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INTERNET SLANG

Abstract. *The article focuses on some aspects of forming Internet slang. Peculiarities and the reasons of its appearance are analyzed.*

Keywords: *Internet slang; Internet communication; language peculiarities; social networking; abbreviation.*

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ІНТЕРНЕТ СЛЕНГ

Анотація. *У статті розглянуто проблеми формування Інтернет сленгу. Проаналізовано його характерні особливості, а також причини його появи.*

Ключові слова: *Інтернет сленг; Інтернет комунікація; мовленнєві особливості; соціальна мережа; аббревіація.*

The statement of the problem. The widespread use of colloquial elements not only in informal speech becomes the main feature of the language process of the late XXth – early XXIst century. Almost unrestricted use of slang is observed in virtual communication in the Internet. The attempt to analyze the issue of forming Internet slang, some aspects and peculiarities of it are made in the article.

Recent research and publications analysis. The issue of slang is the subject of constant scientific research. The concept of slang is more and more investigated in modern philology. The issues of slang were studied by such scientists as M. Makovskii, I. Halperin, H. Menken, V. Viliuman, V. Balabin, V. Khomiakov, Ch. Leland and others [14]. In the English-speaking countries slang has been studied mainly by lexicographers. Many linguists such as D. Crystal, B. Dumas, C. Eble, J. Lighter, P. Kegan, E. Mattiello, E. Partridge and others have also studied slang.

Uninvestigated parts of general matters defining. Nowadays keeping up with current internet trends can be difficult, especially for adults who do not get online much. That is why it is necessary to make some helpful resources for people to further understand internet slang, acronyms, net trends and, in general, internet etiquette. With this in view the term "Internet slang" is defined; different types of slang are analyzed; views of researchers on this issue are presented in the article.

The research objective: The goal of the article is to consider new types of Internet slang and factors affecting its appearance in order to facilitate communication for users.

The statement of the basic material: Internet slang (Internet shorthand, Cyber-slang, netspeak, or chatspeak) refers to a variety of slang languages used by different people on the Internet. It is difficult to provide a standardized definition of Internet slang due to the constant changes made to its nature [12]. However, it can be understood to be a type of slang that Internet users have popularized, and in many cases, have coined. Such terms often originate with the purpose of saving keystrokes or to compensate for small character limits. Many people use the same abbreviations in texting and instant messaging, and social networking websites. Acronyms, keyboard symbols and abbreviations are common types of Internet slang. New dialects of slang, such as leet or Lolspeak, develop as in group internet memes rather than time savers.

Aside from the more frequent abbreviations, acronyms, and emoticons, Internet slang also uses archaic words or the lesser-known meanings of mainstream terms. Regular words can also be altered into something with a similar pronunciation but altogether different meaning, or attributed new meanings altogether. Phonetic transcriptions of foreign words,

such as the transformation of "impossible" into "impossibru" in Japanese and then back to English, also occur. In places where logographic languages are used, such as China, a visual Internet slang exists, giving characters dual meanings, one direct and one implied [10].

The primary motivation for using slang unique to the Internet is to ease communication. However, while Internet slang shortcuts save time for the writer, they take two times as long for the reader to understand, according to a study by the University of Tasmania. On the other hand, similar to the use of slang in traditional face-to-face speech or written language, slang on the Internet is often a way of indicating group membership [3].

Professor David Crystal distinguishes among five Internet situations: The Web, email, asynchronous chat (for example, mailing lists), synchronous chat (for example, Internet Relay Chat), and virtual worlds [5]. The electronic character of the channel has a fundamental influence on the language of the medium. The options of communication for the user are constrained by the nature of the hardware needed in order to gain Internet access. Thus, productive linguistic capacity (the type of information that can be sent) is determined by the preassigned characters on a keyboard, and receptive linguistic capacity (the type of information that can be seen) is determined by the size and configuration of the screen. Additionally, both sender and receiver are constrained linguistically by the properties of the internet software, computer hardware, and networking hardware linking them. Electronic discourse refers to writing that is "very often reads as if it were being spoken – that is, as if the sender were writing talking" [6].

Internet slang does not constitute a homogeneous language variety. Rather, it differs according to the user and type of Internet situation [9]. However, within the language of Internet slang, there is still an element of prescriptivism, as seen in style guides, for example Wired Style, which are specifically aimed at usage on the Internet. Even so, few users consciously heed these prescriptive recommendations on Computer-Mediated Communication (henceforth CMC), but rather adapt their styles based on what they encounter online [2]. Although it is difficult to produce a clear definition of Internet slang, the following types of slang may be observed. This list is limitless.

There have been ongoing debates about how the use of slang on the Internet influences language usage outside of technology. Even though the direct causal relationship between the Internet and language has yet to be proven by any scientific research, Internet slang has invited split views on its influence on the standard of language use in non-computer-mediated communications.

Prescriptivists tend to have the widespread belief that the Internet has a negative influence on the future of language, and that it would lead to a degradation of standard [5]. Some would even attribute any declination of standard formal English to the increase in usage of electronic communication. It has also been suggested that the linguistic differences between Standard English and CMC can have implications for literacy education. This is illustrated by the widely reported example of a school essay submitted by a Scottish teenager, which contained many abbreviations and acronyms likened to CMC language. There was great condemnation of this style by the mass media as well as educationists, who expressed that this showed diminishing literacy or linguistic abilities.

On the other hand, descriptivists have counter-argued that the Internet allows better expressions of a language. Rather than established linguistic conventions, linguistic choices sometimes reflect personal taste. It has also been suggested that as opposed to intentionally flouting language conventions, Internet slang is a result of a lack of motivation to monitor speech online. C. Hale and J. Scanlon describe language in Emails as being derived from "writing the way people talk", and that there is no need to insist on 'Standard' English [10]. English users, in particular, have an extensive tradition of etiquette guides, instead of traditional prescriptive treatises, that offer pointers on linguistic appropriateness. Using and

spreading Internet slang also adds onto the cultural currency of a language. It is important to the speakers of the language due to the foundation it provides for identifying within a group, and also for defining a person's individual linguistic and communicative competence. The result is a specialized subculture based on its use of slang.

In scholarly research, attention has, for example, been drawn to the effect of the use of Internet slang in ethnography, and more importantly to how conversational relationships online change structurally because slang is used.

In German, there is already considerable controversy regarding the use of anglicisms outside of CMC. This situation is even more problematic within CMC, since the jargon of the medium is dominated by English terms [9]. An extreme example of an anti-anglicisms perspective can be observed from the chatroom rules of a Christian site, which bans all anglicisms ("Das Verwenden von Anglizismen ist strengstens untersagt!"), and also translates even fundamental terms into German equivalents [9].

Internet slang has crossed from being mediated by the computer into other non-physical domains. Here, these domains are taken to refer to any domain of interaction where interlocutors need not be geographically proximate to one another, and where the Internet is not primarily used. Internet slang is now prevalent in telephony, mainly through short messages (SMS) communication. Abbreviations and interjections, especially, have been popularized in this medium, perhaps due to the limited character space for writing messages on mobile phones. Another possible reason for this spread is the convenience of transferring the existing mappings between expression and meaning into a similar space of interaction.

At the same time, Internet slang has also taken a place as part of everyday offline language, among those with digital access. The nature and content of online conversation is brought forward to direct offline communication through the telephone and direct talking, as well as through written language, such as in writing notes or letters. In the case of interjections, such as numerically based and abbreviated Internet slang, are not pronounced as they are written physically or replaced by any actual action. Rather, they become lexicalized and spoken like non-slang words in a "stage direction" like fashion, where the actual action is not carried out but substituted with a verbal signal. The notions of flaming and trolling have also extended outside of the computer, and are used in the same circumstances of deliberate or unintentional implicatures [8].

The expansion of Internet slang has been furthered through codification and the promotion of digital literacy. The subsequently existing and growing popularity of such references among those online as well as offline has thus advanced Internet slang literacy and globalized it. Awareness and proficiency in manipulating Internet slang in both online and offline communication indicates digital literacy and teaching materials have even been developed to further this knowledge. A South Korean publisher, for example, has published a textbook that details the meaning and context of use for common Internet slang instances and is targeted at young children who will soon be using the Internet. Similarly, Internet slang has been recommended as language teaching material in second language classrooms in order to raise communicative competence by imparting some of the cultural value attached to a language that is available only in slang.

Meanwhile, well-known dictionaries such as the Oxford English Dictionary and Merriam-Webster have been updated with a significant and growing body of slang jargon. Besides the all too common examples, lesser known slang and slang with a non-English etymology have also found place in standardized linguistic references. Along with these instances, literature in user-contributed dictionaries such as Urban Dictionary has also been added on to. Codification seems to be qualified through frequency of use, and novel creations are often not accepted by other users of slang.

Although Internet slang began as a means of "opposition" to mainstream language, its popularity with today's globalized digitally literate population has shifted it into a part of everyday language, where it also leaves a profound impact [5].

Frequently used slang also have become conventionalized into memetic "unit[s] of cultural information" [8]. These memes in turn are further spread through their use on the Internet, prominently through websites. The Internet as an "information superhighway" is also catalysed through slang. The evolution of slang has also created a 'slang union' as part of a unique, specialised subculture. Such impacts are, however, limited and requires further discussion especially from the non-English world. This is because Internet slang is prevalent in languages more actively used on the Internet, like English, which is the Internet's lingua franca.

The Internet has helped people from all over the world to become connected to one another, enabling "global" relationships to be formed. As such, it is important for the various types of slang used online to be recognizable for everyone. It is also important to do so because of how other languages are quickly catching up with English on the Internet, following the increase in Internet usage in countries predominantly non-English speaking.

Different cultures tend to have different motivations behind their choice of slang, on top of the difference in language used. For example, in China, because of the tough Internet regulations imposed, users tend to use certain slang to talk about issues deemed as sensitive to the government. These include using symbols to separate the characters of a word into other to avoid detection and hence resulting in censorship. An outstanding example is the use of the term river crab to denote censorship. River crab (hexie) is pronounced the same as "harmony" – the official discourse used to justify political discipline and censorship. As such Chinese netizens reappropriates the official language in a sarcastic way.

Abbreviations are popular across different cultures, including countries like Japan, China, France, Portugal, etc., and are used according to the particular language the Internet users speak. Significantly, this same style of slang creation is also found in non-alphabetical languages [13] as, for example, a form of 'e gao' or alternative political discourse [8].

The difference in language often results in miscommunication, as seen in an Onomatopoeic example, "555", which sounds like "crying" in Chinese, and "laughing" in Thai. A similar example is between the English "haha" and the Spanish "jaja", where both are onomatopoeic expressions of laughter, but the difference in language also meant a different consonant for the same sound to be produced. In terms of culture, in Chinese, the numerically based onomatopoeia "770880" (simplified Chinese: 亲亲你抱抱你; traditional Chinese: 親親你抱抱你;), which means to 'kiss and hug you', is used. This is comparable to "XOXO", which many Internet users use. In French, "pkoi" is used in the place of pourquoi, which means why. This is an example of a combination of onomatopoeia and shortening of the original word for convenience when writing online. (6)

Summary: Internet slang provides a channel which facilitates and constrains our ability to communicate in ways that are fundamentally different from those found in other semiotic situations. Many of the expectations and practices which we associate with spoken and written language are no longer applicable. The Internet itself is ideal for new slang to emerge because of the richness of the medium and the availability of information. Slang is also thus motivated for the "creation and sustenance of online communities" [8]. These communities in turn play a role in solidarity or identification or an exclusive or common cause [8]. One of the most significant things that should happen in relation to the Internet slang is that both young people and adults should be taught to manage it.

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