MOST SIGNIFICANT CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL MEDIA DISCOURSE

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Annotation. This article is devoted to the linguopragmatic analysis of the discourse of modern social networks. The article examines the current state of the language of the information technology paradigm and the place of the Internet discourse in it. The most significant trends in the written form of speech in the environment of Internet communication within social networks are given.

Keywords: Internet-discourse, IT discourse, social media discourse, pragmatics, discourse analysis

Introduction. It is widely known that contemporary linguistics is diverse and multi-faceted in terms of different directions it takes, depending on what exact aspect it focuses on and takes into account while studying the rules of the language. Along with classic and well-known established approaches, certain more or less innovative and relatively new directions are taking a visible value, including psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics and pragmatics. The reason for this trend can be explain in a significant variety of factors that produce a certain degree of influence on the way people communicate verbally, the choice of speech turns, vocabulary etc. One of such factors is computer technology.
It can be said without a doubt that computer technology, or IT, is a phenomenon that has already surpassed the borders of something out of a comfort zone in the eyes of a contemporary interlocutor. Once, being an exotic sphere with same exotic lexis it brought into language, IT is something we cannot imagine our life without, including verbal communication as one of key opportunities IT offer us on a daily basis. The use of e-mail, Internet forums, social media and instant messaging are most visible examples.

It has to be said that the paradigm of IT was initially perceived as something that related to the sphere of its hardware, i.e. the layer of vocabulary associated with the complex of various devices that are utilized for a certain purpose. Such lexemes as “computer”, “mouse”, “printer”, “system unit” were once exotisms that had their difficult time in embedding into the language. With computers being constantly commercialized and made available for general public, as well as having an overall advantage in solving daily tasks, IT has become an integral part of society and this served as the reason why the paradigm of IT and its lexemes are no longer perceived as alienated and extraordinary. It eventually leads to the process of this paradigm to be expanded owing to the development of software, and, most recently, the Internet. It needs to be said that today, IT is associated almost equally with both hardware and software, including the Web as a continuation of software development and its transfer to an “online” format with their cloud capabilities, including office work, file sharing and cooperation. Attempts to identify this particular layer of the language have been give throughout its studies and included many iterations, among which are: “Internet language”, “Internet speech”, “Written spoken language” etc. [5]

The same applies to IT-related vocabulary. Most of the words of an IT-related paradigm are associated with the Internet and services it offers. Some amount of social media - related vocabulary can clarify this, including such
concepts and words like “go live”, “post”, “vlog”, “update”, “feed”, “link in bio, “ban”, “story”, “highlight” etc. These lexemes and phrases are based on already existing words that take a new meaning in the context of social media. It is important to draw attention to the fact that the Internet itself creates its own discursive environment in which its own terminology is visible and popular. Along with terminology, this environment leads to certain unique linguapragmatic tendencies in communication. They are especially noticeable in the realm of social media. An attempt to retrieve certain outlined discursive “trends” and their development within the framework of social media in the process of verbal communication is a final objective of this work.

**Materials and methods.** Within the framework of this exact study, certain specific pieces of contemporary research in the field of Internet discourse and social media language were taken into consideration and analysis, including Burnayeva, Kokovina, Shupletsova, Smirnova and others (see references). Methods used include: observation, analysis, synthesis; stratification, formalization, introspective method.

**Results.** The reasons for social media being a noticeable phenomenon of a contemporary Internet discourse may vary, but some certain explanations can be given. Social media is an influential part of the Internet that occupies a significant position in an everyday communication owing to their 1) diversity, 2) availability and 3) relation both to personal communication and promotion in the sphere of blogging. Social media as a communication platform has been praised before, being viewed as something that has “new communicative opportunities”. [6] According to our studies and observations, we were able to outline certain language trends that have manifested themselves in social media and can be viewed as different compared to other types of Internet discourse. These include:
1) The use of contracted sentences, omissions of excessive words, grammar violations. Here are some examples based on typical language behavior of social media users when writing a text message or making a title for a social media post:

“Going live on IG at 5:00 pm” (instead of “I am going live on IG at 5:00 pm”)

Omissions of certain words and grammar simplification has been a subject of studies of not only social media, but instant messaging as well [2, p. 121], which once again serves as a proof of significance of these language trends in the Internet environment.

2) The use of memes and emoji symbols, as well as slang in an “embedded in context” scenario to create a certain message.

“LOL where your 🛠️s bro?” (“LOL where are your keys bro?”)

It is interesting to notice that there are definite reasons to use the aforementioned means in verbal communication. The first example is motivated, first, by the tendency to save time while writing the message; second, to make it more informal, as the nature of social media itself is aimed towards an informal discursive scenario. The second example again showcases informality, but taken to a higher degree with the use of Internet abbreviation LOL to express amusement; plus, punctuation is omitted as well to save up time. (“LOL, where are your keys, bro?”) The slang in Internet discourse is widespread and is explained, most notably, by a global character of the Internet itself, its emotiveness and globalization of culture. [1, p. 265]

3) The use of hypertext where possible. This exemplifies how the capabilities of social media can influence a certain written speech act: by suing hyperlinks in the context of a massage, a certain interlocutor makes his act interactive by encouraging to use the links that lead to other content related to the message he provides.
4) The use of hashtags.

“Going out today for some #snacks! #ItsAWeekend”

The use of hashtags has a few motivations. The first one is a tendency to be as visible as possible with the message to the public. The next reason is an attempt to express to what topic the message and content belong to. Hashtags make it easy to filter the messages and find topics of discourse a certain internet interlocutor is interested in, which again makes communication easier and more interactive.

Discussion. There are many other tendencies in written speech acts that can be retrieved in the context of social media. The cases mentioned above are most widespread and typical ones that can be found on the majority of popular social networks and blog-related websites including Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. According to the observations, the reasons for these tendencies are:

1) an attempt to simplify the message and make it more informal,
2) reduction of time for actual writing of the message considering the widespread use of written form of speech on the Internet,
3) technical reasons (hyperlinks, hashtags) to popularize the content.

It is important to make a remark here in terms of a genre dependency of the Internet discourse. Such informal manifestations depend on the genre of communication on the Internet, i.e. the use of slang, abbreviations or contractions is possible when verbal communication is focused on an everyday casual speech acts, which is represented today in a vast diversity of social media, as well as blogs, blog comments and instant messaging. [4, p. 184]

It has to be said that an overall image of IT-related discourse, in our case, the language of social media, highly depends on ongoing trends that are more popular in an online communication. This is the reason why the features of social media discourse is relatively unstable and evolves with time once certain tendencies become obsolete with new Internet features and trends being added. It has already
been noticed that certain trends related to IT and the Internet are verified with their stability over time [3, p. 147] which decides whether a certain Internet neologism occupies a firm position in vocabulary or fades away. The study of this process is one of key moments in pragmatic analysis of modern of IT discourse.

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