

The Impact of the New Technologies on the Language and Communication Habits of Young People

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Abstract: *This paper draws on communication and language studies, and focuses on the influence that new technologies exert on our brain, and implicitly, on the means of written communication. The main purpose of this research is to study the communication habits of young people, in accordance with implemented forms of communication, namely texting, email and social media.*

Keywords: *new technologies, brain, nervous system, hypertextuality, creativity, acronyms, logograms, linguistics, questionnaire.*

1. Introduction

This analysis concerns the identification of the language features used in communication mediated by the new technologies, i.e. cyber communication and communication through GSM networks.

The purpose of this research lies in the analysis of the changes in written communication, as a consequence of the utilization of the

virtual environment, and in the identification of these changes in a corpus of messages.

The scientific novelty of this research, including relevant findings, lies in the analysis of a relatively new medium of communication, i.e. cyber communication. The findings concern the identification and description of certain peculiarities related to the linguistic construction of messages in the virtual world.

The topic was approached not only from an analytical perspective, but also from a comparative one. During the documentation stage, I have learned from various bibliographical sources about the studies performed and the theories developed by psychologists, neuropsychologists and linguists regarding the effect of the new technologies on the brain and language.

The characteristics identified in linguistic studies have helped me to prepare the analysis of my corpus of messages in the practical part of my research.

The main aim of this scientific article is to show the degree of presence on every social environment mentioned above, time spent online, the problems that arise and the impact each social media have in everyone's life.

Besides all these features, it is interesting to find out which of the three Social Media application is the top preference, what the interviewee would do if the application did not exist application and what would s/he change about it. Thus, this paper is based on the assumption that shows that people spend so much time in the virtual environment, they want to be part of a community, and they give a great deal of free time for their presence online.

2. Methodology

The steps followed while preparing this paper were: research from different sources (hardcopy and online), the implementation of

research tools on the gathered corpus of messages, analyzing the findings and drawing the conclusions.

In the first chapter, which presents the theoretical framework, I examined the studies conducted until now on the topic under discussion, with special attention to the findings concerning the effects that the excessive use of the internet may have on the brain and the nervous system. The second chapter focuses on the way in which virtual environments impact and influence the language used in online communication. For the practical part, I elaborated two research methods to specifically identify the effects on the means of written communication and the occurrence of a new language: “messenger language”.

In relation to the research methods, both informative and investigative methods have been used. To be more specific, both the content analysis method and the quantitative method, namely the elaboration of a survey, were applied.

The survey, which was designed to gather information directly from the users of the three forms of communication, consisted of a questionnaire made up of sixteen questions assessing users’ habits and motivation related to the use of these three forms of communication. As for the second research method, I created the questionnaire and I administered it to forty people.

3. Results and discussion

With the help of the research methods mentioned above, I managed to achieve the intended results so as to highlight a series of characteristics, particularities and constants found in the three analysed forms of communication: texting, email, and social media.

The investigated texts emphasize the nature of “messenger language”, i.e. it is identified as functional language with a high level of oversimplification, the main characteristic of which is freedom of expression.

Because of the linguistic analysis of the three types of communication, I was able to identify the characteristics of “messenger language”, but also the orthographical distortion tendencies. In my analysis I had as a reference the characteristics identified by the two linguists mentioned in the first part of the paper, David Crystal and Gina Nicula.

The analysis of the corpus of messages has been conducted based on a set of characteristics exemplified with quotations from the collected texts. Thus, I identified some conventions designed to replace the value of diacritical marks, the absence of vowels (some words are written only using its consonants), the use of graphic means of highlighting information, either by writing some words in capital letters (ALONE), by placing several exclamation marks or by repeating letters.

Following the analysis of the three types of communication, I was able to identify a series of constants and differences in the linguistic structure of virtual messages, which detailed in my dissertation paper.

The study of the communication habits specific to written communication mediated by the new technologies and the collection of data have been made based on a questionnaire that targeted the identification of the changes triggered by online communication.

4. Conclusions

As a result of the conducted research, I came to the conclusion that non-verbal elements, such as mimics, gestures and tone are absent in online language. Although these are extremely important in reproducing the expression of natural language, they have been replaced with emoticons, i.e. with suggestive images that substitute for non-linguistic communication. Despite its many advantages (e.g. communication without limits of space and time, an unlimited number of participants, constant studying, improvement of one’s writing style),

online communication also has various disadvantages (e.g. defective spelling and topic, excessive use of abbreviations, ambiguity, speech errors perpetuated thorough imitation and/or ignorance).

Furthermore, the analysis of results derived from the questionnaire has led to the conclusion that we use all forms of communication to the same extent: telephone calls, text messages as well as emails, text messages being the top of the list (be they phone messages, WhatsApp or social media messages). Consequently, the new technologies make us use written communication more, but the problem that has arisen is how we do it and how accurately we write.

In conclusion, the occurrence of online means of communication has led to a certain extent to the alteration of language and of traditional communication structures. Ignorance of and relaxation towards the nature of language cause changes in communication habits, which makes the young generations gradually lose contact with proper language.

Personally, I think that the standardization of communication through the automatic interface of monitors brings the risk of estrangement through national and cultural identity loss.

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