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VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT IN VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT

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The paper studies the development of vocabulary on the internet in the so-called virtual environment. The concept of new linguistics features and Internet slang as a new language with innovative characteristics are being discussed. With the progress in computer technologies and the creation of virtual communities, Internet slang has been gradually evolving from a medium of computer communication into an everyday language and has caught the attention of linguists as a fast-developing aspect of different linguistic cultures.

The results of linguistic studies of the concepts of cyberspace, virtual reality, virtual community, virtual time, and virtual linguistic personality relevant for further application in internet linguistic research are presented. Unlike talking face to face, when we rely on non-verbal cues to grasp the meaning, online communication uses written language as the main means of communication. The results of the study show that the simplification of the language processes taking place on the Internet makes them comprehensible for a wide range of language users.

The internet language is considered the features developed by virtual communities or so-called Internet villages, which unite people or virtual language personalities with common interests, communicating via social networks, chats, messengers, etc., without leaving staying at their actual homes.

The paper analyses network metaphors or netaphors, which operate with base-level language concepts, Internet slang as a standard language variant and the result of linguistic variability on the Internet.

Particular attention is paid to the issues of linguistic application in a virtual environment, which is important for understanding the main semantic changes in Internet language development. In the article, we attempt to summarize the impact of globalization determine the linguistic significance and institutional status of languages and analyze the consequences of the global transition to digital languages as well as describe some aspects of interlingual and intercultural interaction in computer-mediated communication.

РОЗВИТОК ЛЕКСИКИ У ВІРТУАЛЬНОМУ СЕРЕДОВИЩІ

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Ключові слова: лінгвістика, стандартна мова, лінгвокультури, віртуальна спільнота, віртуальне мовне середовище, лексика, інтернет-сленг, мему, соціальні мережі.

У статті досліджується розвиток лексичних одиниць в інтернеті, або так званому віртуальному середовищі, розглядається концепція нових лінгвістичних структур та інтернет-сленгу як інноваційного мовного явища. З розвитком комп'ютерних технологій і створенням віртуальних спільнот інтернет-сленг поступово еволюціонував із засобу комп'ютерного спілкування і почав вживатися в повсякденному мовленні та привернув увагу лінгвістів як новий аспект різних лінгвокультур.

Результати лінгвістичних досліджень концептів «кіберпростір», «віртуальна реальність», «віртуальна спільнота», «віртуальний час», «віртуальна мовна особистість» розглядаються в роботі як актуальні для подальшого вивчення в інтернет-лінгвістичних дослідженнях. На відміну від безпосереднього спілкування й опори на невербальні сигнали для зрозуміння змісту, онлайн-комунікація використовує писемне мовлення як основний засіб спілкування. Результати дослідження показують, що спрощення мовних процесів в інтернеті робить їх зрозумілими для широкого кола мовних користувачів. Інтернет-мова розвивається віртуальними спільнотами, які об'єднують людей або віртуальних мовних особистостей зі спільними інтересами через спілкування в соціальних мережах, чатах, месенджерах тощо.

У статті також аналізуються поява та поширення мережових метафор, які оперують мовними поняттями базового рівня, інтернет-сленгом як варіантом стандартного мовлення та результатом мовної варіативності в інтернеті.

Особливу увагу приділено питанням лінгвістичного розвитку у віртуальному середовищі, важливого для розуміння основних семантичних змін у мові інтернету. У статті ми спробували узагальнити вплив глобалізаційних змін, що впливають на лінгвістичне значення й інституційний статус мов, і проаналізувати наслідки глобального переходу до цифровізації мовних процесів, а також описати деякі аспекти міжмовної та міжкультурної взаємодії в комп'ютерно-опосередкованій комунікації.

Розвиток інтернет-лексики є новим, цікавим аспектом лінгвістичних досліджень. Хоча мовний стандарт є більш надійним і безпечним для вживання, ніж нові форми дискурсу, проте прихильникам мовної чистоти не варто побоюватися, що інтернет-лексика цілком його змінить, оскільки розвиток нових лексичних одиниць допоможе розширити та збагатити наше мовлення.

Problem statement. Digital transformation is one of the socially and culturally significant projects of our time since it affects all spheres of professional and daily activities. Smartphones and tablets, and the improvement of software platforms, have presented new opportunities for the understanding and employment of virtual reality. An analysis of modern linguistic studies devoted to language discourse development in a virtual environment indicates the process of transformation of printed words into an electronic format. The interconnection of spaces – physical and virtual, permits individuals to immerse into an electronic environment, without leaving familiar links to their physical space.

Purpose of the article. In this article, we apply the conceptual analysis to identify the basic concepts of vocabulary development on the Internet. In the course of the analysis, the most widespread concepts were identified, which are well-known and are included in the personal conceptual thesaurus.

The *subject* of the study is a specific aspect of internet vocabulary developed in the digital environment; the *object* is the linguistic characteristics of new versus traditional standard language as new forms of discourse.

Presentation of the main material. The use of multiple metaphors to conceptualize a single concept is not unique to the Internet. According to J. Lakoff and M. Johnson, to understand all aspects of everyday life, we are forced to use metaphors that sometimes contradict each other. The metaphors highlight some aspects of the Network, hiding the others. Thus, each metaphor focuses on certain aspects of the Internet to emphasize their importance and significance [6].

G. McCulloch considers in detail how Internet conversations help users to convey their tone of voice. In a recent interview with The Atlantic, she said that we no longer agree that writing should be lifeless, that it can only convey our tone roughly and inaccurately, or that nuanced writing is the exclusive prerogative of professionals. We are creating new rules, not rules that are imposed from above, but rules that emerge from the collective practice of a couple of billions of social monkeys – rules that enliven our social interactions [7; 8].

The Internet concepts of virtual reality and cyberspace are important for understanding the main semantic changes in Internet language development. The concepts of cyberspace and virtual space are synonyms in their semantic content. They differ only in terms of etymology and the concept of cyberspace, before becoming one of the fundamental concepts of Internet linguistics, was developed by science fiction.

The main characteristics of the concept of cyberspace are considered to be multidimensionality, interactivity, an infinity of space, anthropocentricity; hypertextuality, and psychological comfort. Defining

the concept of cyberspace as a space where the world is controlled by a machine, a virtual world, virtual reality created and programmed for certain actions, noosphere, which includes a huge amount of digital information and people represented as virtual personalities through their activities – chats remarks, publications, realistic and imaginary ones.

Several elements develop internet conversations or so-called internet slang that has been used since the advent of the internet. In the early 80's in Calgary, Wayne Pearson first used the abbreviation LOL on the Internet chatting with a friend. The Oxford English Dictionary traces the use of special language abbreviations on the Internet since the 1990's [4]. However, the language of internet conversations is not only about abbreviations. Other popular trends include using excessive punctuation or its absence, emoji, and skipping words in sentences due to character restrictions.

D. Crystal explains this as a natural response to communication online rather than verbally [1]. Talking to someone face to face, we may rely on non-verbal cues such as facial expressions or hand gestures to give meaning to what we are saying, whereas in writing it cannot be conveyed in the same way. Thus, online communities have used written and spoken languages to create their means of communication. For example, excessive punctuation is a way to emphasize the statement or question or to convey feelings of anger, doubt, or excitement.

The users build virtual communities based on their interests, values, and inclinations. The term was introduced by G. Reingold as the features of communication-based on data transfer between members of social groups based on electronic mailing lists, news lists, and multi-user communities [10]. C. Ridings and D. Gefen define the concept of a community as networks of interpersonal relationships for social interaction, support, information exchange, a sense of belonging and social identity [11].

The concept of a virtual community is characterised by anonymity and voluntariness. A virtual community is a group of virtual accounts that exchange messages. Difficulties in expressing emotionality are compensated by a specially designed system of signs for conveying emotions. Virtual community has the possibility of exchanging video/audio files, and photos. Its members can take roles depending on an individual self-presentation, which is often different from real and leads to the plurality of images and roles, as well as the resulting variability of identity in the communicative space, participant's social status and different strategies for gender representations. We imagine different people and try to communicate with them. A virtual community is a community of avatars of real people, created for some purpose, which unites the community and creates a communication hierarchy.

A virtual community is a place of global freedom where everyone can realize hidden desires and opportunities, and behave as they want. A virtual community is an Internet village where people are looking for like-minded people, using virtual communities to communicate and support each other in their interests or endeavours, without the necessity to leave home. They function according to the rules of a real society, discuss topics, exchange data, arrange meetings etc. Social networks, chats, and online games are typical examples of virtual communities.

The concept of virtual time is connected with the concepts of virtual reality and virtual community. Within the framework of this concept, one real hour can be either less or more than a virtual hour, the same can be mentioned about a day. The participants in the game, for example, often agree on how long a particular period lasts, so it can be the same in all countries and on all continents. Virtual time can be interpreted concerning online games, where everything happens quickly. Within an hour, the protagonist can experience as many events as a real person cannot in a lifetime. People dissatisfied with their real lives spend too much time on the Internet. From that moment on, real-time stops for them, and virtual time begins to operate, which seems unlimited, because nothing undesirable happens in the life of an Internet user. The main features of virtual time are its modelling, programmability, artificiality, opposition to real-time, subjectivity about reality, illusory nature, conditionality, and dependency on the place in the Network. With the advent of virtual time, the concept of time ceases to be universal, and two temporary parallel spaces appeared, since a person sitting at a computer is simultaneously present in two time planes – real and virtual.

The perception of virtual time varies for virtual communities in different linguistic cultures and the attitude towards virtual time is more pragmatic, a person is less dependent on time and tries to control it, although wastes time in real life.

In the context of the concepts of cyberspace, virtual reality, virtual time, and virtual community, the term user should be replaced by the term *virtual language personality*, which is essentially a conceptual metaphor. A virtual language personality is a virtual image that a user creates for communication on the Internet. The user creates an avatar depicting a virtual image or a real photo, and a nickname or a keyword for identification, a fictional character who lives exclusively on social networks created to increase self-esteem, a human mask on the Internet. A person sometimes hides under a fictitious nickname, which is especially popular in social networks and games. Often this imaginary person has nothing to do with a real one and attributes to themselves non-existent qualities, interests, and physical appearance. People

do all this to feel better, richer, and more interesting for others.

A virtual language personality is a kind of clone created in virtual reality and embodying the most cherished dreams of its creator to shield themselves from public condemnation or fear of being rejected. There is a significant difference between the real image of a person and the second self that lives on the Web. People on the Internet tend mostly to create an image, promote themselves, demonstrate their best qualities, communicate, get rid of complexes, etc. A virtual language personality feels protected, comfortable, and free, as a result, they behave bravely and are liberated.

The analysis showed that the internet language is rich in developing and using network metaphors or *netaphors*, which serve two main purposes. Firstly, the metaphor helps to make the Internet accessible to people who do not have special knowledge in the field of computer technology, presenting new items through the old familiar ones. Secondly, it helps to express an attitude towards the concept. Metaphors in the language of the Internet operate with base-level concepts occupying an intermediate position between conceptual image schemes and specific single concepts.

The level of linguistic difficulty for a virtual language personality can be intermediate in the hierarchy from general to specific. F. Julca, G. Méndez and others have established the existence of such a level of language categorization which most effectively interacts, stores and transmits information. On this level, the general features of category members are perceived as similar and can be displayed at all levels [5].

The emergence of another aspect of language – Internet slang is the result of linguistic variability. Language variation is a key concept in sociolinguistics and a characteristic of language, which means that there is more than one way to express the same thing. Speakers may use clear pronunciation, stress, word choice (vocabulary), or morphology and syntax. In this study, *Internet slang* is treated as a standard language variant and is usually associated with word choice, morphology, and syntax. Internet slang as a variant of the standard language is informal, irregular and dynamic [2].

Internet slang often borrows foreign words, dialects, digital elements, and signs; it often combines paraphrasing, homonyms, duplication and other word-formation techniques, as well as unconventional syntax. Compared to the standard language, Internet slang features innovative characteristics, and its application is quite creative.

Some channels (such as Twitter) forced users to be more creative in their use of language to fit whatever they wanted to say into the original 140 characters.

Tumblr has popularized the use of lowercase capital letters and the avoidance of punctuation to give the text a fluidity that is not possible with proper spelling.

Even though the Internet variations of standard language have become popular, such tricks to make the written word more emotional or verbal are not new. As McCulloch explains in his book, writers like James Joyce or E. Cummings, have already broken the rules of grammar, with the same goals in mind [7; 8].

While some may argue that internet conversations and memes are destroying language, linguists studying the internet language disagree. D. Crystal argues that playing with online communication and adopting the style best suited to their message makes people much more aware of the social and stylistic features and meanings of different genres and types of languages [1]. McCulloch adds that all of our text messages and tweets help us communicate better in writing [7]. Internet slang, like memes, has gone far beyond the chat rooms, social networks, or other online communities where they were born. Admittedly, people probably won't use the internet acronym talking to someone face-to-face, but using other expressions from the internet or abbreviating certain words does not sound unusual or weird.

Conclusions. Internet vocabulary development is a new and interesting aspect of linguistic studying. Traditional standard language is more reliable and safe than the new forms of discourse [3]. However, the supporters of linguistic purity do not need to be afraid that an Internet vocabulary will come into the language and completely change it since this will not take anything away from it and only help to expand and develop it.

Prospects for further studies of internet vocabulary development are important in modern linguistic research. The gradual language changes in computer communication into an everyday language are a perspective field for linguistic studies as a fast-developing aspect of linguistic cultures.

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