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CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES OF DIGITALIZED COMMUNICATION

The article focuses on contemporary digitally-based communication (computer discourse, Internet discourse). The aim of the article is to present the overview of the general features of digitalized communication, including the new perspectives of studying its addressee and addresser roles. Methods of research are deductive analysis, synthesis, interpretive and semantic analysis, linguistic modeling. Novelty of research. Digitalized communication involves a variety of «addresser» and «addressee» roles which include Artificial Intelligence agents or at least technology assisted human communicators. The article raises a number of issues connected with transformation of traditional sender and receiver roles in digitalized communication, as well as its influence on the language use and semantic interpretation practice. Conclusions. Internet discourse (ID) is a multifaceted concept that has become the center of research in linguistics and many related disciplines as it combines traditional definitions of discourse with the features of modern digitalized communication. Due to its uniqueness, it is regarded as an independent form of discourse. Its hybrid nature (that of spoken and written conventionally defined discourse) can be specified by functional features, genre diversity, information transmission channel, target audience, types of communication means, stylistics, communication strategies, as well as subject area. The specific features of digitalized communication are transformed nature of communication due to the lack of information about the addressee and the addresser, which involves low protection against misrepresentation and manipulation of information; non-human agents that can act as communicators or at least assist human communicators; blending of features of oral and written speech; structured and organized practice of using visual iconic patterns.

Key words: Internet discourse, digitalized communication, addresser, addressee, Artificial Intelligence assistant.

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ВИКЛИКИ ТА ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ ЦИФРОВОЇ КОМУНІКАЦІЇ

Стаття присвячена викликам та перспективам дослідження сучасної цифрової комунікації (комп'ютерного дискурсу, Інтернет-дискурсу). **Метою** статті є огляд загальних особливостей цифрової комунікації, включаючи нові перспективи вивчення ролей адресата й адресанта. **Методами** дослідження є дедуктивний аналіз, синтез, інтерпретаційний та семантичний аналіз, лінгвістичне моделювання. **Новизна дослідження.** Цифрова комунікація включає різноманітні ролі «адресанта» та «адресата», які зокрема залучають штучний інтелект у якості комуніканта або, принаймні, асистента комуніканта. У статті порушується низка питань, пов'язаних з трансформацією традиційних ролей адресанта й адресата цифрової комунікації, а також з її впливом на використання мови та практику семантичної інтерпретації. **Висновки.** Інтернет-дискурс (ІД) – це багатоаспектне поняття, яке залучає лінгвістичні та міжпредметні дослідження, оскільки поєднує традиційні визначення дискурсу з особливостями сучасної цифрової комунікації. Завдяки своїй унікальності він розглядається як самостійна форма дискурсу. Його гібридність (поєднання рис традиційного усного та письмового дискурсу) проявляється у функціональних особливостях, жанровому різноманітті, каналах передачі інформації, цільовій аудиторії, типах комунікаційних засобів, стилістичних особливостях, комунікативних стратегіях, а також тематиці. Особливістю цифрової комунікації є її трансформація через відсутність інформації про адресата та адресанта, що спричиняє неможливість убезпечити учасників від перекручування та маніпулювання інформацією; залучення штучного інтелекту, який може виступати в ролі комуніканта або принаймні асистента учасника комунікативної події; поєднання особливостей усного та писемного мовлення; структурована й організована практика використання наочних знакових зразків.

Ключові слова: Інтернет-дискурс, цифрова комунікація, адресант, адресат, штучний інтелект.

Formulation of a research problem and its significance. Global informatization of society has lately been leading to radical changes in traditional communication. Embracing every aspect of contemporary social life virtual communication tends to minimize many barriers, while the global community has to deal with a different universal system of information exchange, where the Internet plays a key role in meeting daily communication needs.

The access to the Internet implies free dissemination of enormous amount of information in digital dimension, which means changes in the structure of communication, type and manner of interaction, relationships between communicators. However, the two orthodox categories of the addressee and the addressee do stay as well as the two basic functions of any communicative act – to express/manage communication and influence/manipulate. Governing the flow of information, digital communication has become not only an informative source, but also a powerful impact on general public and individuals, which makes its research a topical issue not only in linguistics but also psychology, social studies, information technologies, philosophy, etc.

Analysis of the research into this problem. The study of digitalized communication relies greatly on the output of classical linguistic studies, including research in text linguistics (I. Arnold, M. Bakhtin, R. Barthes, R. Beaugrande, A. Bell, I. Bekhta, T. van Dyck, I. Halperin, U. Eco,

O. Vorobyova), theories of modern hypertext (R. Barthes, N. Belozeroва, M. Belyaev, N. Butorina, V. Bush, O. Huber, M. Wiesel, O. Galichkina, O. Goroshko, K. Davydova), communication and Internet discourse (N. Akhrenova, E. Varlamova, Y. Vzheshch, I. Diasamidze, I. Lukyanov, M. Ryzhkov, L. Schipitsin and others).

As relatively new, digitalized communication is still experiencing the transitional period from being treated as conventional communication via digital channels (Fawkes & Gregory, 2000) to a new type of discourse. Thus, in terms of metalanguage the concept «Internet discourse», for example, is used to denote the discourse of indirect communication and can also be named as «computer discourse», «virtual discourse», «electronic discourse», «network discourse» (Остапенко, 2013). While many researchers agree on the term «computer discourse» as a special type of discourse, they interpret it differently. Computer discourse is defined as any communication in computer networks (Кримова, 2018); or communication on computer topics (Yus, 2011); or communication between people via the Internet, but also human communication with a computer, which includes listening to audio files, typing, watching videos, working on the Internet, etc. (Borisov, 2016).

Therefore, computer discourse can be considered as an integral concept for the discourses of indirect communication (Посохова, 2013). Network discourse is seen as the process by which

communicators interact to share information and resources (Гудзь, 2015). A local area network discourse is considered its subtype, the major difference between them being the coverage on local or global levels accordingly (Луценко, 2013, p. 65). A virtual discourse is a text immersed in a situation of virtual communication.

The multifocal view on digitalized communication allows researchers study its various aspects. They define the prototypical features and genre characteristics of Internet communication (Гудзь, 2015; Нерян, 2018; Патрушева, 2014; Borisov, 2016), while others focus on its pragmatics (Yus, 2011), defining the roles of the participants (Більовська, 2018) or its functions, which include manipulation and control (Медведева & Терещенко, 2019). Research of verbal and non-verbal features of digitalized communication falls into several trends: study of visual iconic patterns (Bays, 2010; Aldunate & González-Ibáñez, 2017); research of linguistic features of Internet discourse (Гудзь, 2015; Луценко, 2013; Borisov, 2016; Yongyan, 2000); studies of digitalized communication of different social groups, e. g. the youth (Остапенко, 2013), English slang speakers (Кримова, 2018), etc. The most advanced, yet intricate, issues connected with digitalized communication are those speculating on the ways, forms and moral consequences of reshaping human communication via technology, thus giving rise to a new object of research – Artificial Intelligence-Mediated Communication (Hancock, Naaman & Levy, 2020).

The aim of the article is to present the overview of the general features of digitalized communication, including the new perspectives of studying its addressee and addresser roles.

The body of the article. Digitalized communication is represented by various genre forms of online and offline communication. It is characterized by hypertexts and interactivity (e. g. the presence of hyperlinks, which gives readers freedom to navigate on their own, and therefore change the process of text perception). It is also characterized by a special hierarchy along with component integrity (Зайцева, 2012).

Generally speaking, digitalized communication falls into two broad categories which sometimes overlap each other: Internet mediated communication and mobile phone mediated communication. The Internet possesses a set

of tools for communication, which are transmitted exclusively through the web (e. g. blogs, vlogs, posts, forums, social networks) in contrast to mobile communication, where the communicative function is implemented via a different set of tools (Патрушева, 2014, p. 116), such as SMS, voice mail, voice recognition artificial intelligence program Siri, etc.

Being a concept that combines computer, electronic and network discourses, Internet discourse is referred to both as the medium and the source of information. Thus, to a large extent it embraces communication via the direct use of personal computer as a means of information exchange as well as smartphones or other communication viable gadgets (Yus, 2011).

The structure of discourse has traditionally been considered within several perspectives: 1) cognitive, with a discourse content model as a generalized model of the reference situation; 2) informative, when knowledge about the world, is embodied into a text; 3) social, with context highlighting the specifics of social interaction; 4) linguistic at micro and macro levels, the former actualizing semantic and syntactic knowledge, and the latter focusing on narrative schemes of text construction (Borge, 2013, p. 76).

Internet discourse is believed to possess numerous constitutive features, among which are 1) electronic signal (a channel of communication); 2) virtual nature of communication; 3) separation in space and time (distant involvement); 4) an ability to become viral; 5) hypertexts; 6) equality of participants; 7) the specific ways of expressing emotions, facial expressions, and feelings with the help of emoticons, emoji, gifs, and the like; 8) a combination of different types of discourse; 9) computer ethics (Гудзь, 2015). Internet discourse is perceived as an information environment that acquires a new distinctive communicative content, respectively, the text is transformed, adapting to the tendentious system of values, and filling some gaps in public consciousness (Borge, 2013, p. 12).

Generally digitalized communication is characterized by distance between the communication partners who are frequently so elusive that have to be imagined by communicators. It is the addressee with his/her typological characteristics who becomes a determining factor for the selection of language tools and principles of text creation. The term «addressee» helps

emphasize the conscious direction of speech to the second participant (specific or non-specific) of the interaction, thus, the communicative intention of the author must be consistent with this category. In other words, any language act is designed for a certain model of the addressee (Fawkes & Gregory, 2000). Describing an event or sharing information, the addresser imagines the addressee, so each text is bound to have its own target audience. This is the only way for the text to be able to have a significant impact on the addressee, because a clearly defined starting point is an important component of successful communication.

Traditionally, the term «addressee» means the person(s) to whom the author sends a text message, focusing in advance on his / her general characteristics when constructing a text that the person understands and that causes a physical, mental or emotional reaction. Addressability can be considered as the «opinion» of the addresser about the imaginary addressee (Більовська, 2018). Thus, in successful communication there should be a certain «pressure» of the addressee's factor on the language, hence, the «error of the addressee» is equal to appealing to the wrong authority.

Digitalized communication includes a greater variety of «addresser» and «addressee» roles, namely:

- 1) human addresser – human addressee;
- 2) human addresser – artificial intelligence (AI) addressee;
- 3) AI addresser – human addressee;
- 4) human addresser assisted by AI – human addressee.

Some common examples of these are so called 'bots' in social media chats (artificially generated participants with predetermined content of speech acts); Siri, Alisa, Ok Google and other artificial intelligence voice recognition search engines, etc. As the disclosure of the AI assisted communication is not clearly demanded either by moral, or legal norms the human participants of communicative situations may misrepresent their communicative partner and misinterpret his/her/its communicative intention.

A significant feature of Internet discourse is the transformed nature of communication due to the lack of information about the addressee and the addresser who in order to achieve their goals of communication select avatars, nicknames,

information (often unverifiable) about their gender, education or age, etc. Their feelings and emotions are expressed either by graphic verbal means (capital letters, repeating punctuation marks, etc.), or special software graphic means (emojis, emotions, gifs, etc.), which leads to the emotional saturation of the compensatory type (Bays, 2010). Finally, voluntariness and desirability of contacts contribute to self-presentation of the virtual language personality and its creative self-realization (Aldunate & González-Ibáñez, 2017).

Soon AI technologies will make it possible to generate whole messages on behalf of a human addresser including creating online profiles. No wonder concerns are rising around AI's involvement in human communication, especially in deep fakes where AI is used to misrepresent what a person says or does in audio or video (Suwajanakorn, Seitz, & Kemelmacher-Shlizerman, 2017). Nowadays even streaming videos cannot be considered as reliable because faces can be morphed to match the viewer's preferences (Hancock, Naaman, & Levy, 2020). No doubt obscurity of the information about the participants is one of the reasons why manipulation and deception thrive in the Internet discourse (Медведєва & Терещенко, 2019).

The language of the Internet combines the features of written and oral speech, but also has its own properties mediated by computer communication (Crystal, 2001, p. 78), which is characterized by extensive use of informal forms of greeting and leaving; the first and second person pronouns; the unrestricted and uncontrolled expression of feelings and emotions; the frequency of interactions, largely phatic in nature, in which humour and strengthening of social bonds are the main communicative intentions (Yongyan, 2000; Yus, 2011).

The language of Internet discourse created by netizens performs first and foremost generalizing function as its buzzwords become symbols of news and changes in society; reflect present media culture, and highlight public opinion (Більовська, 2018, p. 212). As the language of the digitalized communication develops, the use of emoticons is no longer arbitrary but is considered to be an organized interactional and structured practice similar to other visual conversation codes, such as sign languages (Bays, 2010).

Hohenstein & Jung (2020) show in their research paper that smart replies prompted by

Google in text messaging are overly positive (e. g. *sounds great! well done!*) and can be used to improve relationships between communicative partners. This raises the question whether the technology mediated language use can eventually alter the speech patterns of ordinary communicators in the future.

In digital communication the addresser of the text creates certain conditions of communication that are targeted at promoting rapprochement with the addressee. Describing an event the addresser sets certain pragmatic parameters aimed at a dialogue or monologue, with the involvement of the addressee in communication by imitating oral spoken language. This tactic minimizes the distance between the author and the reader and creates the most favorable conditions for the perception of information by the addressee through cooperative interaction. For instance, personal pronouns are used to determine the distance between the addresser and the addressee. The author's «I» dynamically correlates with the reader's YOU while YOU tends to get transformed into WE. Such relations are a powerful signal of illocutionary attitude to the commonality of actions, the involvement. The transition from I to WE is not just a change of subject, but rather the transformation of WE into a full-fledged word with the lexical meaning of an indivisible community (Crystal, 2001, p. 64).

However, the unifying effect of WE notion doesn't work that predictably with Internet discourse due to its unlimited number of participants from all walks of life. For instance, Elon Musk's Twitter note of January, 18, 2022 (<https://twitter.com/elonmusk/status/1483484932961972227>): *We should be much more worried about population collapse* has started an agitated discussion of overpopulation vs. declining birthrates. Some of the responses rely heavily on the initial WE notion, which encompasses the humankind or at least its innovative, science-oriented part: *We should be investing in technology that makes having kids much faster/easier/cheaper/more accessible; We should be more worried about extending the life of the ones that are already living...* Yet, the concept is quickly squeezed to the notion of 'citizens with social concerns': *We want kids that were wanted and loved. Not kids whose parents are resentful for them; We should also be worried about those in power who want to reduce the population.*

While in the responses mentioned above the pronoun 'we' may mean that Elon Musk (the initial addresser) is included in the groups entitled as WE, he is obviously excluded from the following ones, due to his race or financial status: *Africans are still multiplying in large numbers and we're bound to double in twenty years ceteris paribus. This is largely a Western/East Asian problem...; We can barely afford sustaining ourselves.* So the unifying function of WE concept is quickly replaced with the separative one along with a more traditional tool for expressing opposition – the pronoun 'you': *Elon, you're not worried about population collapse. You're worried about having enough workers; So you have a issue... How do you overcome it? Its not easy when rich gets richer and poor gets more poor... If this goes on we go back to dark times.*

Yet, alternatively, 'you' is used in the expressions of the participants' respect for the personality of the initial addresser and his opinion: *You are spot on, but it takes a cultural shift for that one. You can be a role model for this shift; Yes sir, you said it. China is also going on a downstream population.*

Thus, we see multiple constructions and deconstructions of several concepts, verbally expressed by two simple pronouns (we and you), but used by different communicators in various contexts, yet in one common discourse. It is a hierarchically organized, multilevel complex, in which texts of smaller structural and semantic volume are included in larger textual 'wholes' (Нерян, 2018). Asynchronous response by an unrestricted number of participants to any of the previous messages sent within one communicative situation makes Internet discourse different from traditional forms of communication.

The constitutive features of Internet discourse can also be researched in the perspective of a discursive picture of the world and a linguistic embodiment (Habermas, 1992, p. 12), where the author's presence can be of stylistic characteristics: 1) identification of the author (from the «shadow presence» of the author in absolutely objective information to the frank «I» with a story about the circumstances of obtaining information and its understanding); 2) degree of complexity (texts with one author's voice and polyphonic texts); 3) the share of means of representation of the author's «I» (this parameter refers to the relative text space allocated for the author's origin).

Research data show that as minimum the author's «beginning style» is presented in short information genres – notes, memos, and messages. The lack of manifestations of the author, i. e. the author's assessment, information about the extraction of information, unconditional personal pronouns and other verbal signs gives the text rigor and formality. The only function of such texts is information. In such cases, the identification of the author belongs to a category called a «shadow presence», because the reader only guesses that behind the text is a person who selected, collected, and systematized information in a certain way. The share of the author's «I» representation is minimal; the role of the subjects is performed by inanimate objects and abstract concepts.

The opposite end of the scale is the obvious and direct authorial presence in the text, namely, the maximum share of the author's beginnings is found in analytical genres – correspondence, commentary, and analytical article. However, the gradation of the author's presence can be observed in a number of informational, analytical and artistic materials with different proportions of the author's representation, varying degrees of complexity and different roles. The list of the roles, in which the author acts, may include: propagandist (agitator), polemicist, reporter, chronicler, artist, analyst, researcher, ironist, informant, interviewer, expressionist, etc. (Yus, 2011).

For instance, in notes and short information texts the author acts as a seemingly neutral informant, giving objective information without expressing any attitude to it (though it is he/she who chooses what information in what perspective to share); in texts with analytical elements there can be observed the implicit presence of the author who evaluates the information. The assessment is expressed in the forms of evaluative markers, such as, «unfortunately», «strange»; while in analytical genres informing is combined with an open expression of opinion to what is reported. As for the rest of the author's roles there is the prevalence of a particular author's role in the text, which attains certain genre characteristics to a text (Yus, 2011).

Conclusions and prospects for further research. Netizens explore the Internet for searching, transmitting, discussing and storing information, as well as communicating and getting entertainment. Since digitalized communication eliminates social, gender, age and other differences, communicators become status-equal. Several local-temporal conditions (cybernetic, asynchronous, and real) create maximum convenience for satisfying communication needs. Internet discourse is becoming a genre-generating sphere that not only derives the long-known ones, but also stimulates the emergence of new genres, depicting a changing world picture.

Internet discourse is an artificially created communicative environment, has no spatial and temporal constraints, compared to traditional discourse. Cognitive frame of conventional discourse is a hierarchy of elements, the main of which are: agent/addresser/author, recipient/addressee/reader, means/channel, result, object, cause, condition, time, place, purpose, and others. Their interaction is established by the idea of action (act). Unlike the cognitive frame of traditional discourse, distinctive features of Internet discourse exclude condition, time and place, as the information exchange in cyberspace can take place in different ways. Communicative acts can last for a short or long period, can be direct or indirect, signed or anonymous, voluntary and express a wide and complicated range of the emotions.

The dichotomy «author-reader» is a success of communication and depends on the author's intention as well as the degree of involvement of the addressee as a linguistic personality. The author, embodying his/her ideas in the text, creates a message for specific readers, thus forming his target audience.

Communicative and psycholinguistic approaches are the basis for pragmatic research in which the images of the author-addressee are related to the influence of the text. This function is realized through lexical-semantic, graphic, grammatical means with the help of «hidden grammar». Categories «addresser» and «addressee» are the basis for interpretation.

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