

## THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF DIGITAL DISCOURSE RESEARCH

## ТЕОРЕТИЧНІ АСПЕКТИ ДОСЛІДЖЕНЬ ЦИФРОВОГО ДИСКУРСУ

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The study of the Internet discourse is of particular importance as it is one of the most popular and rapidly developing types of communication featuring a range of possibilities for any individual to be involved in speech interaction. Digital discourse analyzes is a subject of modern linguistic studying and systematization. The analysis of different approaches to digital discourse classification has been provided in the article.

The analyses of the modern linguistic works in digital discourse studying revealed the existence of numerous approaches to the question of its definition and systematization. A number of conducted earlier interdisciplinary studies of Internet communication established the main features of network discourse. However, different approaches to the discourse analyses existing in linguistics and great variability of Internet communication types create a discrepancy in the studies of digital texts.

The terminology defining Internet communication has been summarized in the paper, and different directions of linguistic analysis of digital texts mediated by the Internet channel have been studied. Rapid developing forms of Internet communication create difficulties in defining them as types of interaction, which are not a simple message transfer from the sender to the recipient but a creative mutual effort via a technical device for participating in the communication process realization.

The paper suggests using the term Human-Mediated Communication for different types of computer-mediated interaction and indicates the importance of the human factor in Internet linguistics. This type of communication possesses certain dichotomic properties described in the article. It is highlighted that a wide application of a range of levels of multimedia recourses supply the text in a communicative situation changing the level of text authorship and influencing the content, which requires further linguistic analysis.

**Key words:** digital discourse, Internet communication dichotomy, Internet discourse, Internet linguistics, linguistics of web 2.0, keyboard-to-screen communication.

Вивчення інтернет-дискурсу має вагоме значення, оскільки він швидко розвивається й досліджує один із найпопулярніших видів комунікації, залученої до ситуації мовленнєвої взаємодії. Дослідження цифрового дискурсу є предметом сучасного лінгвістичного вивчення та систематизації. У статті подається аналіз різних підходів до класифікації цифрового дискурсу.

Аналіз сучасних лінгвістичних праць із вивчення цифрового дискурсу виявив наявність численних підходів до питання його визначення та систематизації. Низка проведених раніше міждисциплінарних досліджень інтернет-комунікації окреслила основні риси мережевого дискурсу. Проте наявні в лінгвістиці різні підходи до аналізу дискурсу та велика варіативність типів інтернет-комунікації створюють розбіжність у дослідженні цифрових текстів.

У статті узагальнено термінологію для визначення інтернет-комунікації, досліджено різноманітні напрями лінгвістичного аналізу цифрових текстів, опублікованих в інтернет-джерелах. Швидкий розвиток форм інтернет-комунікації створює низку труднощів у визначенні їх дискурсу, типів взаємодії тощо. Цифрові повідомлення різних напрямів розглядаються не як просте передання інформації від відправника до реципієнта, а як творче взаємне зусилля, здійснене за допомогою технічного пристрою для реалізації комунікаційного процесу.

У роботі пропонується використовувати термін «опосередковане мультимедійне спілкування для різних видів комп'ютерно-опосередкованої взаємодії» та наголошується на важливості дослідження людського фактора в створенні інтернет-дискурсу. Цей тип спілкування має певні дихотомічні властивості, описані в статті. Висвітлено широке застосування різноманітного рівня мультимедійних ресурсів, які забезпечують інформативність тексту в комунікативній ситуації, змінюючи рівень авторства тексту та впливаючи на його зміст, а також потребуючи подальшого детального лінгвістичного аналізу.

**Ключові слова:** дихотомія інтернет-комунікації, інтернет-дискурс, інтернет-лінгвістика, лінгвістика веб 2.0, комунікація від клавіатури до екрана, цифровий дискурс.

**Statement of the problem.** The growing number of Internet users affects language development and leads to the emergence of several directions in linguistics. They study various aspects of the global web's impact on our speech and language. In the era of digitalization and information globalization, the concept of communication is acquiring new and

more diverse spheres of application; therefore, the achievements of modern linguistics are based on a comprehensive interdisciplinary study of human speech activities [12]. The transformation of modern socio-cultural reality and the increase of the Internet, the growth of the web audience, and the development of the Web resources influenced the nature of com-

munication. The Internet has become the main communication center of the digital era, which has led to changes both in language functioning and in speech interaction: new means for emotional demonstration, new models of texts, new genres of communication have appeared [5].

Internet communication includes transmitting text, audio, and video data in the digital space via emails, blog posts, forums, web pages, social networks, and various instant messaging platforms. It is a dynamic social phenomenon that requires a comprehensive study, as well as a generalization of the already available research results of the studies in different spheres. In particular, it is necessary to systematize the knowledge about modern discourse development and adjust the approaches in theoretical and applied linguistics.

An important area of modern linguistics is the study of the Internet discourse variability based on information about the digitalized language. This is of particular importance in the connection with the discourse of the social network functioning in the information and communication space of the Internet [7]. It is one of the most popular and widely available types of communication, since in such a discourse any individual can be involved in speech interaction, regardless of age, education, religion, political views, country of residence, etc. Digital discourse analyzes is a subject of modern linguistic research and needs further studying and systematization.

#### **Analysis of recent research and publications.**

The information and telecommunications network Internet is characterized by the simultaneous coexistence of many segments of the virtual space with different functions. Crystal defined the Internet as the largest area of language development we have seen in our lifetimes. Only two things are certain: it is not going to go away, and it is going to get larger and, "...the challenges facing linguists are considerable, as they move towards the goal of formulating a sophisticated theoretical and applied Internet linguistics. But that, of course, is the basis of its appeal" [2, p. 149].

M. Warschauer discusses broad trends of Internet language development. B. Danet and S. Herring studied the linguistic of Internet communication in different ranges of languages and analyzed the linguistic diversity of the largest share of Internet resources [3; 16]. The analysis of electronic discourse by discussing the pragmatics of language use in computer-mediated settings was conducted by M. Locher [12].

Scientists in numerous works have defined network discourse as a global intercultural phenomenon, a special type of oral-written discourse existing in the interactive sphere. P. Opincario, B. Özad, N. Doğruer,

R Eyyam, R., and I. Meneviş tried to analyze modern trends in general linguistics from proto-linguistics to natural language processing, the new era of internet-linguistics. [14; 15]

The scientists allocate in a digital content block of texts, designed for one-way reception or provision of information for individual perception. However, most of the webspace is occupied by segments involving feedback, which results in communication between two or more parties [13]. In the interdisciplinary studies of Internet communication, conducted earlier, the features of network discourse were established, in particular the mediation of communication, the spatial distance of communicants, the variability of speech activities (written or oral), as well as the possibilities of asynchronous communication.

**Purpose of the article.** The purpose of this article is to analyze different approaches to the digital internet discourse classifications and systematize the general modern Internet language studies as an integral element of a new fast-developing direction in the linguistic– the Internet-linguistics.

**Presenting main material.** Internet communication provides almost unlimited opportunities for the exchange of a wide variety of information (text, photo, video, etc.), creating individual profiles with the amount of personal information that the user considers necessary to report about himself, content commenting on, and much more [9].

It should be noted that until now there was not a single term describing the study of the language functioning in the new situation of Internet communication. The most used terms in this genesis are Computer-Mediated Communication, Digital-Mediated Communication, Digital or Computer-Mediated Discourse or Digital Discourse, as well as Internet-Mediated Communication and Internet-Communication [10]. In relation to the linguistics framework the terms Internet linguistics, linguistics of Web 2.0, Internet media linguistics have arisen. These conceptual spheres of linguistics study the platform-communicative interactive space or channel information transmission.

The term Internet linguistics was introduced by David Crystal in 2011. If the authors emphasize the study of linguistic processes in the web 2.0 services, they talk about the Internet media linguistics or discourse of web 2.0. The terms Internet linguistics, computer-mediated communication, Internet communication are also used to denote the direction of linguistic analysis of the linguistic and communication processes mediated by the Internet channel [2].

However, in 2011–2012, is the term keyboard-to-screen communication appears, which unifies all

types of computer-mediated communication, including Internet-communication, communication in multimodal situations (comprising social networks, microblogging or video hosting), communication with robots or robot-mediated communication, and some other types of communication [10].

It should be noted that this term keyboard-to-screen communication describes all various forms of communication via modern gadgets, including the non-verbal components (e.g., expressed graphically); implements three communication formats: one-to-many, one-to-one, and many-to-many; and indicates the information transmission mediated by a digital channel [10, p. 40].

Moreover, the term keyboard-to-screen communication also takes into account the change in modern communications, when instead of one indirect information transmission channel there is a transition to the transmission in multimodal situations, which leads not only to the transmission channels convergence but also to the convergence of forms and content of communication [10, p. 41]. This convergence is implemented due to various electronic devices (laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc.) that have two things in common: any information is inputted from the keyboard and all transmitted information is reproduced on the screens of these devices, or in other words, the data from the sender's keyboard goes through electronic channel and is displayed on the recipient's screen. These two conditions are the backbone of keyboard-to-screen communication.

However, this type of communication does not include Skype, voice messengers, or other voice transmissions. For this type, we use voice/keyboard-voice/screen communication. It is used for communication by recording your speech in Telegram, WhatsApp, or other messengers. And this term takes into account two factors. Firstly, communication is not a simple message transfer from the sender to the recipient but a creative joint work, whom E. Toffler's called prosumers. Secondly, voice/keyboard-voice/screen communication takes into account the fact that both the recipient and the sender need a technical device to participate in the communication process, without that this communication cannot be realized [10].

In the framework of linguistics as a general subject of research, the terms Internet linguistics, Internet communication study, sociology of the Internet, sociology of web 2.0, and others are used. In addition, the research methodology and a specific linguistic area of analysis should be taken into account. Such terms as Internet discourse or digital genre studies could be used respectively [7].

Considering keyboard to screen or keyboard (sound)/screen (sound) communication, the term Human-Mediated Communication, which defines all types of human computer-mediated interaction processes and emphasizes its anthropocentric component is applied. The importance of the human factor is vital in the linguistics of computer-based communicative situations. The new type of communication is characterized by certain properties or dichotomies that describe its structure. They could be asynchronous or synchronous; written or oral; monologic or polylog; text-utterance or fragment of speech; private or public; mobile or stationary; monomodal or multimodal; voice-keyboard etc. [10, p. 42]. Some of these dichotomies are contrasted, while others blur, developing in a constant stream of transitions from one state to another.

The synchronicity/asynchrony factor was one of the first defined for this type of communication [8]. Subsequently, this dichotomy was clarified by introducing the concept of delayed communication or quasi-synchronous communication, when the response to the message does not occur instantly [10, p. 43]. The delayed communication makes it less formal, closer to the oral style than instant communication. Landert and Jucker even introduced a special term to describe it – the language of communicative immediacy [11].

This term is also related to the concept of the language of distance, which, according to Jucker and Dursheid, together with the language of direct communication, describes the opposition between written-oral communication more accurately and explains the concept of the third type of speech (oral-written) used by other researchers (Baron or Kristal) [1; 2; 10, p. 44].

The monologic-polylogic (dialogical) dichotomy is associated with the text-narrative dichotomy. The text is monologic, embodied in graphic code and edited for asynchronous perception, has a certain and sometimes sufficiently long-range, often does not depend on the context, and the utterance is always a dialogue based on a certain communicative situation, is spontaneous with small lexical volume [10, p. 44]. An utterance is always a replica, a comment on something that has already been uttered, or something that requires a comment as the development of a dialogue, for example, an update of the status on Facebook, which is displayed in the user's feed.

In the public-private dichotomy, three concepts are used to categorize it: a communicative situation or level of public availability, content or level of privacy, and linguistic embodiment or level of implementation [10]. In this context, we also mean public/non-public language situation and private/

non-private content. For example, on Facebook, public messages viewers can be limited by the profile's privacy settings.

The dichotomy of monomodal-multimodal states considers the language, as well as images, sounds, melodies, which with the development of Internet multimodal platforms, increases the level of multi-channel communication leading to its convergence and diversification at the same time.

These dichotomous features affect computer-mediated communication characterised also by certain anonymity of its participants, who can use nicknames or pseudonyms instead of their real names. This often leads to more relaxed or aggressive verbal behaviour, disrespect for the interlocutor's opinion, trolling, in most cases avoiding responsibility for what was said. This leads to the development of a more aggressive discourse and frequent use of the so-called hate speech.

Moreover, the content richness and variety provided by the media make the users less dependent on one news source or any other information as they can use quickly and flexibly all the sources they need in a variety of services. While the *modus operandi* of these media lies in their timely content updating, a user does not need to participate in every conversation only to analyze the final result of the communication situation. Alternatively, a recipient can be constantly present in these communications, and the social boundaries between public and private are quite blurred, and so an accidental utterance in commentaries can be made public immediately and have an influence on real life.

Likewise, the instantaneous speed of information transfer leads to its propagation without any preliminary verification, which developed an idea of being overconnected or getting into various communicative contacts without enough time for processing all incoming information. All participants of such communications must be multitaskers and be ready to deal with any problem quickly, e.g., create and edit a text, video, audio, develop or update a game or applications, etc.

The relationships in social media are built according to the network principle, where leaders of public opinion or any other significant stakeholders, as a rule, dominate. However, there is no hierarchy in these relationships and we observe a shift from objectivity to subjectivity, when any

false information, gossip, or speculation spreads rapidly reducing the overall level of trust in social media information.

A high level of multimedia, such as video, graphics, and animation, can be used to supply the text information within the framework of one communicative situation and modern software allows every user to make a multimedia presentation or create a video without significant effort to give a direct instant response, whereas the content sender and recipient become its co-producers and participants. It changes the category of text authorship and influences its content, which requires further linguistic analysis. Moreover, such features of Internet communication as interactivity dichotomous to one-way communication, a higher degree of communication efficiency, and the absence of temporal-spatial boundaries change the text perception.

**Conclusions.** All these changes could not but affect the main forms of public and personal communication, which results in the language changes and make it an object of studying by a new direction in linguistics – the Internet-linguistics. The rapid development of technologies, including the Internet, has led to the emergence of several directions in linguistics studies for the impact of the Global Web on different aspects of speech and language.

For the new trends in communication description, the term communication from the keyboard (or sound) to screen (or sound) is proposed, which takes into account such modern trends as robot-mediated communication, communication 2.0, and others. At the same time, all these types of communication refer to human-mediated communication. The terms Internet linguistics, linguistics of web 2.0, Internet media linguistics should be used to emphasize the study of linguistic situations occurring in the framework of certain computer technologies. These new types of communication possess certain dichotomous features (asynchronous-synchronous; written-oral; monologue-polylog; private-public; mobile-stationary, monomodal-multimodal and voice-keyboard or screen) of speech utterances.

In further studies of the digital discourse classifications, a crucial role of Internet-linguistics should be defined. The practical analysis of Internet texts and their linguistic parameters by theoretical linguistics permits solving arising problems related to the study of the digital discourse of the Internet space.

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