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LANGUAGE STUDIES OF ELECTRONIC DISCOURSE

The analysis of Internet communication study by modern linguistics and the appearance of a new concept – Internet discourse have been provided in the article.

The concept of discourse, despite its rather wide use in modern linguistics, still does not have a unified definition in discursive studies. Discourse includes the characteristics of speech and language, where they are both a process of a language act and its result. Discourse is usually a complex communicative phenomenon, which, in addition to the key element (text), possesses some non-linguistic parameters, such as personal relationships and interlocutors' goals, self-realization, ideas, assessments and self-assessment, context etc.

Internet discourse is defined in the article as a special type of communication that takes place via the Internet as a channel of communication and exchange of information between participants. It requires the availability of three factors: the user, the computer and the Internet. The language of virtual communication has developed rapidly with the growing popularity of the Internet, turning into the most popular form of written speech, although it lacks language norms, and each user can influence its development by inventing new words and abbreviations. The article emphasizes that Internet discourse is diverse and should be considered only as a whole, taking into account all its components.

The paper identifies Internet discourse main aspects such as the usage of apocope, abbreviations, the predominance of the phonetic principle in writing, the rejection of capital letters in punctuation, the efficient use of the most rational speech tools for virtual communication, saving effort in the interaction between the sender and recipient. The special role of Internet discourse as a separate type of discourse and as a new form of communication is emphasized.

Key words: *Concept of Internet discourse, context, discourse, Internet discourse, linguistics, language, language structures*

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ЛІНГВІСТИЧНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ЕЛЕКТРОННОГО ДИСКУРСУ

У статті аналізуються особливості вивчення сучасною лінгвістикою інтернет-комунікації в комп'ютерних мережах та поява нової концепції – інтернет-дискурсу.

Концепція дискурсу, попри досить широкий ужиток, досі не має єдиного визначення в різних дискурсивних дослідженнях. Дискурсу притаманні риси мовлення і мови, де він є водночас процесом мовної діяльності та його результатом. Дискурс зазвичай є складним комунікативним явищем, яке, окрім ключового елемента (текст),

включає низку позалінгвістичних параметрів, а саме: взаємини та цілі співрозмовників, їхню самореалізацію, думки, оцінки та самооцінку, контекст тощо.

Інтернет-дискурс у статті визначається як особливий вид комунікації, який здійснюється через інтернет як канал спілкування й обміну інформацією між учасниками спілкування та потребує наявності трьох чинників: користувача, комп'ютера й інтернету. Мова віртуального спілкування стрімко розвивалася разом із популяризацією інтернету, перетворившись на найпопулярнішу форму писемного мовлення, хоча їй не вистачає мовних норм, і кожен користувач може впливати на її розвиток уживанням нових слів і скорочень. У статті наголошується на тому, що інтернет-дискурс відзначається різноманітністю, його необхідно розглядати лише цілісно, з урахуванням усіх його складових частин.

У роботі визначаються особливості такі інтернет-дискурсу, як: використання апокопів, скорочень, перевага фонетичного принципу в письмовій формі, відмова від великих літер, розділових знаків, застосування найбільш раціональних мовленнєвих засобів для віртуального спілкування, економії зусиль у взаємодії відправника й одержувача. Підкреслюється особлива роль інтернет-дискурсу як окремого типу дискурсу та нової форми спілкування зі специфічними рисами, зумовленими його функціями, новими мовними формами та панівною роллю інтернету в сучасному суспільстві.

Ключові слова: концепція інтернет-дискурсу, контекст, дискурс, інтернет-дискурс, лінгвістика, мова, мовні структури.

Statement of the problem. The rapid development of Internet technologies has led to changes in language development. The Internet has become not only a source of information but also the dominant means of communication, closely related to all spheres of human activities. The electronic revolution entailed a linguistic development, which, in turn, led to the emergence of a new network electronic language (Crystal, 2004: 238).

The rapid development of the world computer networks and the Internet brought to life the reality called virtual. This virtual reality emerged so quickly that it is not yet possible not only to predict but to describe all the significant social, cognitive, technological and ethical aspects of this phenomenon. This phenomenon was not ignored by the scientific and pedagogical community. A thorough study of the concept of Internet discourse plays a key role in the training of professional linguists and language teachers.

Research analysis. In language studies, most researchers consider discourse as a text immersed in a situation of communication (Shevchenko, 2005; Gudz, 2013; Karpa, 2010). Among the definitions of discourse, the most widely known and frequently cited are by T. Van Dijk, who explains discourse is a complex unity of a linguistic form, meaning and action, related to the concept of “communicative event” (Dijk van, 2001: 355). According to J. Gee discourse is the result of the integration of language, activities and interactions, cognitive patterns, beliefs, assessments necessary for the realization of a certain type of socially recognizable identity (Gee, 2005: 21).

From our point of view, D. Schiffrin formulated the most precise definition of discourse, which reflects a general understanding of the term in linguistics: “discourse exists over the other speech units <...> and represents decontextualized units of language struc-

tures, but contextualized units of language application” (Schiffrin, 1994: 39).

It should be noted that the term Internet discourse is not generally accepted yet. In English linguistic literature, there are such analogues as computer-mediated communication, Netspeak, chatspeak, web discourse, electronic communication, etc. The researchers suggest different alternatives of the term, including computer discourse (T. Rusko), virtual discourse (L. Collister), network discourse (N. Morgun), network discourse (P. Leifeld), electronic discourse (L. Abraham, L. Williams), online discourse (T. Beau-lieu), electronic communication (O. Kalyta).

E. Gribovod believes that, despite the variety of terminology, “in general, these are identical concepts that represent acts of communicative, which result in the exchange of information and communication between people via a computer, and various means of communication” (Gribovod, 2013: 118).

Purpose of the article. The purpose of this article is to analyze and systematize the different approaches to the concept of Internet discourse as an integral element in the training of professional linguists and language teachers.

Presenting main material. Modern linguistics studies Internet communication and language communication in computer networks, which determined the appearance of a new concept of Internet discourse. However, it does not yet have a monosemantic interpretation. For defining Internet discourse, it is necessary to refer to the key concepts of discourse and Internet communication.

The concept of discourse is not new in science, but it attracts the attention of researchers, who interpret it in the modern scientific paradigm. The term discourse is applied in various scientific areas, such as philosophy, sociology, psychology, linguistics etc. the wide application of the term contributes to the fact that

there is still no single definition explaining precisely the specifics of the concept in various discursive studies. Nevertheless, despite a range of definitions, they demonstrate the adherence of the term to its original Latin meaning – argument, exchange of ideas (Merriam-Webster).

In various studies, discourse is regarded as opposites discourse-speech, discourse-text, discourse-dialogue, discourse-register.

Discourse is traditionally compared with speech and language, possessing features of both. It is believed that discourse is similar to speech as it is evident from the process, and differs by the systemic elements inherent in language.

However, the language, unlike discourse, is more abstract. The discourse differs from language and speech in a sociocultural context. In the modern linguistic literature, the opposition text-discourse is actively studied. Although every discourse at the fundamental level is a text, not every text is a discourse. The basic difference between discourse and text is in its dynamics and interactivity. Thus, discourse is both a process of linguistic activities (communication, context) and its result (text).

B. Grosz, analyzing and comparing the concepts of dialogue and discourse, comes to the conclusion that discourse in a social context is related to speech or text in a situation of dialogue brought back to life (Grosz, 1995). If the discourse is perceived on a personal level, it is opposite to the dialogue, since it leads to the opposition of an individual to other participants of the communicative process. Thus, discourse is a special independent linguistic concept, which is not identical to speech, text, register, dialogue, but includes some of their patterns.

The language of virtual communication has developed since the Internet has become the most popular form of written communication, learning the principles of electronic interaction have been actively studied by linguists. The manner of personal representation depends on the user's age and his addressee. Basically, the younger they are, the more their communication is saturated with various contractions. This language develops and changes very quickly because it lacks language norms, and each user is able to influence its development by applying new words and abbreviations.

Internet discourse has been the subject of a large number of studies undertaken in recent years. The novelty of this topic leads to heterogeneous approaches to solving different language tasks, which is displayed at the level of the object nomination, because some scientists confuse not only the concepts of “communication”, “interaction” and “discourse”,

but also use “electronic”, “virtual”, “computer” or “Internet” as interchangeable concepts.

Contrariwise, a number of researchers use different nominations for the same object. The vagueness of the definition is the cause of inconsistent approaches to the definition of the Internet discourse.

Virtual communication is a method of interaction when contact between interlocutors is mediated by a computer network, and all interactions are carried out virtually. For many individuals, virtual communication is becoming a vital part of their lifestyle. The language of virtual communication is expressed in written form based on the modern spoken language and characterized by information compression.

The main features of Internet discourse are the wide usage of apocopes and abbreviations, the tendency towards the dominance of the phonetic principle in writing. Communication in internet chats is fast-paced and simplistic. Its syntax close to telegraphic is characterized by the rejection of capital letters, punctuation marks, the usage of a large number of meaningful abbreviations. In the process of virtual communication, speakers select the language means that are the most rational for the purposes of their communication. Virtual communication is also subject to the principle of the effort saving style of the sender-recipient interaction. This explains the richness of lexical and graphic abbreviations. To communicate in chats, a compact way of information transition is necessary, based on phonetic writing, which matches the graphic design of words with their sound (Blank, 2009).

Anonymity is one of the main pillars of Internet communication. Nowhere else a person can permit such open communication without interruptions and time limits choosing a certain image, or changing images.

According to C. Surratt the Internet is a virtual human settlement designed to meet personal and social communication needs via telecommunication technologies (Surratt, 2001: 70). In other words, the Internet is a communication platform that realizes verbalized speech-cognitive performances.

The combination of two concepts – discourse and the Internet – leads to the obvious conclusion that Internet discourse is a special type of communication carried out via the Internet as a channel of communication and information exchange between communication participants.

However, the identification of Internet discourse as a separate type is not recognized by all researchers. Specifically, M. Skey mentions a national discourse, rather than considers various types of discourse in their general framework, and Internet discourse

in particular, since they are just manifestations of national discourse. These are not separate types of discourse, but only their modifications adapted to the area of their functioning (Skey, 2011: 10).

At the same time, linguists do not deny the existence of the Internet discourse but demonstrate a great interest in the studying of communication in the global network. The term Internet discourse implies the discourse attachment to the Internet and to the computer. In other words, this type of communication includes three participants: the user, the computer, and the Internet. Emphasizing the computer-mediated nature of the Internet discourse, S. Greiffenstern and S. Herring, regard it as a set of texts, realized in an artificially created communicative space, which expects distant communication of virtual interaction (Greiffenstern, 2010; Herring, 2019).

Electronic discourse is a type of spoken communication on Internet sites, characterized by interactivity, real-time mode and realized in written form. However, the writing in chats differs from the traditionally accepted to such an extent that it needs linguistic study as a unique type of communication. Nowadays, scientists are searching for adequate methods for analyses of this new empirical phenomenon. Having considered earlier the concepts of virtual discourse and electronic discourse, as well as relying on the concept of discourse, we consider these concepts as not identical with computer discourse and Internet discourse.

Undoubtedly, that virtual mode of communication and prerequisite of an electronic signal are the main features of the computer Internet discourse. In modern linguistics the term discourse is close in meaning to the concept of text, but also emphasizes the dynamic, time-related, natural language communication; on the contrary, the text is regarded as a static object, a result of linguistic activity.

Sometimes discourse is explained as a two-component notion: both the dynamic process of linguistic activities, inscribed in its social context, and its result (i.e., text). However, the attempts to replace the concept of discourse with an idea of coherent text are not successful, since any text is coherent.

Most researchers subdivide computer Internet discourse into different types according to their level of interactivity or the speed of the interlocutor's reaction to the message: chat, forums and conferences, blogs, e-mail etc. Accordingly, the Internet serves only for communication between individuals via a computer. However, one feature of Internet discourse cannot be ignored by researchers: this discourse takes place not only between people who use the Internet but also between the user and the discursive

Internet space, depending on the language and Internet technologies.

Therefore, different Internet services should be considered at the creation of a holistic comprehension of the Internet discourse. Underestimation of the precise communication types identification and a holistic description of numerous Internet services is one of the main reasons for the incorrect definition of the Internet discourse characteristics.

The concept of dialogue is also close to discourse, which, like any communicative act, presupposes the occurrence of two fundamental roles of the speaker or author and the addressee. In this case, the roles of the speaker and the addressee can be alternately redistributed between the discourse participants; in this case, we can speak of a dialogue. If during the course of the discourse the speaker's role is assigned to the same person, we speak about a monologue. The statement that a monologue is a discourse with a single participant is incorrect as in a monologue, the addressee is also necessary. In fact, a monologue is just a special type of dialogue, although traditionally dialogue and monologue are regarded as opposites.

There is no clear and generally accepted definition of all cases of discourse use, and it apparently contributes to the wide popularity of this term over the past decades: various definitions successfully corresponded to various conceptual needs, modifying more traditional representations of speech, text, dialogue, style and even language.

Internet discourse is a various discourse, which is necessary to be considered only holistically taking into account the special aspects of its constituent parts and Internet services. The Internet provides a large number of opportunities for its users and the discursive space of the Internet should be studied in the following basic areas: worldwide web e-mail, search engines, instant messaging systems, online games, newsgroups etc. These basic areas are independent services of the Internet, which can be used directly.

At the discourse studying as a natural phenomenon, the question of types and varieties of discourse classification arises. The biggest difference is in this area of oral and written discourse, which is associated with the channel of information transmission: in oral discourse, the channel is acoustic, in written discourse, it is visual. Sometimes the distinction between oral and written forms of language communication is conferred to the difference between discourse and text, but such confusion of two different oppositions is not correct. Discourse is a complex interdisciplinary category and is the subject of research for various sciences (philosophy, linguistics, semiotics, cultural studies, sociology, etc). Discourse generally is

a complex communicative phenomenon, which, in addition to the key element (text), includes a number of extra-linguistic parameters, which include the communicants' attitudes and goals, self-realization, opinion, assessment and self-assessment, discourse context, etc.

Discourse is a textual system and is often compared to text. However, for all the similarities of these concepts, they have a fundamental difference. A text is an object, and discourse is an incomplete process; therefore, we can only partially apply concepts of syntax, semantic and pragmatic coherence. Therefore, discourse is a text considered at the moment of actual involvement in a communicative activity, in the process of interaction with the context.

Discourse is characterized by a communicative situation, functions and content; in addition, the time factor, goals, results, motives, context and cognitive aspects have to be taken into account. There is a number of different discourse classifications: hypotaxis, and parataxis; antecedent, simultaneous; textual; situational; interactive; contextual (Esser, 2014; Ketcham, 2011).

It is impossible to liken the concepts of virtual discourse, computer discourse, electronic discourse, network discourse, and Internet discourse. The categories of computer discourse and electronic discourse can be considered synonymic when they denote text in the context of a communicative act through electronic means (computers or mobile gadgets). Internet discourse implies communicative interaction in the global Internet network, and network discourse prac-

tice including communication in the different types of networks, including local, corporate, etc.

Conclusions. Different types of discourse mediated by computer means of communication are always in a hyper-hyponymic relationship and result in the generation of a communicative environment. Internet discourse, specifically, presumes a modified communication channel and possesses specific features typical for the virtual environment.

In linguistics, virtual discourse is confined by computer discourse. In the computer discourse, in turn, communication is assumed not only between users via the Internet, but also the communication of a person with a computer. The computer discourse, in addition to interaction on the Internet, also includes communication in local networks, which implies the direct contacts of communicants, which cannot be in virtual communication, where a communication partner appears to be completed by our own consciousness. But on the other hand, virtual discourse is understood much broader than electronic, since not only the Internet is used for communicative interaction in virtual reality, but also the other means of communication.

Thus, the status of the Internet discourse as a separate type of discourse and a new form of communication is confirmed by its specific features due to its functions, new linguistic forms and the dominant role of the Internet in modern society. Further studies of the Internet discourse influence on the development of society as a whole and its place in linguistic science for more effective training of future professional linguists are necessary to be conducted.

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