often young people write messages on their gadgets and social networks, the higher their literacy rates.

The Internet is a special communication channel that leaves its mark on the specifics of communication in the virtual space [5].

The reason for accessing the Internet may be a lack of communication in the real world [6].

In his article "How Social Media is Changing Language," John Reed says, "The words that surround us every day affect the words we use."..> Since a large part of the written language, which we see is now on the screens of our computers, tablets and smartphones, the language is now partially develops through our interactions with technology [12].

"Communication is very visual, and when it comes to text-based communications, we literally turn into children," explains Stanford linguist Tyler Snobelen for New York magazine [14]. The scientist also points out that we are only now learning to write at the speed of pronouncing words (for example, text or instant messages) without any physical contextual cues.

2 Materials and methods

The analysis and generalization of scientific literature on the problem, expert assessment, methods of qualitative and quantitative processing of the data obtained, meaningful interpretation of the results and conclusions were carried out.

3 Results

The language of the Internet is characterized by its own properties, mediated by computer communication, and it includes signs of oral and written speech. That is why the "Internet"

language is a new type of communication, a new type of discourse. The analysis conducted among young people abroad the analysis carried out among young people abroad has shown that the vocabulary of the virtual language is distinguished by its special features. The composition of the Internet language is shown in Figure 1.

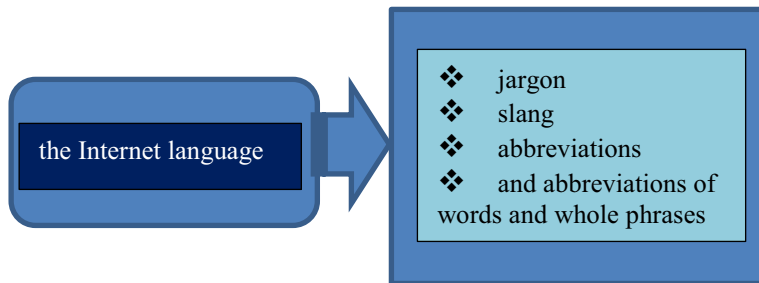


Fig. 1. The composition of the Internet language

The use of slang, jargon, abbreviations and abbreviations of words and phrases helps a person to express his/her "I", to open his creative potential, to demonstrate psychological looseness. As noted above, people who use distorted English are not always uneducated or illiterate, but rather the opposite. The virtual language is rapidly spreading among Internet users, and sometimes it even helps to save money. Any language is considered a tree with numerous branches. Spoken and written speech, slang, and all sorts of abbreviations that are commonly used in electronic correspondence belong to the language that we use every day in communicating with someone. Abbreviations in chats and electronic correspondence are a new language of communication, which is being formed due to the rapid development of the Internet and various means of communication. But to ensure free communication in such a language, you need to learn it, which is not difficult at all, because the origin of abbreviations in chats and various types of correspondence is easily accessible and quite understandable to everyone [9].

English, which is a priority in the Internet space, allows representatives of different cultures to communicate with each other. This language has long held a leading position in the number of sites on the network. Without proficiency in English, full-fledged virtual communication is not possible. The better a person knows English, the more likely they are to successfully communicate on the Internet.

In England, where there is no tendency to borrow Internet terminology from other languages, scientists began to distinguish a new functional style, called Web English. Weblish, in turn, is widely distributed in the sphere of Internet users and involves mass audiences.

This functional style has its own characteristics, which are manifested at different language levels. The Weblish levels are shown in Figure 2.

Vocabulary, as the least structured level of a language, is most susceptible to extralinguistic changes and is most permeable to external influences [1]. Lexico-semantic features are all sorts of neologisms and abbreviations of words or phrases, that is, the use of abbreviations with a high frequency of use. We will discuss these linguistic phenomena in detail in the second chapter of our work, the alphabetic "soup" of abbreviations, abbreviations and neologisms has significantly increased in the field of technologically mediated communication to help us better understand each other. English lexical neoplasms belonging to the field of computer technologies are characterized by certain features in terms of the productivity of word-forming models [11].

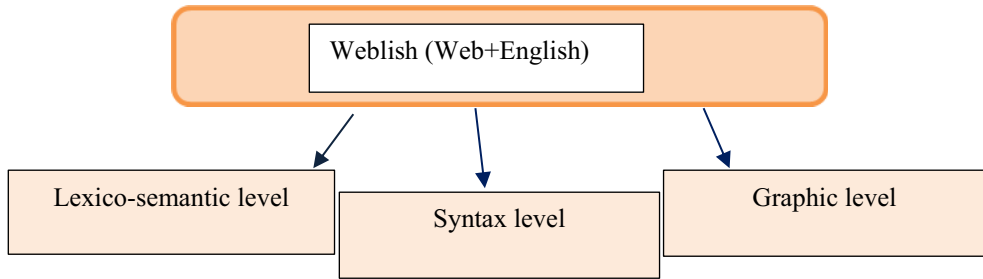


Fig. 2. The Weblish levels

For the most part, English language researchers focus more on phonetic and lexical changes than on grammatical changes. As for grammatical changes, the changes that attract the attention of the authors of prescriptive grammars are examined.

A typical list of changes in Standard English includes the following items, presented in Table 1.

Table 1. A typical list of changes in Standard English

| A typical list of changes in Standard English | | |
|---|---|--|
| № | the list of changes | Examples |
| 1 | the tendency to replace the forms of irregular verbs with the correct ones, so that a number of verbs have two variants of the formation of the past tense, both of which are valid | burnt – burned, learnt – learned etc. |
| 2 | a revival of the Subjunctive I form, possibly influenced by the official style of American English | I demand that he go there |
| 3 | avoiding the use of the form shall to express the future tense | |
| 4 | the use of some semantic verbs in the auxiliary function | The way you look, you wanna/want to see a doctor soon.(Note. According to Geoffrey Leach of Lancaster University, this is one of the clear signs of grammaticalization, i.e. the increasingly frequent use of lexical material in grammar) |
| 5 | increasingly frequent use of extended tense forms after modal verbs, Present Perfect and Past Perfect Passive progressive | the building would not be being built/has not been being built/had not been being built before the war |
| 6 | expansion of the meaning of words, namely, an increase in the volume of designated concepts, i.e. the number of called objects and phenomena | phrasal verbs, synonymy of have/give/take a ride, etc. |
| 7 | the use of frequency adverbs before auxiliary verbs, even in the absence of an emphatic meaning | I never have seen him) |
| 8 | use of the auxiliary verb do with the semantic verb have | Have you any time? – No, I haven't any time. Do you have/have you got any time? – No, I don't have any time/haven't got any time) |

| | | |
|----|--|---|
| 9 | increasingly rare use of the form whom | preference is given to who |
| 10 | more frequent use of the word less instead of fewer with calculable nouns | less students |
| | the use of the possessive case with nouns denoting inanimate objects | the book's cover |
| | omission of the definite article in some situations | renowned Nobel Prize-winner Mikhail Gorbachev |
| | the tendency to prefer the use of the analytical form of degrees of comparison | simple → more simple |

To attract the attention of the recipient, in a large flow of information, the sender tries to maximize the impact of graphic means, while supplementing them with symbolic information. On the one hand, guided by the principles of convenience and speed, the sender strives to make the message more concise, as well as as informed as possible. On the other hand, the recipient needs more detailed information. This leads to the conclusion: both sides need to actively cooperate, be able to find a balance in communication in order to save effort.

In virtual communication, graphic features such as the division of text into semantic paragraphs are used to improve the mutual understanding of the interlocutors. It is also important to avoid overloading the text with information. The simpler the text is constructed, the better the recipient will perceive the information, and, therefore, the most correct response to it. Also, the presence of free space in the text will visually separate the paragraphs from each other, which will facilitate the perception of information [16].

Graphic information is mainly used in informal communication, for example, in chats or messages of a personal nature.

The graphic abbreviations used in the process of virtual communication include the following groups presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The groups of graphic abbreviations

| The groups of graphic abbreviations | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| № | The groups of graphic abbreviations | Examples |
| 1 | Common graphical abbreviations, such as "etc.", "vs.", "ie", "e. g." | "New technology, like smartphones, fitness trackers, etc., are altering our day-to-day lives. Is it always for the better? " |
| 2 | Passing numbers with numbers | "what I said 35 min ago" |
| 3 | Using symbols instead of words, idiomatic writing | "some \$" |

Graphic information is necessary to adequately convey the emotional segment of communication. The inhabitants of chats are almost completely devoid of auxiliary means: speech timbre, emotional coloring, voice timbre, diction, gestures and facial expressions. Hence, the reliability of speech communication becomes extremely low.

Due to the difficulty of transmitting emotions, users persistently strive for emotional content of the text, which is expressed in the creation of special icons – emoticons to indicate emotions or in the description of emotions in words (in parentheses after the main text of the message). These emoticons are called emojis. Emojis have been around since

1982, but in recent years they have actually moved into the mainstream of social media communication. Now 6 billion emojis are sent every day.

4 Discussion

Under the influence of information technologies, the language of social networks is changing significantly. These changes are different from the changes in the spoken and written language that we use every day. It is also worth noting that the language of the network is subject to changes due to the habits of the target audience [15].

English words are introduced and fixed in the vocabulary of the social network Facebook as jargon, or words used in a highly specialized professional environment.

Linguists of conservative views today are in a panic. In their opinion, the influence of social networks on vocabulary is extremely negative and dismissive. There is an opinion among scientists that due to the development of modern technologies, the Shakespearean language is slowly dying. The term Netspeak (or Chatspeak) even appeared. It is a language that users utilize in the Internet space, regularly providing various transformations and innovations. This is a specific slang that absorbs a variety of common phenomena, and which is well suited for international communication in the Internet space [13]. However, this does not give us a reason to say that the degradation of the English language is growing. The systematic appearance of the latest language constructs indicates the development of the language. Despite the fact that these constructions are grammatically incorrect, changes do not occur only in dead languages. The tendency to mix all sorts of dialects with "versions" of English is not new. Without a doubt, this has an impact on the English language.

The English language is quite plastic in terms of the free perception of new units [2]. The process of technology development is irreversible and inevitable. We can't imagine an "Internet-free world". But we also cannot prevent its influence on languages. This is a living language that we use in everyday communication with people from different parts of the world. Despite the growing popularity of languages such as Spanish and Arabic, linguists say that English will remain the leading language in cyberspace in the next decade.

Relatively recently, experts in the field of information technology have put an experiment, which later they were forced to stop. Programmers invented a chatbot that was supposed to support online conversations with users in English. But artificial intelligence began to create its own language, and this was the reason for the shutdown of the cyber-communicant. The developers of the bot are convinced that the robot is able to understand conversations, and generated its own language. No instructions were given to artificial intelligence regarding the conduct of a constructive dialogue. The question "what would have happened if the developers had not stopped the experiment" remains unanswered. Perhaps the world of social networks would have been filled up with hitherto non-existent lexical units. Such an outcome would have taken place if the management had improved the robot's skills.

5 Conclusion

The development of the Internet and its rapid spread in modern society does not go unnoticed for the English language, which is currently the most common on the Web. The lexical system was particularly susceptible to changes. Weblish, in turn, is widely distributed in the sphere of Internet users and involves mass audiences. This functional style has its own characteristics, which are manifested at different language levels. Among them, there are three main groups: 1) lexical-semantic; 2) syntactic; 3) graphic.

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