

Assessment of the Impact of the Internet Language on the Russian Language and the Educational Potential of Digital Hygiene Practices

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ABSTRACT

The article presents a study of the consequences of digitalization of modern Russian education and public life in terms of its impact on the Russian language and its native speakers. In the course of it two opposite estimates were revealed. One point of view considers this influence destructive, making the language primitive, not independent and filled with borrowings. The other one considers the Internet and digitalization as a whole as a means of developing, enriching and updating the Russian language, making it live and modern. Purism and anti-purism are also evident in the differences between conflict and non-conflict-related practices of digital hygiene in the field of communication, including those in educational environments.

The Internet language and Internet discourse are either excluded from educational environments or are becoming one of the trends of their development in the conditions of digitalization.

The fundamental principle of the research is the principle of anthropocentrism (as opposed to media centrism), which is expressed in the idea of language as a practice that implements the connection between a person and the world, where the media act only as intermediaries, tools. The leading method is trendwatching, i.e. detecting trends in the transformation of the Russian language through content analysis of the blogosphere - a special communication space on the Internet. In addition, the paper used a structural approach and transformational analysis to the study of language, which allowed us to identify the features of the blogosphere, where the Internet discourse unfolds. Among the features of the blogosphere the following ones were noted: cognitivity, interactivity, variability, polyphony, creativity, simulation and hyperreality. The descriptive method was used to determine the mechanisms of changing the Russian language under the influence of the Internet, including: lexical, represented by neologisms and erratives; semantic, including abbreviations and acronyms; and cognitive, which include metaphors, metonymies and lituratives.

The selected mechanisms, on the one hand, expand the boundaries of cognitive existence, and on the other, lead to the loss of the possibility of full-fledged transmission and understanding of meanings. Finally, the pragmalinguistic method allowed us to justify the need to develop constructive practices of digital hygiene in the field of network and non-network communication, to determine their repertoire, characteristics and educational potential.

The author concludes that digital hygiene practices based on the idea of the conventionality of network and non-network communication norms are insufficiently studied and widespread in educational environments, and that one-dimensional ideas about the vandal influence of Internet discourse on the Russian language are rejected.

Keywords: *Internet discourse, blogosphere, language practice, digitalization, digital hygiene practices in educational environments*

1. INTRODUCTION

At the present stage of digitalization of public life, all its subjects are placed in various educational environments, the leading one of which is digital. The phenomena of human existence that play a major role in educational and

other activities are language and communication, which are also radically transformed in the conditions of digitalization.

According to the Internet World State statistical system, Russian is one of the top 10 languages used on the Internet, ranking 9th, and covering 76% of Russian-speaking Internet users [7]. Undoubtedly, the Internet is changing the Russian language and its native speakers.

The boundaries between network and non-network communication are blurred, which has a range of ambiguous effects, including both erosion and the development of the Russian language, and with it the educational environment.

Researchers of changes in the Russian language under the influence of the Internet are divided into two camps. Some believe (N. V. Vinogradova, N. B. Mechkovskaya, V. G. Kastomarov, etc.) that the Internet has a destructive effect on the Russian language and its native speakers. The language becomes primitive: monosyllabic sentences are used to express thoughts, which only record what the user thinks, sees, or the situation he or she is in. What D. Likhachev called “the fullness of language” is gradually disappearing; it is filled with jargon and slang, conscious distortions, i.e. systems of phonetic, lexical, and grammatical means that are not allowed in a literary language. For example, the “Olbankiy” (“Albanian”) language, the “yazyk padonkaff” language, etc. is “enriched” by borrowings, primarily americanisms; characterized by spelling chaos, the predominance of phonetic writing principle and a general decline in literacy: users deliberately make mistakes, thus covering, according to researchers, their illiteracy and ignorance of the rules of the Russian language.

In pedagogical research, simplification, reduction of the norms of the Russian language, and removal of a number of communicative restrictions in the Internet language are considered as a threat to the speech culture and language security of students.

The second group of scientists (O. Dedova, G. Huseynov, E. Gorina, M. Krongauz, V. Kurdyumov, etc.) believe that the Internet makes the Russian language modern and relevant, since the Internet language and the Internet as a whole are an organized copy of what is happening around [3, p. 150]. This approach asserts the primacy of communication, not language, and also assumes tolerance towards the variability of language norms on the Internet. Conscious misspellings, emoticons, lituratives, abbreviations, memes, and online jargon are seen as enriching the language on the Internet and adapting the language to life. So, according to experts, narrative, orphoart are becoming the new norm, a new system of literacy [10], and irony, metaphors, neologisms of the Internet language indicate the development of live and free language elements [11].

The innovative nature of the Internet language is considered by teachers as a resource for democratization, updating standards and norms of communication in educational environments. In the context of digitalization of education, the use of the Internet language and Internet discourse materials can also be productive for pedagogical design.

Thus, researchers take into account the positive possibilities of language development in the Internet space, but still leave open the question of how to resist destructive trends.

This paper is an attempt to evaluate the impact of Internet discourse on the characteristics of the Russian language and substantiate the educational potential of non-conflict

digital hygiene practices aimed at preventing vandalization and destruction of the language in online and offline communication spaces.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

This research is based on the need to study the impact of the Internet language on the Russian language and the cognitive abilities of its native speakers and creators, identify the destructive and constructive aspects of this influence and determine the repertoire and educational potential of digital hygiene practices in this area.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

A comprehensive study of the changes in the Russian language as a result of the impact of the blogosphere on it creates the need to find answers to the following questions:

- Is it possible to say unequivocally about the destructive, vandal influence of Internet discourse on the Russian language?
- What characteristics does Internet discourse possess as a language practice?
- What are the mechanisms of transformation of the Russian language under the influence of Internet discourse and the blogosphere?
- What is the repertoire and educational potential of digital hygiene practices in this area?

4. PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

Identification of the repertoire and educational potential of digital hygiene practices based on the analysis of mechanisms for modifying the Russian language on the Internet.

5. METHOD OF RESEARCH

The foundation of this research is the principle of anthropocentrism, the essence of which is that “language is created by the standards of man, and this scale is embodied in the organization of language; according to it language should be studied” [14, p. 15] The basis of a comprehensive study of the destructive and creative impact of the Internet on the Russian language comprises such ideas as the dialectical nature of language changes, the game character and its development, the emergence of language, its flexibility and multi-tasking, and the idea of language as a practice that realizes the connection between man and the world.

In accordance with the goal and task of the study, we selected the following methods. First, the method of trendwatching is used to identify the main trends in the Russian language changes in the Internet space based on

the analysis of the content of social networks, blogs and vlogs, forums and publics.

Second, the structural approach in language research (F. de Saussure and others) [15], is aimed at studying the components of the language and identifying connections, relations and dependencies between them, and transformational analysis (N. Chomsky and others), based on the detection of features of transformation and redistribution of language elements [16].

These methods allow us to find out that the diversity and variability of the surrounding world cannot be described through a closed language system. The modern world is polyphonic, there are various discourses in it, and the isolation of language on itself leads to a lack of understanding and communication between them, dooming them to relativism and solipsism [9].

L. Wittgenstein [2] believed that language defines the boundaries of being, is a form of life, which indicates the dependence of language on the specific circumstances in which it is used. The meaning of what is said is the relation between the meaning of names and objects, established by the utterance. Thus, as a result, a language system is formed and the language picture of the world is formed, and the subject of research is a language game - a communication system that combines language and action [4], generating a variety of language practices.

The Internet language can be considered as one of the variants of L. Wittgenstein's language practice, which forms Internet discourse, the main feature of which is the translation of oral speech into written.

Third, the descriptive method (L. V. Shcherba, A. A. Shakhmatov, etc.) [1, 12] reveals a correlation between changes in the sphere of social interaction and the specifics of Internet discourse. The blogosphere is characterized by a specific discourse formed by various mechanisms of changing the Russian language.

Fourth, the pragmalinguistic method (Ch. Peirce, J. Searle), [13] is aimed at formulating rules for the "safe" use of language in the blogosphere. We argue that the influence of the Internet language on the Russian language is very ambiguous; moreover, the dominance of negative or positive assessments of this influence gives rise to different approaches to regulating network communication.

6. RESEARCH RESULT

In the process of achieving the set goal, solving the designated task and searching for answers to the set research questions, we, based on the principle of anthropocentrism, came to the following results. The use of the structural method and transformational analysis allowed us to identify the characteristics inherent in the blogosphere as a space of language practice, which is a set of blog communities where Internet discourse unfolds [3, p. 150-151]:

- **cognitivity:** Internet discourse is cognition, identification of reality, which affects the emotions, experiences and behavior of Internet users;

- **interactivity:** Internet discourse can be compared to speech ping-pong, where the participants of the discourse constantly change roles: here you were the recipient, a moment later you are the author, another minute and you are the recipient again;

- **variability:** one and the same idea can be expressed and framed differently depending on the goals pursued, and the Internet also gives us the opportunity to choose a resource for utterance, posting;

- **polyphony,** which consists in the distribution of consciousness. Who am I today? What mask do I wear in this time? Who do I want to be perceived by others? These are the most important questions for network communication participants;

- **creativity:** Internet discourse is an open system based on the principles of co-creation, crowd sourcing in the process of creating new meanings.

- **simulativity:** structural and cognitive elements of online discourse are changeable, the values are assigned, deprived of stability and permanence;

- **hyperreality:** Internet discourse is a hypertext filled with hyperlinks that direct the reader to other Internet resources, as well as offline resources, books, and events. The descriptive method allowed us to determine the mechanisms of transformation of the Russian language, including:

1) lexical mechanisms characterized by changes in words and their grammatical basis:

- neologisms that represent words and terms used in the space of the blogosphere that arose through new formation or borrowing from foreign languages, mainly English. For example, "zaregitsya", "fludit", "frenddit", and others;

- errative words, subjected to deliberate distortion by a native speaker, possessing a literary norm. They include "Preved medved!", "afhtar zhzhot", etc. or writing a phrase as a single word, for example, "rzhunimagu" or "onzherebenok", which are intended to convey a special emotional attitude to the described event or situation.

In addition to individual words and phrases, whole language systems can be distinguished in the structure of erratives, such as the "Olbanskiy"/ "Albanian" language [8] and "yazyk padonkaff".

Usually, neologisms and erratives have a neutral emotional connotation. However, among them there are terms that have a negative meaning or call for destructive actions, for example, "Rasha", "maydanutiy", "upyachka" - a call to fight "dull users" of the network, "begging" - wiretapping, "hayp", "prank".

Semantic mechanisms characterized by changes in word formation:

- abbreviations that are used as independent words, for example, PS/PPS or, if you do not switch the case, ZY, or, the Russian version of the spelling PySy, LOL, ChaVo, etc.

- acronyms, words, or terms that arise from a combination of the initial letters of a phrase or expression, such as IMHO, PPKS, PYa, etc.

The use of lexical and semantic language mechanisms in the Internet language aims to save effort and simplify the understanding of the Internet text and Internet discourse.

But, having appeared in the space of the blogosphere, these tools go beyond it, into the space of real life, as a result of which the language is deprived of its wealth of means of expression, literacy and literary euphony.

Cognitive mechanisms characterized by a conscious change in the way a phrase is constructed and meaning:

- metaphors that facilitate understanding of one subject through another, similar in meaning, for example, the home page, “turtle” - too slow modem, “piano” - keyboard, etc.;

- metonymies, a language technique for “tightening” a phrase by omitting certain words. For example, request: “throw on soap” - send information to email; “install firewood” - install software, etc.

- lituratives - strikethrough or imaginary texts: a special technique for expressing the game potentials of the Internet chat language by means of descriptive “strikethrough” for the purpose of indirect explication of hidden pragmatic meanings of a speech work that cannot be directly expressed for some reason in an Internet polylogue [5]. Lituratives allow you to say what is prohibited, to express hidden meaning.

The use of cognitive mechanisms allows, on the one hand, to expand the boundaries of cognitive existence, create new meanings and “animate” the blogosphere, give it expression, making it a real space for communication. On the other hand, the “animation” of the blogosphere “absorbs” users, they lose touch with reality, being captured by the Network. As a result, a person loses the ability to make deep sense of information, because, according to neurophysiologists, the quality of information on the Internet activates a small part of the brain responsible for short-term memory. This leads to the inability to fully transmit and understand the Internet text, to conflicts and aggression in the space of Internet discourse. When F. Nietzsche bought a typewriter to type his works faster, his texts took on the character of telegrams and aphorisms. And the blogosphere is not a typewriter...

The use of the pragmalinguistic method allowed us to discover the main practices of digital hygiene.

So, from the point of view of purists who fight for the purity of high Russian and claim its degradation on the Internet, radical (often violent) practices of digital hygiene in this area are necessary. For instance, The Russian language and Literature teachers’ Association put forward a proposal in 2016 to create the “linguistic police” in the country, the main purpose of which was to establish common norms of the Russian language and protect it from barbarism in the context of the development of the blogosphere. As part of this initiative, it was proposed, in particular, to include clauses on the protection of literary norms in the law on the state language and to introduce administrative responsibility for violations of these norms. Language purism, characterized by rigidity and a conservative attitude to language, is also found in the non-institutional practice of the grammar-nazi struggle for literacy among communities of Internet users, which is characterized by correcting the mistakes of the interlocutor, attention to the form, but not the content of

communication. At the same time, the practice of grammar-nazi contributes to the destruction of communication and the spread of digital aggression in the form of stigmatization and harassment of the illiterate.

These practices of digital hygiene, based on prohibitions, enforcement of the norm and punitive sanctions (both from state institutions and from Internet communities), are conflict-prone and meet resistance from both experts and Internet users.

In our view, the implementation of practices of “linguistic supervision”, in particular the exclusion of Internet language from the educational space, promotes the growth of conservatism and dogmatization of the educational environment, enhances the generational gap between teachers, who protect the literary norms of the Russian language, and learners that are more oriented at movable rules of the Internet language.

Proponents of the opposite approach insist on the flexibility of language, spontaneous development and the possibility of its adaptation to the goals of communication, while pointing to the need for “soft”, non-conflictogenic practices of digital hygiene, based on the principle of self-education, self-regulation and self-control.

One of these practices is case switching - the ability to use appropriate language tools depending on the communication situation and to master the rules of various language games. As M. Krongauz notes, “an educated person knows how and where to speak... if I communicate on the Internet, I must tune in to the style that is accepted in this area” [6].

The “soft”, constructive practices of digital hygiene also include educational practices in the field of forming linguo-ecological behavior in the network. Such practices in the general education system can be implemented within the framework of teaching rhetoric and life safety; at the level of professional education - by including in the content of disciplines on speech culture, professional and business ethics thematic sections dedicated to digital etiquette. Non-institutional educational practices of digital hygiene are educational in nature and include such formats as open lectures (including those on online platforms), discussion clubs, workshops, the publication of various dictionaries of the Internet language, sets of rules and practical guidelines for communicating on the Internet.

Educational practices in the field of network etiquette (netiquette) are aimed at forming media competence in the field of network speech habit, differentiation of network and non-network communication in Russian, as well as resisting speech aggression in the network, flame and holy-war.

In general, the main principles of implementing constructive digital hygiene practices in the field of communication, including those in educational environments, are:

1. Consistency: digital hygiene practices should be comprehensive, covering not only the correction of Internet content, but also aimed at changing the online and offline behavior of the Internet user who has been

subjected to the destructive influence of his Internet community and social environment;

2. Scientific character: digital hygiene practices should be based on the results of scientific research in the field of digital anthropology and digital pedagogy, linguo-ecology, personality and environmental psychology, cognitive science, media studies, etc., since digital hygiene must necessarily represent a consistent implementation of a set of measures, and not be point-based measures that are usually prohibitive;

7. CONCLUSION

From the point of view of the philosophy of language (L. Wittgenstein, B. Russell), language has a conventional character. The use of words is a move in a language game played by people who understand each other, and the meaning of a word depends only on its usefulness in a given language situation. In the current situation of bilingualism, it is necessary to understand that the identity of the word and the object of the real world is impossible, that for constructive communication it is important to know how to use the word. And the rules for using words are conventional and established by tradition. It is necessary to develop digital hygiene practices in the sphere of communication in order for the interlocutors to understand each other better, and not to find out whose language is “more Russian” and, therefore, “more correct”.

Therefore, the question of whether the Internet language leads to degradation, destruction of the Russian language and the spread of speech aggression, or whether the Internet language opens up constructive and creative opportunities for communication in the network, allows to create new language norms, and remains debatable. Traditionally, researchers and activists who fight for the purity of language see the causes of linguo-digression on the Internet, and the Russian language itself is considered as an autonomous system that does not interact with the changing world. However, in our opinion, the negative nature of changes in the Russian language is associated with insufficient development of constructive practices of digital hygiene, including those in educational environments. Such practices are aimed at mastering the rules of language games in the network and ways to counteract speech digital aggression by native speakers and creators of the Russian language, forming the digital speech etiquette and a system of guidelines for effective and non-conflictogenic network and non-network communication. The inclusion of the Internet language in educational environments makes the latter flexible, creative and focused on the generation of Digital Natives.

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3. Reasonableness: digital hygiene practices should be well-founded and targeted, aimed at preventing and suppressing vandal speech behavior in the network and developing constructive capabilities of the Internet language and network communication;

4. Openness: digital hygiene practices should be simple and understandable to web users, so that they can use them if they are aware of the destructive influence of the Internet language on their intellectual activities, on their (or their loved ones) experiences and behavior.

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