



DOI 10.36074/grail-of-science.10.05.2024.057

EXPLORING LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE DIGITAL MESSAGING: A STUDY OF TWITTER AND INSTAGRAM COMMUNICATION

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РОЗДІЛ ХІ. ФІЛОСОФІЯ ТА ПОЛІТОЛОГІЯ

Summary. The emergence of virtual communication, facilitated by the internet, represents a paradigm shift in human interaction. Virtual communication, reliant on modern technologies, supplants face-to-face engagement, offering users novel avenues for communication, learning, and business endeavors. This form of interaction, characterized by the exchange of symbolic and multimedia messages over the internet, has garnered attention from scholars globally. Internet communication, spanning various channels such as written text, images, audio, and video files, predominates social media platforms, shaping contemporary interactions. Our research focuses on the linguistic features of English-language communication on the internet, with an emphasis on texting. Through analysis of textual samples from Twitter and Instagram, this study aims to delineate lexical, syntactic, orthographic, and emotional characteristics of internet communication. By employing scientific research methods, this research seeks to advance theoretical understanding while offering practical insights for educational applications, thereby elucidating the nuances of network communication in the digital age.

Key words: virtual communication, abbreviation, acronyms, explicitness, non-verbal graphic means, jargon, erratic writing, chat communication

Our investigation delves into the nuances of digital messaging, focusing on its evolution and growing popularity as a distinct form of online communication. The research undertakes several **tasks**, including *viewing* the internet as a communication medium, *defining* "digital messaging" in linguistics, and *distinguishing* its characteristics in comparison with other forms of communication. We investigated lexical, syntactic, and spelling features of digital messages through analysis of



samples extracted from Twitter and Instagram. Notable characteristics include colloquial tendencies, spontaneity, informality, brevity, and expressiveness. At the lexical level, users exhibit a preference for emotive exclamations, repetitions, lexical abbreviations, and emoticons. Syntactic analysis reveals the prevalence of simple and incomplete sentences, omission of auxiliary verbs and predicates, rhetorical questions, and punctuation variations. The emotional and expressive backdrop includes a wide range of emoticons. *Theoretical contributions* of this research includes the advancement of the theory of authentic English texting, considering speech patterns and their specificity. Internet communication has emerged as a dominant mode of interaction, continually evolving and gaining popularity across various domains. Scholars worldwide, such as I. Devterov, O. Dmitrieva, and L. V. Zubova, have extensively studied electronic communication's linguistic aspects. The internet provides linguists with ample research opportunities due to its coexistence of oral and written language variants. It encompasses various channels like written text, images, audio, and video files, shaping linguistic evolution. Terms like texting, e-language, and netspeak define this electronic language, with its realm known as Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC). Texting, the real-time exchange of messages online, is crucial in modern communication. Internet communication has flourished, driven by smartphones and high-speed internet. Platforms like Twitter have their language and etiquette. Compared to traditional communication, internet communication offers unique features like spatial-temporal freedom and anonymity, fostering democratic expression using various emojis and capitalization. Participants exchange various media, constructing individual linguistic styles and online communities. According to I. R. Galperin [2], we may distinguish the following *lexical and syntactic* features of oral (conversational) language: *presence of elliptical constructions; use of questions in the syntactic form of affirmative sentences; presence of contractions; intensifying words and phrases; unfinished utterances; absence of conjunctive connection; conversational-emotional lexicon and phraseology*. Since the written language of internet communication resembles oral speech, the speed of information transmission is undoubtedly of priority, leading to the emergence of new principles and features of verbal communication, which we now clarify. When analyzing texting as a form of communication, we focus on Twitter as representative internet platform. To begin with, let us explore lexical characteristics of English internet communication, often featuring evaluative and informal language. Participants in virtual communication often adhere to the KISS principle (Keep It Short and Simple), using terms, elliptical constructions, and contractions to streamline written language, fostering interactive communication. When typing a quick response, post, or comment we can use numerous abbreviations, truncated words and endings, contraction of verb forms, as well as truncated forms of auxiliary verbs:

"I can't wait for Halloween to be over bc that means @emrata new podcast comes out tmrw ... my first ever update is now live!!!! go check it out, link is in my bio ... (biography). He's readin' now 'cause he'll soon have an exam. This Saturday I had the chance to sit with the wonderful @angelayee and discuss everything... the album, the doc, life, love, hardship... everything ... (documentary). Favorite snack while watching repeat telecast... Eh guess I'll do this for fun, um, I'm YouTube minute, I'm doing a dev log series

on a game in unity". Abbreviations and acronyms are prevalent on Twitter and Instagram, forming a characteristic aspect of informal communication. An abbreviation is a word formation process in which a word or phrase is shortened. Acronyms are a type of abbreviation, newly formed words formed from the initial letters of a phrase [3]. A distinctive feature of acronyms compared to abbreviations is that acronyms are individual words. Acronyms are characteristic of informal communication. Here are some popular *examples* of acronyms: *AFAIK* — *as far as I Know*, *IMHO* - *in my humble / honest opinion*, *HHOK* - *ha-ha only kidding*, *LOL* - *laughing out loud*, *IC* - *I see*, *DK* - *Do Not Know*, *BBL* - *be back later*, *HAND* - *have a nice day* [3]. *This was great plays but they had so much time to tp lol. Do not blame them though; it's rly easy to ignore your ancient while in the zone.* The language of virtual communication, as a relatively new phenomenon, is rich in neologisms and contributes to the emergence of more of them. An effective word formation model in internet texting is also "blending" or portmanteau. Below there are *examples* of neologisms formed in the Instagram network: *"Understand how to steer your life!! Coming soon with a Webinar Series... Join us! (web + seminar). Get familiar with our brand-new single #FRENEMY! (friend + enemy). Duck emoticon inserted here* (emotion + icon). Follow us for daily crossfit motivation! (cross training + fit). Happy Sunday InstaFam! (Instagram + family)"*. Therefore, online communication has a large number of lexical and stylistic means of language economy. Some of them help simply reduce the volume of the message, while others assist in expressing the emotional component and we can notice the use only a few words without the explanation of the emotional state when writing an email. Speaking about *syntactic features of texting*, we may conclude that the rules of syntax partially lose their significance in Internet communication. Incorrect use of prepositions, omission of apostrophes, absence of articles, substitution of pronouns, use of inappropriate word forms, changes in the formation of comparative forms of adjectives are very common in comments and posts by Internet users. Ellipsis is a manifestation of sentence truncation, its structural or logical incompleteness. Ellipsis has a high level of explicitness since it involves the recipient's speculation of the missing information or logical completion of the message [4]. When we do not want to clarify something from the context, we use this type of expressive syntax: *"Trust me when I say I have heard worth"*. In chat communication, messages with conjunction omissions are often used. This technique saves the linguistic effort because the absence of conjunctions often does not affect the gist of the message or hinder the achievement of the communicative goal: *"Meanwhile, English is 3rd language for most Indians, 2nd for few. How many English speaking people have a 2nd-3rd language?"*. Language parcelling is a way of expressing intonation in online text [4]. This phenomenon involves highlighting a part of a sentence and transforming it into an independent part that does not affect the semantic structure of the message. The period is a graphical indicator of parcelling in the text: *"That's nothing. One time, Pippa stabbed Will. He got better. Obviously"*. For people learning English, articles pose a particular difficulty, while a characteristic feature of the English-language internet environment is the relaxation of language norms during communication, allowing communication participants to ignore the use of articles: *"What deep conversation!"*. The internet communication has many examples of incomplete sentences. Modern English has a strict sentence structure,



where the syntactic position is quite rigidly fixed. The typical word order in a sentence is as follows: the subject comes first, followed by the verb, object, and adverb. Internet community users communicate as if they are not familiar with this model, especially evident in the structures of interrogative sentences: *"What it is? How you beautiful so! Do you fail always at maths? How you are getting so many likes?"* Moreover, there may be also frequent cases of subject or predicate omission in sentences, for example: *"Racing William in a boat today. I'm supposed to pretend he let me win but come on, I mean, he's wearing a paper hat"*. Thus, concerning syntactic features, we identified violations of word order in sentences and in subject-verb agreement. In addition, there are great deal of incomplete sentences, omission of auxiliary verbs, and absence of the predicate in the sentence. Contemporary studies on internet language focus on trends such as the democratization of communication, the widespread adoption of colloquial style and jargon across different domains, the utilization of non-verbal graphic elements like emojis, frequent and occasionally unwarranted employment of abbreviations, and a decline in literacy, often stemming from deliberate orthographic alterations in online communication. Discussing orthographic characteristics of language use in Internet Communication, we may state that orthography as a branch of linguistics represents a system of rules, which establish correct spelling. The orthographic system ensures uniformity in the transmission of language in writing. According to A.N. Morokhovsky, besides traditional punctuation marks, which often inadequately convey much of the variety and diversity of live speech, modern English often uses additional means to compensate for this gap. This may include font changes, writing words in capital letters, changing the spelling of individual words, ellipses, and so on. This helps highlight a particular part of the text or expression and attract attention to it [5]. Analysis of the graphics and orthography used in private email correspondence has allowed the identification of specific, distinctive graphic and orthographic means developed in this form of computer communication, visually distinguishing this style out of all others. Among these tools, Yezhova T.V. [5] identifies the following: repeated use of exclamation or question marks (*Can I have a cheeseburger????*); repeated duplication of the same letter (*She is soooo cuuute!!!, Loo-o-o-v-v-e-e-e them aaaal!!!!*); writing proper nouns or words at the beginning of a sentence in lowercase; absence of punctuation marks in the sentence. Agrammatism (originated from Greek *agrammatos* - illegible) is also associated with the orthographic peculiarities of electronic speech and means a violation of a person's speech, manifested in the incorrect use of grammatical elements and forms. Overall, our study of written communication in English on the Internet shows that users' orthography, despite the availability of tools to check it, has not improved. Our research indicates a reassuring conclusion that this peculiarity is often a way of attracting attention, a kind of game, rather than an inability to write correctly. However, it is unlikely that this phenomenon might be positive or even neutral, as it promotes disregard for punctuation marks and spelling rules. The most characteristic way of realizing agrammatism in internet speech and electronic correspondence is erratic writing - deliberate distortion of existing orthography to give the user's expressions a humorous tone or express negative emotions: disapproval, irritation, contempt. Erratives, intentional violations of orthographic

norms, various compressives, and abbreviations, *for example: smmr (summer), hols (holidays), tht (that), up 2 N (up to now), etc.* have become a distinctive feature of network sociolect. However, alongside them, one can admit the use of simply misspelled words related to a large number of English words like: *it's - its, there - their, then - than, seperate instead of separate, fourty instead of forty, necesary instead of necessary, etc.* In the English internet speech, orthographic violations usually aim to simplify writing to save the user's typing time. Such orthographic distortions in English do not contain any particular emotional coloration [6]. *Examples* of such distortions include variations in the spelling of English words: love = luv, to you = 2U, forever = 4ever, Congratulations! = Congrats!" Highlighting emotionally emphasized words or phrases in a different color is also common. Emphasizing emotionally significant words or phrases can be done using symbols * (asterisk), # (hash), \$ (dollar), + (plus), ! (exclamation mark), ? (question mark), and others. The language of the Internet introduces its own peculiar rules into the practice of spelling words themselves. In the network, the American variant of spelling is encountered more often than the British, partly due to historical reasons (in general, the American origin of the Internet), and partly for the sake of economy, since most American ways of writing the same words are shorter than British ones: "color - colour, fetus - foetus, etc." New rules for spelling plurals have emerged in particular, replacing -s with -z, as in the words: *tunez, gamez, serialz, etc.* In chats, you can find distorted spelling and, as a result, distorted pronunciation of words, such as: *yep, yup, yay, nope, noooo, for yes and no, or forms like kay and sokay for "It's OK".*

In today's information society, the importance of chat communication, which takes place virtually, continues to grow and gain popularity. In English-language chat communication, characterized by its linguistic, structural, and socio-group specificity, as in other forms of interaction, the emotional function is a crucial component, alongside the cognitive and informational aspects. This emotional component is evident in the reproduction of emotions, feelings, moods, and experiences in written messages without the use of non-verbal communication cues. Since we cannot replicate and convey our emotions, intonation, and feelings visually through a screen (excluding photographs), the emotional dimension becomes vital. *Emoticons*, or emotive markers, play a significant role in conveying the emotional content of virtual messages. These linguistic or symbol-graphic tools construct an emotional field, combining verbal and non-verbal means to express human emotions. Language does not directly express emotions; rather, it highlights their personal conceptualization. Human emotions and the emotional field generate an indirect reality, a linguistic worldview based on principles of lexicology, phonetics, grammar, and cultural aspects [6]. These elements together form a cohesive whole, irrespective of the differentiation level of its components. In the English-language chat communication, we use various tools for encoding and displaying emotions as emotive markers: exclamations and interjections; inflections and acronyms; emotive lexical-stylistic devices (emotionally amplifying or evaluative nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, etc.); emotive metaphors and idioms; punctuation marks serving an emotive function (e.g., exclamation mark "!", question mark "?", ellipsis "..."); emotive graphic elements (emoticons, stickers), emotive photos and videos. The absence of visual contact in chat communication deepens the possibilities of emotional



response, particularly its intuitive forms, which may disrupt communicative processes focused on normativity and formality in visual communication. Therefore, the choice of written communication forms, without visual contact with the interlocutor, aims to differentiate genuine emotions from transmitted sensory signs. This strategy of emotional behavior encourages the search for modes of encoding emotions that correspond to the purpose and tasks of communication.

During this study, it was determined that electronic language serves as a unique form of natural language, manifested in specific conditions and reflecting the interaction process between oral and written forms of modern English. Internet communication is a method of exchanging information via internet channels using standard exchange protocols and data representation. Texting refers to the real-time exchange of messages among one or more communicants via internet connection, facilitating communicative interaction. Social media platforms like Twitter and Instagram provide the foundation for such communication and are the focus of our research. Oral expression through writing is evident across all levels of structural organization in this genre: phonetic, lexical, syntactic, morphological, and graphical. To compensate for the lack of verbal expression of emotions, emoticons and various animation effects provided by interface developers are used. Twitter has become so popular that it has even coined a gerund noun in English, "twitting," referring to internet communication popularized by the platform. Syntax-wise, conversations on Twitter mostly feature simple, elliptical (often-exclamatory) sentences, providing dynamism and a sense of real conversation. Additionally, internet communication features a large number of incomplete sentences, auxiliary verb omission, and absence of predicates, with a tendency towards agrammatism, deviating from syntactic and punctuation norms of literary language. Due to the absence of direct contact and inability to use nonverbal means, an excessive use of unnecessary punctuation marks is observed. Regarding lexical characteristics, users of social networks tend to employ emotive interjections, repetitions, onomatopoeia, emoticons, lexical item omissions, emotionally marked words, slang, and neologisms. Orthographic features of texting include the use of rhetorical questions to express personal attitudes, hesitation pauses (*Um, er, erm*), frequent orthographic simplifications for typing speed (*Love = luv, to you = 2U, forever = 4ever*), and repeated duplication of the same letter for emphasis and expressiveness. The emotionally expressive style of social networks is due to a wide range of emoticons, allowing for the expression of emotions, actions, types of activities, and message embellishments. The development of modern technologies has led to the evolution of internet communication, which has become a common form of human interaction on par with face-to-face communication. In conclusion, the emergence of digital messaging on social networks influences the evolution of language, manifesting in lexical, syntactic, and spelling variations. The investigation of these changes and their impact on language constitutes a promising area for future research.

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