



APPROACHES TO STUDYING TRENDS INTERNET-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the analysis of approaches to the consideration of the so-called Internet-mediated communication, which is carried out in a virtual environment of Internet networks and services. The study analyzes views on the Internet environment and the field of computer technology in terms of their impact on spoken language and communication processes. The article also studies the main language trends in the Internet environment, based on the influence of the terminological and conceptual sphere of computers, information technology and the realities of the software component of this environment.

Keywords: Internet communication, Internet communication, Computer-mediated communication, Internet, Social networks, Internet language, Slang.

Introduction

Modern colloquial speech is of particular interest, as it most clearly reflects certain trends in the language, its development and successive linguistic and discursive inclinations. Modern information technologies and the Internet connected with them have brought a new level to the colloquial form of speech, which is called Internet communication. This type of communication has its own characteristics and tendencies, some of which are unique to this discursive environment, due to the technical possibilities of the Internet, as well as the concepts that they bring to modern life and verbal communication. There are many approaches to the consideration of the language of the Internet, which are determined by varying degrees of consideration of certain aspects of the Internet and computer technology. The purpose of this article is to analyze these approaches and identify the main trends in Internet communication based on these approaches.

Materials and Methods

The author of the study used a highly introspective approach based on personal observations and his own participation in the discursive processes of Internet communication. Structural, descriptive and stratification methods of research have





found application in considering trends in Internet communication. An analysis was made of research in the field of Internet communication, including research by D. Crystal and N. Baron.

Results

Communication through the Internet and computers has been an interesting subject of research in linguistics for a relatively long time. However, there is no definite scientifically outlined concept of Internet communication, which may be caused by several facts: of the Internet (terminology of the realities of Internet services, programs, etc.), or directly takes into account youth slang, which is unique to Internet communication, which may or may not be related to the technical aspect of the Internet. Earlier studies in the field of Internet-mediated communication focus on text communication as a special, separate type of communication that differs from written and oral forms, but has certain features of both. In particular, the so-called “texting” is singled out in the studies and works of D. Kritsal as a special form of communication, which has its own unique stylistic, discursive and graphic features dictated by the nature of communication through the possibilities of the Internet. Crystal points out that the use of complex sentences in the process of communication mediated by information technology is unlikely to be convenient (2, 24) - which is the main reason that encourages communicators to resort to creating abbreviations.

In the case of Krystal, especially in his early work, the main emphasis is on such forms and genres as correspondence by SMS messages and, later, by e-mail. At the same time, in early studies there are no analyzes of modern forms of Internet memes, such as mediums or creolized memes, which is explained by the lack of the possibility of their creation at that time.

Иные исследования уделяют больше внимания терминологическому слою сферы компьютеров, который привносит в язык новые термины, неологизмы, основанные на них единицы сленга не только в среду Интернет-общения, но и в язык в целом. Сюда можно отнести такие единицы терминологии, как:

1) words denoting technical, hardware elements of a computer and other technologies (монитор, клавиатура, мышь, сканер, трекбол, модем, системный блок, винчестер, процессор, материнская плата). The etymological aspect of these units is of interest. In particular, the concept of the word “processor” in English in the context of the field of computers is based on the general concept of the word “process” not only in the understanding of “process”, but also “processing something”, in the case of computers, “data processing”. An interesting fact is that this concept of the word in English is also applicable to other techniques (for example, “food processor”),





which is unusual in Russian, in which the word processor has not found the same use and remains exclusively a “computer” term. (4, 665-669)

2) words denoting actions in the software environment of computer systems (копировать, вставить, вырезать, поделиться, отправить, загрузить, перезагрузить);

3) slang and jargon based on these concepts, meaning the realities of computer technology and working with it (скинуть, сбросить, расшарить - поедлиться, юзать - использовать, залогиниться – совершить вход на сайт, моник - монитор, клавиша - клавиатура, системник – системный блок, материнка – материнская плата, винт - винчестер, камень - процессор).

It should be taken into account the fact that most of the terms and other professional language units of the computer language in modern times are not something "exotic" and unfamiliar in terms of human perception. An example is both professional words and existing Internet slang: **“скинуть” (“skinit”), “игнорить” (“ignorit”), “забросить” (“zabrosit”), “ИМХО” (“IMHO”), “рукалицо” (“rukalitso”) and so on.** Despite a certain degree of exoticism, figurativeness and informal nature of these examples, most of them are understandable to a wide range of people who are not even connected with the discursive environment of the Internet and computers, since the presence of the realities of the information technology sphere is constant and necessary in modern life, which in itself brings the specifics of the sphere and its lexicon into the communication process. (7, 11-25)

However, when considering communication in the Internet environment, these units of the terminological and slang layer cannot be taken into account as fundamental ones, since the units listed above are less pronounced in Internet communication, since speech does not always concern only the sphere of computer technology. However, a certain part will still be traced due to the technical nature of such communication.

There are several lexical and discursive trends in modern Internet communication that have taken this type of communication to a slightly different level compared to Crystal's early studies of textual communication. One of them is the inclusion of media elements in the process of communication. In addition, new realities such as microblogs and social networks themselves bring new directions in the development of the Internet language. It is conditionally possible to divide approaches to the consideration of Internet communication into several types according to the evolution of its development:

1) The first approach considers not so much Internet communication as the terminological aspect of computer technology. In this case, we are not interested in



the characteristics of computer-mediated communication, but in the influence of the computer sphere on language in general terms.

2) The second approach is based on the consideration of text communication via a computer or mobile phone, where the researcher is interested in the presence in communication of various abbreviations, initial text memes (Gr8 - great, I C - I see, LOL - Lots of laugh, ASAP - As soon as possible) .

3) The following approach considers the computer as an intermediary in communication, in this case, the layer of terminology is taken into account when considering the trends of Internet communication, as well as communication without the Internet, for example, via a local network.

4) The modern approach takes into account such linguistic aspects of Internet communication as the process of creating and using in the Internet environment one's own memes, abbreviations, slang based on the realities of social networks, blogs and other technically determined possibilities of Internet services. This includes units of direct slang, words that come from the terminology of Internet services, such as social networks, blogs, forums and chats, i.e., in discursive Internet environments where direct verbal communication takes place. (нуб – новичок, неопытный; запостить – опубликовать, игнорить – игнорировать собеседника в чате, оффтоп – разговор не по теме, флудить – заниматься пустословием в чате или Интернет-форуме, ИМХО – по моему и т.п.) In this understanding of Internet communication, one of the main roles is played by the definition of criteria for the discursive space of Internet communication, which make communication possible for implementation. Here we can highlight the following: 1) all communicators should be given access to computer technology and the Internet to a certain extent; 2) communicants, in turn, must have communication skills through the Internet and computer technology. (3, 222) Most genres of communication via the Internet are informal, colloquial, which is also confirmed by the presence of their own slang in it. Nevertheless, according to N. Baron, online communication also has the means of a formal form of communication, since most of the audience of Internet communicators are students who practice the formal style of communication via the Internet for academic purposes. (1, 70)

One of the interesting and, to some extent, problematic aspects of the language of the Internet is its excessive variability in the modern state, which often leads to a sharp increase in the popularity of the use of specific language units and, to the same extent, a fall in this growth. First of all, this applies to neologisms and terms in the field of computers, as there is a process of replacing IT technologies with new ones. Secondly, given the fact that most of the vocabulary in the modern world falls on the share of the Internet language and communication, related slang, which is born within the





framework of a particular Internet service, there is a sharp change in language trends, as obsolete Internet communication services are getting new ones. Words such as "ICQ" (ICQ messenger), "selfie" (self-portrait photo) are no longer a priority in the process of Internet communication, due to the "obsolescence" of the realities associated with them.

At the moment, the terms of IT realities are also perceived by the general public as something familiar and mundane, sometimes even outdated. Words such as "computer", "hard drive", "monitor", "system unit", "modem", "e-mail", "text editor", "file" are not surprising or understandable to anyone, at least to most people. This, firstly, serves as direct evidence that IT-related vocabulary has firmly entered the everyday life of people on a global scale, thanks to its technical capabilities and ergonomics, which have changed the way, course and pace of people's lives in almost all areas; secondly, the process of "obsolescence" of specific words and phrases in this area is already observed, since the IT field is constantly updated and developed, which cannot but affect the vocabulary used in this area. In other words, some units of language related to IT are not only trivial, but generally begin to fall into disuse. Many terms and concepts of the past years are already less clear (or incomprehensible at all) to representatives of the new generation of computer users, for example, "floppy disk", "CD drive", "trackball", "plotter", etc. It is logically clear that this is connected with high rates and speed of development of the IT equipment. (7, 11-25)

Despite this trend, some abbreviations have proven to have a strong foothold in the language, such as ASAP. Such abbreviations are understandable even to non-English-speaking Internet users, at least in most cases.

Some abbreviations have fallen out of fashion altogether and are not used regularly, such as LOL. Other abbreviations, for example, AFAIK (As far as I know), TLDR (too long, didn't read), do not have the same popularity, and their use has a narrower circle, therefore, their understanding is also limited to a strictly English-speaking audience of Internet communication. The third and probably the most common area of discussion is the effect of Internet abbreviations on the language of everyday communication in general, both inside and outside the virtual environment of the Internet. The existence of informal expressions, abbreviations, together with related slang words and jargon, inclines the language towards a more and more informal character, leading to such potentially negative consequences as excessive figurativeness, "template" speech and the loss of aesthetic and artistic characteristics. (6, 93-97)





Discussion

Modern consideration of the language of Internet communication allows us to highlight several of its main trends and characteristics:

1. The use of slang, especially in Russian Internet discourse, based on borrowings: ("ban" ("ban"), "block" ("block"), "follow" ("follow"), etc.)
2. Dependence of the specifics of the Internet language on the environment and function of a particular Internet service. For example, torrent trackers actively use terms such as "seed" (a person who distributes files for download) and "leechers" (English "leech" (leech) - users who only download files, but do not distribute them), that are specific to these types of services.
3. Frequent change in vocabulary trends, which depends on the popularity of certain means of entertainment in social networks. For example, such words as "selfie" and "spam" are already becoming less and less visible in the Internet discourse.
4. The use of abbreviations in the form of abbreviations, which may or may not have a figurative meaning, the purpose of which is to save time in the process of communication: "IMHO", "LOL", "ASAP", etc.
5. Excessive fragmentation, regardless of the type of message. Whether it's a direct message, a comment on a post, or a photo, online communication always tends to be abbreviated, resulting in grammatical violations, word abbreviations, etc.
6. Multimedia nature of communication. New technologies have laid the foundation for a new level of communication, regardless of the graphical representation of the language. Instead of writing words, other modes of communication can be used, including emoticons, images, GIFs, memes, etc., which are used even without a verbal element, if the message is understandable to the addressee without them.
7. Independence of the communication process from extralinguistic conditions. Internet users can communicate regardless of extralinguistic factors, including distance, current location, and time. The role of personal relationships of communicants in real life also decreases. They may not even know each other personally.
8. Hybrid characteristics of communication. The process of dialogue on the Internet, despite its non-textual nature, has the characteristics of an oral conversation.
9. Scale of communication. Since extralinguistic factors do not directly create boundaries in Internet communication, users can communicate with any number of people and from anywhere in the world. In addition, by using hashtags as a specific language and software tool for social media, a user can share their message of particular interest with an arbitrarily wide audience.





10. A variety of genres of communication, which include: dialogues (conferences and chats), monologues (blogs), and e-mail correspondence, which is an epistolary, non-public genre. (5, 482-486)

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