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INTERNET-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION UNDER UNCERTAINTY

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Abstract

The paper presents the features of computer interaction as a type of mediated communication. It is noted that in terms of their content and structure the texts of Internet-mediated communication represent oral speech given in writing. Faster processing of information in language terms is reflected in the use of a minimum set of lexical tools with the maximum content fullness of text messages. Non-verbal means of communication in the Internet environment are particularly important since being used in oral communication they make it possible to establish the interaction using the body language, to promote psychological contact or to distance the communicators. The transfer of oral communication to the Internet environment imposes a requirement on communicators to comply with the rules adopted on public network resources. Content may be presented as a collage reduced to a repetition of previously produced information. The reasons for this combinatorics are seen in accelerating the pace of life, saving time, using technical means that facilitate the process of text creation. The main criteria include the speed of creating the text and its accessibility, the comprehensiveness of a wide audience. However, such a democratization of the language is fraught with the following risks. First, the human brain loses the ability to in-depth thinking and learning, detailed analysis. Second, the language itself as the cultural code of the nation will undergo significant changes in terms of simplifying syntactic constructions, word forms and norms of the literary language.

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Keywords: Internet-mediated communication, cultural code, content, virtual communication, Internet community, digitalization



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1. Introduction

The rapid development of the technosphere and the growth of innovation in modern society lead to a steady increase in the diversity of opportunities affecting the increased uncertainty. Uncertainty as an integral part of the modern world is the subject of study not only of psychologists, but also among physicists, mathematicians, economists, biologists and specialists in other fields of knowledge. Uncertainty as a phenomenon occurs at all levels of human life: both in business communication and everyday life; both in intergroup communication and interpersonal interaction.

The Internet as a means of communication is considered in various aspects. Thus, researchers describe demographic trends among social media users (Gambo & Özad, 2020), problems of digital reality in education (Pochebut, 2021), analyze the negative impact of the Internet environment on minors (Risks of Internet communication between children and young people, 2019; Tretyakov, 2020), impact of new high-tech forms of communication on the quality and standard of living of the population (Sheremet, 2020), on the activation of youth protest movements in modern Russia (Vasilchenko, 2017), consider technological, socio-cultural aspects of pedagogical computer-mediated communication in training (Totskaya, 2021), interpersonal communication in the blogs of English celebrities (Ivanova, 2019), present a historical insight into computer-mediated communication (Barkovich, 2020), explore the structure and semantics of folk memoirs in Internet communication (Minina, 2018), give a linguistic characteristic of computer-mediated communication in the German sector of the Internet (Shchipitsina, 2011), analyze the features of emoticons in Russian and German Internet discourses (Gorbova & Perederiy, 2021), elliptical structures on the Internet (Yagodkina & Kotleva, 2021), epistemic modal modifiers in English texts of Internet forums (Troshina, 2017), tools that promote progress in new media communications (Karpov & Karpova, 2021). Despite the close attention of researchers to the phenomenon of computer-mediated communication, information technologies are rapidly developing, which is reflected in speech production in a new communication environment. The digital age brings new ways of thinking, self-determination, self-actualization. We are going through a transition from the person of yesterday formed by book culture, to the person of the future controlled by technology. Today, the world is in the conditions of uncertainty, including linguistic, when the traditional sign system of world understanding is pushed out by the total textualization of machine sign systems and by the virtual and imaginal representation of the world in general.

2. Problem Statement

Today, the Internet is a translator of information, a means of not just mass, but global communication, which is not limited to national borders. The Internet environment represents the concentration of computer and communication infrastructure and combines the world's information resources into a single system.

The quintessence of any communication is language, which, as the most important substance of culture, is the first to be influenced by the digitalization of being. Personality transformation takes place: a person deliberately refuses reality, preferring digital and electronic existence. Now the benefit of the person is the information received from the screen. The subject defines himself entirely in an Internet-mediated

environment: a massive transition from the world of speech, texts to the world of hypertext, artificial intelligence, content leads to the replacement of traditional value systems with a system of uncertain productive projects, strategies, programs and devices.

The content of the information system, the process of organizing the communication environment and speech interaction in the conditions of computer-mediated communication requires thorough attention and study.

3. Research Questions

- 3.1. What is the content of information resources in the Internet environment?
- 3.2. What is the structural and denotative filling with content, as well as its compliance with the traditional norms of the modern Russian literary language?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify the sociolinguistic features of computer-mediated communication through content analysis.

5. Research Methods

The study uses general logical methods (simple and overt observation, analysis of computer-mediated texts posted on the Internet), the deconstruction method (ability to evaluate a text according to views, without distorting the author's text). Inductive conclusions are made on the basis of an aspect content analysis of sites and social networks (material is interpreted through certain practical examples).

6. Findings

Communication on the Internet has a great variety of genres and is implemented in emails, forums, chats, blogs, bulletin boards, comments, etc. The Internet-mediated communication is understood as a method of communicative interaction carried out in the Internet environment through electronic computing communication devices. Internet communication may be defined as verbal / non-verbal communication, characterized by anonymity, remoteness, mediation, electronic signal, creativity, putting forward the requirement to communicators to comply with the ethical standards of the computer user community. The use of electronic means of communication affects the ways, forms, nature of communication between people.

6.1. Purpose of interaction

Depending on the purpose, texts presented in the Internet environment may serve a means of training, i.e., training content implemented in the following genres: instructions, useful tips, cases, reviews, online courses.

Content is a means of communication: communicative content (situational, provocative), which is determined through feedback, answers to user questions. Speech interaction, in which people united by common interests are involved, is called a conversation, the participants of which share important and not very important information. Communication, or chat, takes place in real time. The violation of the rules of communication with communicators allows other participants to block and ignore.

A communicative act, as a result of which users share their knowledge, experience, opinions on a topic expecting an answer or a response to a message in the future, not at the time of communication, is called a forum. If users give a huge number of unjustified quotes, the communicative content may be called overquoting.

To denote an unconstructive dialogue in the Internet community, the following nominations are used: *off topic* (literally *out of topic*) – communication that deviates from a given topic; *flood* – information presented in the form of comments, messages and posts that are not related to the topic under discussion. A synonym for this English word is the Russian *pustoslovie* – *windbaggery*. These may be both short non-informative text messages, repetitive messages of the same type, and graphic data consisting of, for example, emoticons alone. Communication, which unexpectedly grew into a dispute, becomes a flame.

Content may become an advertising tool: advertising content. In this case, unlike advertising that explicitly offers goods and encourages to buy them, the content has a hidden motivation and a target setting to purchase something. The user is invited to sign up, register for the upcoming free webinar or take a training course.

6.2. Specifics of a web page text

The analysis of the genre variety of texts presented in the Internet environment allows differentiating them into those intended for the creation of various types of web pages, the purpose of which is to inform, advertise, train, and entertain the users, and texts that implement the communicative function, which will be discussed in the next information block of our study. Let us consider the content of the GeekBrains Educational Project, which educational ecosystem amounts to 6390189 people. A target audience of 12-17 years old people are offered a Web Design for Children: Tilda, Figma, Readymag, it gives information on what children will learn and how long will it take: Children get acquainted with web design: they design interfaces in Figma, create sites in Tilda and Readymag, learn to manage the attention of people. During 3.5 months they will be able to immerse into the profession of a web designer and create a project for their portfolio (Web Design for Children: Tilda, Figma, Readymag, n.d.). A training program is offered indicating the skills obtained by completing each lesson. The course designers promise that during the development of the material, schoolchildren will develop comprehensively, spend time with benefit and fascination, learn to make decisions independently and achieve goals – all this will make it possible to make provision for their future. Traditionally, the educational process at school is carried out under the guidance of a teacher. Despite the fact that the training will take place in an online school, the teacher will conduct the training session in the form of 1-hour lessons, but this concept in the Russian language consciousness is associated with a person teaching at a higher educational institution or a special vocational school. In this case, the main focus is on students mastering a subject that is not included in the school education curriculum. The authority of the teacher is reinforced by his qualifications: designer of digital products;

work: works as a UX/UI-designer of MTS IT; internship experience: trained at MTS and Rambler Group; competency: understands related areas: identity, web layout and product design; experienced IT specialist.

It is necessary to pay attention to a large number of foreign-language lexical units, which, on the one hand, are necessary for the nomination of a new branch, and on the other, they allow creating an image of prestige: Conducted workshops on Figma and lectures on the design of immersive projects at the HSE School of Design. Besides, the teacher is a mentor. In a lexicographic source, this word usually marked ironic has the meaning of ‘a person that constantly instructs, insists, obsessively educates’ (Large Explanatory Dictionary of the Russian Language, 2000, p. 533), cf.: mentor tone, but in this case this word has a positive connotation: he is a mentor in the student organization HSE Curators: helps freshmen understand their studies and careers (Web Design for Children: Tilda, Figma, Readymag, n.d.). The age of the teacher is also appealing: his photo is posted on the website of the online educational course. Students will be able to easily find a common language, since the teacher is young, therefore, understands the interests of children. Besides, he is a student himself: studies Design and Programming at the HSE School of Design, so he knows how to entertain and present the educational material in accessible and clear format. So that students feel that training will allow mastering the skills useful for web designers and frontend developers, and not giving a new load when they do their homework, the online school provides ongoing support for the training process: Students are assisted by mentors – teaching assistants. They answer questions concerning homework, monitor performance and are constantly in touch.

A feature of content presentation is the use of bright headlines based on the main issues: Who is the training for, *How is the study arranged, What do practical classes look like, What else is important to know – or the training specifics: Exciting leisure, Practical tasks, Continuous support, Communication with the teacher.*

All the necessary information is very capacitive to characterize the caption bar. The maximum number of sentences required to disclose the content of the information given in the caption bar is five.

Content involves feedback from users. It is interesting to pay attention to the etiquette phrases: *Hi! Any questions?* which are used in relation to people of the same age, people from surrounding community, i.e., friendly disposition, without familiarity, but at the same time demonstrating respect towards the interlocutor: Please write us and we will help to understand more!

There are other etiquette phrases in Russian, but in this case, they are not used, since the greeting Hello! is official, it is also applied to barely known, unfamiliar people. Hello compared to hi is neutral, the latter in turn shows the favor of people responding to users, they are happy to see you and communicate with you. The welcome address ends with the icon in the form of an emoticon conveying the emotion of joy :). Users are trained to work with the service: Write a message and press Enter.

Like advertising that has gained the support of reputable people who also use such a product, a service, the advertising content has a section where the users who have completed training share their impressions of the training process. The site records the number of reviews – 771403, ranking on a five-point scale, 80% of which rated the taught material, the quality of its submission marked “excellent”, which indicates the competence of online course teachers and the trustworthiness of the organization. The site contains a license for educational activities issued by GeekBrain LLC and a User Agreement, which any interested individual accepts by clicking the button “I accept the terms of the offer” when he registers on

the site. It also contains information on the Privacy and Personal Data Processing Policy, which is carried out in accordance with the requirements of federal laws.

When comparing two contents, two ways for submitting information, advertising on the main page and information posted on the tab with the Privacy and Personal Data Processing Policy, we note a change of friendly tone to categorical statements: Use of GeekUniversity Pro, geekbrains.ru or gb.ru means the unconditional consent of the User to the Policy and specified conditions for data processing. If you do not agree with the terms of this Policy, leave the page and do not register on the Platform or geekbrains.ru or gb.ru (Web Design for Children: Tilda, Figma, Readymag, n.d.).

In order for a potential customer to agree to receive education in the advertised program, he is offered some financial benefits: a free trial lesson, a 25% discount for a lesson valid until a certain date: Get a 30% discount when buying two or more GeekSchool products, and attractive terms, such as the possibility of paying with maternity capital: Use your maternity capital to buy the entire course; cash back: Return 13% of the cost with tax deduction. This motivates and pushes users to sign up for the course, pay its cost before a predetermined deadline. To settle the expected questions, the content developers provided answers to frequently asked questions.

The democratic nature of the language in the content, its accessibility, general understanding, bringing to a single language standard is largely expressed in the almost undeniable priority of the English language. For example, the use of English terms thus preserving the graphic appearance of the original language transmitted in Cyrillic: GeekSchool is an online school of demanded IT and digital skills for children and adolescents. In our opinion, the designers use them deliberately, for the purpose of status, to increase the company image. The term digital skill is also widely used in Russian. Knowledge of English loan words and their use in written or oral speech makes a person involved in culture and marks the belonging to a certain social, professional group.

6.3. Content analysis from regulatory perspective

The analysis of text messages allows considering the formation of a specific norm of communication in the field of electronic communications. The ethical aspect imposes a ban on unacceptable, offensive, illegal text, audio or video messages that may offend a person, his religious feelings, cause aggression, and spark hatred. Information that does not make sense to the audience, does not correspond to reality, and misleads people, is also prohibited: Sometimes we are forced to block and delete the account. Then we make a decision based on the situation, and in especially urgent or serious cases we may delete the account without notice (Your account is not valid, n.d.).

Written language is more rigorous than oral language and is structured in accordance with grammatical norms. In terms of their content and structure, text messages in computer-mediated communication are a reflection of oral speech presented in writing.

Specific features of spoken speech are as follows: 1) reliance on an out-of-language situation in which unprepared, relaxed speech arises, communication between close interlocutors occurs directly; 2) use of non-verbal communicative means (gestures and facial expressions); 3) mainly oral speech. The texts of Internet-mediated communication adopt the features characteristic of spoken speech transmitted through a written communication channel. Spoken speech is characterized by spontaneity, ease, expressiveness,

which is achieved through the use of graphic means: abundance of punctuation marks that implement intonation-expressive and separation functions and are used to convey a strong sense of admiration, surprise, doubt, focus on the message and so on. For example:

SHIFT-ARENA

Hi everyone!!! we will open in a few days, the exact date will be announced soon!!! In this regard, we launch the action!!! Anyone who writes a review about our club on Yandex and Google maps will receive +1 hour gift!!! (all grammar and spelling has been left unedited) (RapidComp Computer Store, 2020).

Faster processing of information due to computerization, the introduction of electronic means in all spheres of human activity, which carry out operations in a matter of seconds, leads to faster speed of work with information. In terms of a language, this is expressed in the fact that people seek to put as much information as possible in a message using the minimum set of language tools, so one sentence may present a collapsed two- or three-part structure of a communicative situation: appeal to the interlocutor, gratitude, answer message:

Hello, I noticed that some pages do not exist on your site.

Hello Dmitry, thank you, corrected (all grammar and spelling has been left unedited) (RapidComp Computer store, 2020).

The wide participation of all registered users as communicators, whose communication takes place in writing, exposes their level of language literacy and culture of behavior, which is expressed in a large number of spelling and punctuation errors.

Most genres of computer-mediated communication are designed for the reverse response expressed by verbal means in user comments, requests to perform any action: Please repost this page! (Emoticon *Waving*, n.d.) – non-verbal means, which function is performed by graphic images used to transmit emotions, state, appearance: *smiley* (from English *smiling*), which is used as a conditional signal of their demonstration, not directly related to a smile.

The emotional mood of the interlocutor is expressed by facial expressions, so the emoticon is an indicator of emotions, the state of people in the process of written communication in the Internet environment. This term extends to the demonstration of other images, not only of a person's face, for example, smileys of body parts (Set of emoticons "Body Parts", n.d.), although the correct name for such images is emoticon (from English: emoticon < emotion + icon).



Figure 1. Emoticon "Long Years and Prosperity"

7. Conclusion

Thus, the analysis of computer-mediated communication allows concluding that 1) written communication is a means of transmitting oral speech with its characteristic emotionality; 2) computer-

mediated communication emphasizes the importance of the speed of information and emotions, therefore, for practical purposes, graphical means are rationally used to respond to a message.

The Internet may be rightfully called a means of mass communication, which has a dominant role in modern society. The texts created by the technology define insights into the world, its values, and the assimilation of information by a person in an interactive environment is a mental consumption without in-depth processing of information. The linguistic worldview is changing significantly. Computer-mediated communication creates a new scientific and cultural environment, and human network activities represent various “language games”, the essence of which is related to the worldview as a collage from a repetition of previously produced information. Content is presented as a collage reduced to a repetition of previously produced information. The reasons for this combinatorics are seen in accelerating the pace of life, saving time, using technical means that facilitate the process of text creation. The main criteria include the speed of creating the text and its accessibility, the comprehensiveness of a wide audience. However, such a democratization of the language is fraught with the following risks. First, the human brain loses the ability to in-depth thinking and learning, and the brain areas responsible for detailed analysis are gradually left without load and lose intensive work skills, and as a result, Internet users turn into impulsive people not capable of long and hard work. This will undoubtedly affect the use of language tools. Second, the language itself as the cultural code of the nation will undergo significant changes in terms of simplifying syntactic forms and language norms, and the latter will be formed into new ones adapted to the medium of expression.

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