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PECULIARITIES OF LANGUAGE OF YOUTH ONLINE COMMUNICATION ON EXAMPLE OF INTERNET MEMES

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Abstract. *This research paper aims at giving a broad outline of online communication considered from a linguistic point of view thus paying attention to the changes which the language undergoes under the influence of instant interaction. Due to the processes in question the internet language becomes susceptible to colloquialization and breaking language standards. It surveys the peculiarities of internet discourse implemented via linguistic economy, abbreviations, elliptical sentences, intentional use of grammar mistakes and substitution of letters by figures. The research has been conducted on the materials of internet memes which verbal component has been under consideration.*

Key words: *internet communication, linguistic economy, internet memes, elliptical sentences.*

Introduction Continuous development and innovation of computer technologies open up new spheres where they can be applied making people acquire and master computer skills to be able to move with the times. They help people keep their finger on the pulse with everything that is happening in the world. Another sphere where they are applied is online communication. This very communication is considered really important as modern IT technologies and the Internet itself favour it in many ways. Thus, such type of communication influences society allowing people keep in touch with each other even being at different corners of the world. Moreover, it erases distance between them and at some point bridge cultures, gaps between them blurring the boundaries of cultural identity if those who are involved in the process of communication are representatives of various cultures. So called virtual space has been created and it unites people of different age, social status and ethnical identities letting them communicate discussing matters of their interest.

People all over the world tend to use social media for communication. According to the information provided by the website Statista currently approximately 2,5 billions of people use social media which is represented by the diagram (Fig. 1).

Taking into account the statistics showing the proportions of different social network users and their preferences provided by the site in question it can be justified that a considerable part of people worldwide use the Internet precisely for communication. Their preferences include Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp.

Main text

Linguists deal with such a notion as discourse. There are different definitions of the term in question. But the common thing is that the text is considered in connection with the context. So, Pike defines it as a result of interaction sociocultural context [5, p 65].

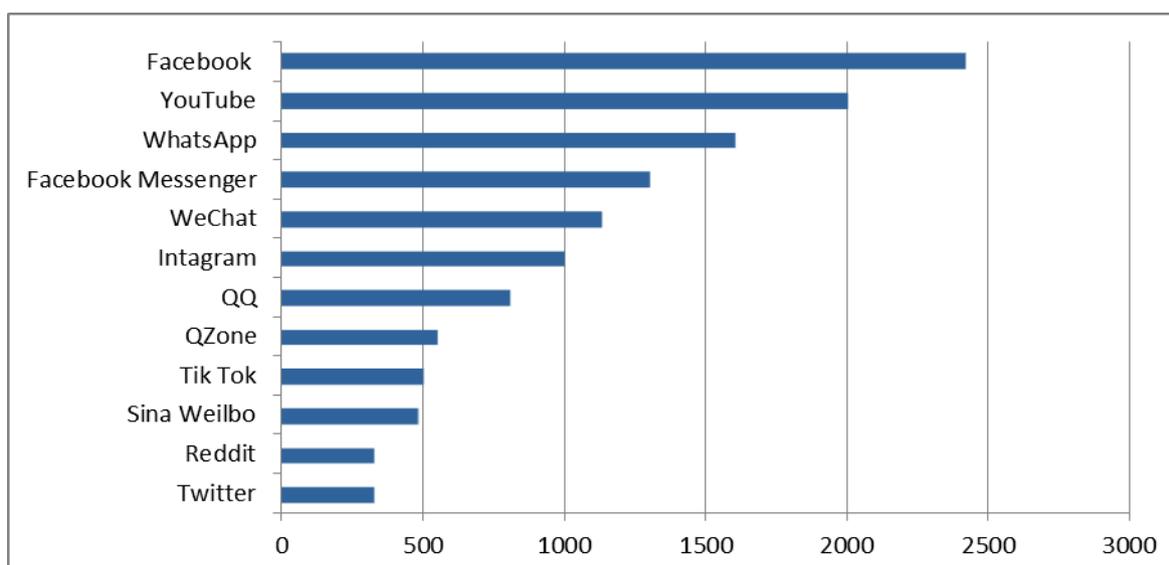


Fig 1. Most popular social networks worldwide as of October 2019, ranked by number of active users

According to Schiffrin there are several approaches defining discourse as a linguistic notion: language above the sentence or above the clause, language in use and language as utterances [6, p. 20]. The approach of language as utterances implies that discourse is not a primitive set of isolated units of a language structure but a unity of functionally organized, contextual units of the language use [3, p. 86]. Internet communication can be considered as online discourse expressed in a written form.

Consequently, youth communication is of particular interest as it is essential while studying any texts to understand their essence and nature paying attention to the sphere they function within [2, p. 86]. Online communication and its artificial forms of social communication are substituting face-to-face communication as a result traditional everyday social interaction changes and language functioning in the process of global online communication as well.

Youth online communication serves as a source of constantly changing live and authentic material for linguistics' study. There are processes of blending of oral and written communication in terms of their content via online communication.

According to Kovalska there is such a notion as a spontaneous written language that is when thoughts expressed are represented in a written form. Moreover, language for online communication acquires typical characteristics of a spoken language therefore it can be called a spoken written language [1, p. 74].

Online communication implies the following processes: colloquization of a style, tolerant attitude to grammar and spelling mistakes and in some cases intentional use of the mistakes in question, use of abbreviated forms and elliptical constructions etc.

According to Vyshnyakova internet language or internet written discourse which used to be considered the one which met the language standards is now susceptible to certain changes which are closely connected with those requirements which are made by the network as a communicative environment. They are conciseness, expressiveness and encounter orientation [7, p. 45]. Thus, young people tend to simplify the language they use in their online communication to make it sound

similar to spoken English to engage encounters in casual style atmosphere.

Online communication cannot be time consuming due to the fact that it is synchronized so there are certain limitations applied to online-discourse and to be more precise it is its economy. That is why encounters face the necessity to choose lexical units, their linkers and shorten them so that to adapt them to meet this need.

The notion of linguistic economy has been of interest to linguists. In particular, Martine was the first to define this phenomenon considering it as a synthesis of operating effects which eliminate unnecessary difference and ensure of new one [4, p. 130]. The implementation of the linguistic economy is significant due to the fact that this type of communication is instant and covers all the language levels consequently it always leads to shortening the length of language exchanges. The process of shortening is implemented via elliptical sentences when some sentence members are omitted though the idea of the sentences is understood due to the context. Moreover, it can be one-word sentences.

Another way of linguistic economy is the use of abbreviations which is especially typical for internet communication among young people. They serve for the language simplicity and effectiveness.

The common feature of internet communication is substitution of letters, words or parts of word units with figures which is justified by a desire of encounters to save their time besides it assists in blending oral and written forms of communication.

In everyday life communication especially of young people tends to be emotionally coloured. Though considering it within virtual space we can assume that encounters experience certain lack of means of expressiveness. It is due to the fact that in contrast to face-to-face communication in online communication encounters are deprived of prosody and body language. But still the Internet provides other ways of expressing their emotions.

One of them is the use of internet memes representing creolized texts consisting of a verbal component and icon. Their functioning is not only limited to an entertainment but informativeness and communicativeness as well. This is exactly what presupposes the popularity of internet memes among young people in their online communication and what makes them go viral rapidly. Authors of memes are free to change the language adjusting it to the need of youth online communication. Consequently, taking into consideration a verbal component of internet memes one can trace the way modern language standards change.

They are characterized by purposeful breaking of language standards. It is implemented via the use of erratives, use of non-literal symbols that is blending of verbal and numeral information of word units or their parts, wordplay, abbreviations and elliptical sentences etc. Memes serves as means of expressive one's attitude to certain events that is why they tend to be as simple as possible to resemble the characteristics of oral communication especially among young people.

On analyzing the internet memes it has been singled out memes with animals and children. There are some examples which to our firm believe vividly represent their characteristics in question.

For instance, the meme with an image where a dog pretends to howl has a text '*I is a wolf*' which implies colloquialization and grammar simplifying via grammar

mistakes that help to achieve a special effect in the language and to make the speech sound as similar to spoken English as possible.

The use of grammar mistakes, of one-word or two-word sentences, erratives and abbreviations are typical for the memes with children as well to make them sound natural and make others perceive them as if they were pronounced by children in fact.

The following example can be given. The meme in question has an icon of a crying baby and a text saying '*I don't wanna go back to school*' which is typical for a spoken language of youth and is used instead of more standard one '*I don't want to go back to school*'.

Thus, we can say that memes have their certain style and language characteristics via which specific information is conveyed. Moreover, they express language typical for young people and those language characteristics help to express humour, irony, sarcasm as well. Being simple and easy to comprehend memes serve as powerful means of online communication.

Summary and conclusions Online communication is some kind of blending of oral and written forms of communication. It is characterized by intentional breaking of language standards to implement linguistic economy in online communication. Online discourse should be considered within certain context especially if it is communication among young people.

Though online communication does not have a considerable amount of options of expressing emotions or attitude towards something there is still a possibility to do it if a necessity arises. So, one of the additional expressive means is internet memes. They contribute to the formation of certain association via the language used and encounters perceive information and thoughts in the most natural way for a spoken communication.

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