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DIRECTNESS IN THE BLOGS OF ENGLISH CELEBRITIES

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the study of the peculiarities of the interpersonal communication in the Internet. Public communication is prevalent among other types of modern communication. A great variety of social networks implying bilateral communication have appeared over the last decade. Social networks are a perfect instrument which is employed to manipulate people. The goal of linguistic manipulation is to achieve definite aims, i.e.to change the listener's behaviour, his mental set, intentions, perceptions, evaluations, etc. in the course of verbal interaction. The article under consideration gives the overview of linguistic means of directness in the blogs of British celebrities in social network Twitter. Blogs are regarded as a type of discourse, as a complex versatile phenomenon. It has been concluded that the main means of directness are imperative structures, performative verbs. Also the article deals with the classification of imperative utterances in order to identify modal modifications of directness.

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Keywords: Internet discourse, blog, manipulation, directness, imperative structures, performatives.

1. Introduction

Nowadays the Internet isn't just a source of searching for some information, communication and entertainment. The Internet has become a profound communication medium possessing the resources of instant feedback by means of which social, political and economic activities are carried out. The Internet discourse has emerged due to the development of modern information technologies and science. The Internet discourse is the process of text creation together with pragmatic, sociocultural, psychological factors (Zagoruiko, 2012, p. 58). N.A. Akhrenova considers Internet discourse as a definite type of discourse the uniqueness of which is revealed in all its spheres: there are some graphic, orthographic, lexical and grammatical peculiarities. Therefore, a new type of discourse has evolved – oral-written one (Akhrenova, 2013, p. 23). Each year there appear new public pages, applications, social networks which attract people who can communicate there, share knowledge, and promote their services and goods. Nowadays almost every politician, businessman, media person has an account in a social network as it is the quickest way to find required information in the modern society. By means of accounts in social networks celebrities create their public images. The blog is viewed as a webpage or a website with a set of links to other sites, newsfeed that allows to add some links on the topic under consideration and short commentaries. From this point of view the essence of the blog reduces itself to the opportunities of its authors to share some facts with other users and to provide feedback. So, we can suggest that blog is both the means of exchanging information and the means of communication (Litvinenko, 2016, p. 49). Also blogs provide a profound basis for manipulation. Manipulation is realized when the listener cannot see the speaker's covered intentions behind what is actually being said.

2. Problem Statement

The topicality of the research is connected with the appearance of new electronic means of communication. This fact inevitably leads to the modification of communication tools and the necessity of studying their peculiarities. The Internet shapes people's views, dictates some rules of choosing things, especially if we talk about accounts of celebrities. It should be noted that communication in blogs is always a two-way process; the communicative role of the audience isn't passive any longer. People actively produce some information making others take into account their point of view. The public always copies behaviour and a lifestyle of their idols. More and more people are taking commercial advantage of the global network by creating blogs and advertising some products and services there, by organising online marathons and trainings, by selling things there. Politicians – agitate, doctors – cure, actors and showmen – win audience's hearts with the help of the Internet. Thus we are interested in studying the linguistic means of persuasion and characteristics of effective manipulation at different levels of the Internet discourse.

3. Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in the present study:
1. What are the peculiarities of interpersonal communication in the celebrities' blogs?
2. What are the ways of manipulation?

3. How is directness commonly expressed in social network Twitter?

4. What are the modal modifications?

5. What are the modal modifications of directness?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of our study is to analyse the peculiarities of communication in the blogs of famous contemporary British people. This involves studying the forms of linguistic manipulation in the accounts of famous people and identifying the ways of expressing directness in social networking service Twitter. Our goal is to provide the thematic classification of the utterances under consideration by grouping them on the ground of intention they possess.

5. Research Methods

We have studied 428 utterances taken from the blogs of British celebrities of the 21st century with the help of data-fetching method. We also employ the following methods in our research:

-   synchronous linguistic description (used for selecting, systematising and describing of utterances);

-   evaluation (used for analysing the utterances and contexts);

-   interpretation (used for explaining the meaning);

-   contextual analysis (used for analysing historic and cultural settings and characterizing the text as a text).

6. Findings

In this article we deal with the discourse of celebrities' blogs located in Twitter. Twitter is world-popular microblogging system that allows the user to allocate short text messages (up to 140 words) with the help of web interface. The characteristic feature of Twitter is an instant public availability of posted messages giving the opportunity to provide feedback, view photos and videos. We consider the blogs in Twitter as being a discourse, not a genre, or a communication style due to their multifaceted nature, the ability to combine several communication media in one account. Generally, a blog in Twitter consists of some personal information about the author (a photo, location, occupation, etc.) and a newsfeed where all the posts and commentaries (usually structured as hypertexts) are allocated. We are mainly interested in the ways of linguistic manipulation that we come across in these accounts. We consider directness being one of the forms of manipulation conveying impositive intention and inspiring readers to follow the blog.

Modal modifications of directness in the blogs of British celebrities in social network Twitter are the following:

•   Invitation – the authors of the blogs invite the readers to different occasions, forthcoming events, the opening nights.

- Advice – celebrities try to influence the readers decisions by modifying their worldview and inducing them to perform some exact actions.

- Announcement – famous people inform the audience of their blogs about some events from the life of other actors, writers, singers, dancers.

- Reporting – the authors of the blogs tell the audience about their everyday life, common routines, their free time, travelling, hobbies.
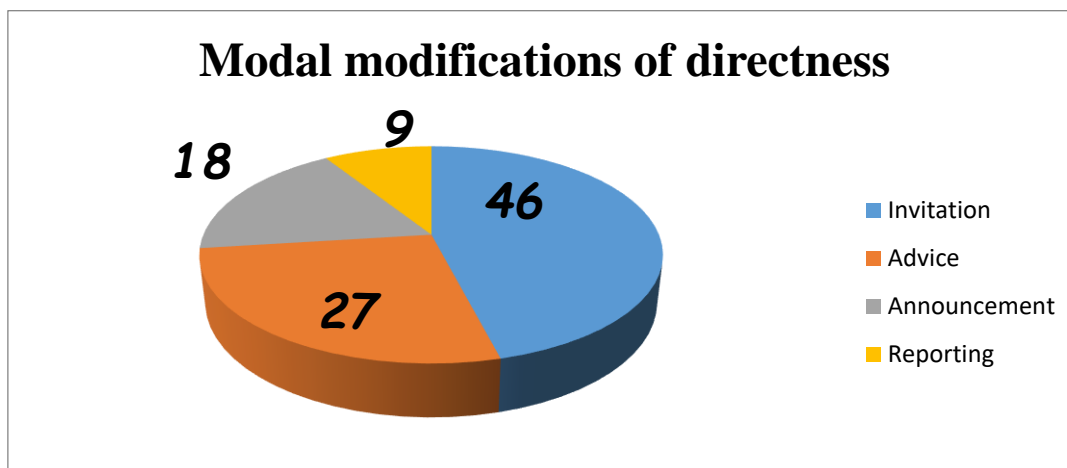
Figure 01. .Modal modifications of directness in the blogs of British celebrities in Twitter.

Modal modifications are certain thematic groups of utterances differ on the ground of their purposes and the way of influencing the reader. Each group conveys its own intention inducing the blog audience to participate in the conversations: initiate their own posts, comment on the existing utterances, invite their friends to the discussions.

6.1. Invitations (46%)

This group of utterances has appeared to be a dominant one in the present research. Such utterances tell us about forthcoming events featuring the celebrities: publication of a new book, shooting of a new film, the opening of exhibitions or some establishments. Not only the authors are eager to share some information concerning such events, but also the readers of the blogs await impatiently for the announcements of any occasions.

Bring on@HGtheatre comedy fest! Tomorrow! Tickets in @TROLLEYGIRLS bio! 🛒 *https://twitter.com/trolleygirls/status/916212781053030401 …(Jessica Forrest).*By inviting the readers to participate in tomorrow's meeting, Jessica Forrest implicitly mentions that the access is not free.

Remember to watch Mabinogi-ogi tonight in s4c, 5.35! I play an evil so and so called Efnisien 🐴 *#mabinogi#mwahahahaha (Mari Beard).*

The illocutionarygoalofimperativestructuresconsistsintheattemptofthespeakerto make the reader perform an action: attend the event, read the book, listen to the interview, watch a film, etc.

I talked with @Ploy_Radford and her podcast #millenialsnow about writing for children! **Listen** *now to hear me talk about the responsibility of writing for 10yr olds, rant about the internet, and discuss the highlights of my glittering pig farming career (Ross Montgomery).*

Impositive intention of invitation is conveyed by imperative verbs and is intensified by emoticons that visualize the text of the utterance. The more pressing the invitation, the more sincere it sounds (Leech &Larina, 2014, p. 28). The authors intend to be rather polite and enthusiastic while inviting their readers to the events.

6.2. Advice (22%)

Thespeechesoffamouspeopleformandchangetheworldviewoftheiradmirers.Thelatterbelievetheicons theyadore, take their behavior for model by imitating celebrities' lifestyle. Taking into account some advice given by famous people, blog readers choose the same routs for travelling, the same brands of clothes and shoes. The utterances grouped here mainly aimed at promotion of services and goods.

READERS OF TWITTER! **Fancy** *a personalised signed bookplate?* **Review** *any of my books on Amazon and I'll send you one to say thanks! I mean you'll have to tell me you've done it first and everything, I'm a writer not a mind reader (Ross Montgomery).*

Here we come across utterances related to some socially important spheres– healthcare, education. The language of narration is sometimes quite 'emotionally-rough' including some constructions of expressive syntax (parcelling, rhetorical exclamations and questions). The graphical means of incitement is capitalization of words, phrases and even whole sentences. Capitalization makes a message more visually emotional, it is used to attract the reader's attention and sometimes it reflects a high-pitched communication:

GET. YOUR.CHILDREN.VACCINATED. (Chris Cook).

An important means of softening the imperative are forms of address. They play an important part in interpersonal communication because they contain information about a given language, indicate the social status of the interlocutors and the type of relations between them, in particular the degree of intimacy, social and status distance, etc (Larina, 2015, p. 202). In the following example the author addresses teachers and parents in order to attract their attention to some bonuses that they can acquire if they subscribe a certain account.

TEACHERS! PARENTS! **Fancy** *fantastic creative writing resources, vids and advice from authors?***Get***10% off a termly or yearly @authorfy subscription using the codes TERMMAX or YEARMAX - you'll even get a video of me trashing my own flat and filling my booze cabinet with sand! (RossMontgomery).*

The blog authors are perceived imposing as they are too willing to give advice to anyone.In order to make the reader use a particular service, blog authors suggest additional discounts and special offers. The situations of incitement with a high degree of insistent are marked by emotional exclamatory structures.

*I don't **agree**. Look at how many Dragons Den style Biz events now go on around Country. (Deborah Meaden).*

Performatives, i.e.,*request*, *recommend*, *hope* are also a way to indicate directness within the frameworks of the Internet discourse.

*This is a glorious, glorious book. I throughly**recommend** it.Joyful.♥(AmandaAbbington).*

Performativity(broadly speaking) is a category that allows to portray an action actualized in a definite communicative context, when a word and an action are almost the same. Thus the word doesn't describe an action and doesn't report about it, but consummates an action. In the narrow sense performativity is regarded as the meaning of the utterance, which is in certain pragmatic circumstances equals to the action indicated by it.

6.3 Announcement (18%).

The intention of the utterances grouped here is popularization of the activities of other representatives of art occupation.

***Get to know** Manchester's @IAMDDB - who's come third in the BBC #Soundof2018 - in her own words. (Mark Savage).*

We include here retwitts (citationsofposts) of other people'sutterancesaimed at providing the blog audience with some information concerning events in the sphere of show business.

***HELP!** We're nearly a quarter of the way to our #ChipIn target. We want community groups and hard-to-reach audiences to engage with @beckyph7's #ChipShopChips next Spring. Can you help us? http://bit.ly/ChippingIn. (Jessica Forrest).*

Blogauthorsattempttomakereaderscontinuetofollowtheirpageandenterintocommunication using the following ways of expressing directness: imperative structures, performatives, rhetorical questions.

6.4 Reporting(8%).

The utterances in this group present the blog author's data (personal requests, messages concerning routine affairs, state of health, etc.). The main goal that is achieved here is to portray a famous person as an ordinary citizen possessing the same duties and solving the same problems.

*Any of you in Amsterdam or know anyone in Amsterdam? Please please**tag** them x Thank you x (Craig Russel).* Lexical repetitions (pleaseplease) intensifyimpositive intention of the utterances. The author is almost begging here in order find a person who is not indifferent, a person who is eager to help. With the help of this emotional utterance Craig Russel underlines that it is important for him to find someone out of his supporters to help him.

*Flu😰 ouch / **help** / me. Sponsored by happy valley series 2.😷(Jessica Forrest).*

All these utterances reveal some hidden facts from the life of celebrities. The blog authors become close with the readers winning their hearts and making them ardent supporters of the accounts and famous people themselves.

7.   Conclusion

The Internet communication nowadays is an interpersonal interaction in the global network. The most common modern form of such communication is a blog. The contents of the blog are closely connected with the blog author who provides readers within formation. The information is interpreted by the blog readers by writing commentaries, citations, posting some data in their blogs. Predominant imperative utterances determine the shortening of communicative distance between the author of the blog and the audience. Incentive intention is revealed with the help of imperative structures, performative verbs in combination with capitalization and emoticons responsible for emotional component of the utterance. Thus, complex pragmatic impact is achieved. Modal modifications of directness in the blogs of British celebrities are the following: invitation, advice, announcement, reporting. The main goal of is to inspire and motivate the audience.

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