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## LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF DIGITAL ENGLISH DISCOURSE

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*The article aims to focus on the impact of digital technologies on language, paying particular attention to digital English discourse and its linguistic features in online platforms, reflecting current Internet communication trends. The role of digital platforms (social networks, messengers, forums) in forming new language models, lexical innovations, syntactic simplifications and multimodal communication is considered. The paper examines how IT technologies have transformed communication, language use and reshaped linguistic norms and social engagement. Typical lexical items, stylistic features and pragmatic functions of digital discourse are analysed. The author highlights the contributions of linguists in investigating key features of digital discourse such as informality, multimodality, immediacy and interactivity. A rapid development of new linguistic forms such as emojis, emoticons, abbreviations, shortenings, hashtags, and innovative lexical items is observed, reflecting both the expressiveness and efficiency demands of digital communication. The research emphasises the process of human-machine interactions with the role of chatbots and their ability to simulate empathy and involvement in informal, dynamic conversation. Ongoing transformation of human communication due to digital technologies, particularly the dynamic nature of digital discourse and its multimodal features, suggests the prospects for further research. Linguists must investigate the influence of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality and virtual reality on language use and linguistic norms. The research material aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the English language in digital contexts and the notion of digital discourse.*

**Keywords:** digital discourse, online communication, IT technologies, information, linguistics, chatbot, innovation.

**Problem statement and relevance of the research.** The 21<sup>st</sup> century has witnessed the digitalisation of nearly all forms of communication. The emergence of IT technologies has significantly transformed language use, especially online. Digital English discourse refers to using English in digital communication platforms such as social media, blogs, forums, emails and messaging apps. The relevance of studying digital English discourse is evident in its impact on communication, language evolution, identity construction, and socio-political engagement in modern society.

Many linguists aim to explore and explain how communication changes when technologies mediate it, and they are interested in researching various aspects of digital discourse. Foreign and Ukrainian linguists have made valuable contributions to studying digital discourse from different perspectives – linguistic features, sociolinguistics, communication strategies, etc. Among them, we can outline works of N. Pasichnyk, N. Zakordonets, O. Plavutska, A. Prykhodko, N. Lazebna, K. Lysova, D. Crystal, C. Thurlow, K. Mroczek, J. Androutsopoulos, S. C. Herring, C. Tagg and

many other scholars aimed to explore and explain how communication is changed when IT technologies mediate it.

By all means, information technology impacts a person, their thinking, and language. Moreover, suppose the change of communication under the influence of technology causes certain modifications in people's mental activity and forms a new thinking style. In that case, that change in the nature and content of thinking significantly affects language, which is organically connected with thinking, as a means of communication, a material shell of thinking (Izotova, 2021, p. 200).

Modern society is characterised by "the exponential growth of digital communication that necessitates a nuanced academic exploration of how emerging technological phenomena generate linguistic expressions" (Bykova, 2024, p. 24).

**The purpose and objectives of the article.** The objective of this research is to identify and analyse linguistic markers that specify English digital discourse. The author focuses on the intersection of technology, society and language, and explores how communicative needs reshape linguistic norms.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** In order to understand the term “digital discourse”, we need to pay attention to the two key concepts: discourse and digital technologies. Discourse is not new in linguistics, but various researchers stress it and give new interpretations in the modern scientific paradigm (Pasichnyk, 2022, p. 76).

A distinctive feature of digital discourse (DD) is “digitalised sociality”, as the rapid development of computer technologies and the Internet has singled out virtual communication and given it special significance in the modern world (Crystal, 2001, p. 178). The prescription of specific codes in programming languages and their design in natural language indicates the expansion of the boundaries of the information and technocratic space (Holt, 2004, p. 189). O. Marina examines the features of digital artistic discourse and argues that the specificity of generating this type of discourse involves using digital technologies and their functioning in an electronic format (Marina, 2017, p. 108).

Digital discourse makes the space of communication of contemporaries even more diverse, as its agents and clients (humans and machines) often change roles. For example, a chatbot can be a full-fledged interlocutor and be perceived as a person or as a higher-level phenomenon – social agents or animated machines, when a person on the machine screen can see a personalised robot capable of not only verbal but also non-verbal communication (Yan, 2016).

When communicating between Humans and Machines, there is also some place left for imagery and emotionality. Innovative lexemes’ expressive and emotional charge transfers the semantic features of common language lexical units. Thus, they reflect a lively and dynamic image of the human experience. Visual and graphic means attract the attention of Internet users and diversify English digital discourse (Lazebna, 2020, p. 12).

English digital discourse is a kind of institutional communication mediated by the symbiosis of (artificial) programming languages and (natural) English, which reflects the digitalised speech (dis)action that becomes the motive for verbal interaction between its agents and its clients through innovative information technologies.

The ways of communication within the framework of the DD are oral (audio messages, comments, voice responses, podcasts, digital media files, etc.), written (written messages, comments in files, messages, etc.), visual (graphic signs, non-verbal means, emoticons, pictures, memes, etc.), audio, audio-visual and a combination of

these methods (“cascading communication”) (Prykhodko, 2022, p. 57). Cascade communication often faces challenges. It may happen when the original message becomes weakened or misinterpreted while moving through different levels. We experienced delays in spreading the information and the absence of effective feedback systems to confirm that the message was received and understood correctly.

DD is characterised by the rapid spread of verbal and graphic means (emoticons, emojis, hashtags, etc.) In this way, people simplify their communication in virtual reality, saving time and creating an inexhaustible space for realising their imagination and creativity (Sondheim, 1999, p. 140). At the same time, language is used not only for exchanging information, but also for reflecting one’s emotional state in communication. Recently, a special code has been developed for this purpose: different types of emotionality are conveyed by specially adapted signs (Landau, 1993).

Communication in digital discourse is dynamic and creative. Analysed empirical material shows that users (both professionals and amateurs) develop the vocabulary of English social networks (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and others) (Lazebna, 2020, p. 9).

Having examined anthropomorphic and non-anthropomorphic models of computer terms creation, it is relevant to focus more specifically on the source domain “biophysical characteristics” within the structure of the anthropomorphic model where 50% of the examples presented in this source are created via the metaphoric transfer of the concept DEATH with explicit involvement of the main lexeme, responsible for the creation of corresponding terms (deadband, deadfile, deadspace, deadtime, deadlock, mortality) thus indicating the dominant anthropomorphic background of English computer terminology. (Lazebna, 2020, p. 11). Moreover, the rapid development of digital technologies has transformed human communication, work and mentality. The main contribution is the emergence of new concepts that demand new linguistic representations. Creating computer-related terms has become a dynamic process involving linguists, translators and specialists in terminology. We should highlight both linguistic mechanisms and sociocultural factors that influence this process.

The problem of emotional expression is highly relevant in linguistics, which deals with language in various aspects of its systemic organisation and functional purpose. One of these purposes is the inherent ability of language to realise emotional intentions (Sukyadi, 2011, p. 38).

In addition to the verbal way of expressing thoughts and designating certain phenomena, DD has a system of non-verbal computer tools used in chats and text messages on mobile phones. Since messages need to be typed on a keyboard, which takes some time, a special sign system used in text messages is iconic (Langton, 1993, p. 48).

The use of iconic signs is possible due to the ability to achieve both completeness and conciseness of the message. Visual rhetoric also contributes to the maximum facilitation of information perception, attracts the reader's attention, and sometimes even creates a comic effect (Sag, 1999, p. 481). The communicative principle of expressiveness is realised in an electronic text through verbal and non-verbal means of conveying a message, i.e., verbal and graphic. A striking example is the so-called emoticons, designed to express feelings through non-verbal images. The most common are emoticons, which consist of various combinations of keyboard characters that look like images of different emotional states of a person.

Graphic space is known to be an integral part of a written text. Outside of it, the text is fundamentally unrealisable, since any information cannot exist outside the code of a particular medium (Marchionini, 2011, p. 46). Graphic symbols make the text of English social networks attractive for a viewer, create the possibility of "repeated reading of one phrase and thus recognising different but related meanings in its composition, which contributes to its effectiveness and also allows the recipient to feel like a co-author of the message" (Marchionini, 2011, p. 78).

On a structural level, we can observe the persistent issue of orthography, for example, the use of abbreviations, spelling practices in general, strategies of phonetic writing (searching for occurrences of *cu* for see you, *kul* for cool, emoticons, etc.), letter – number homophones, nonstandard spelling, and the use of uppercase lettering (such as *SUUUPER*). Furthermore, two kinds of ellipses will be analysed, especially regarding the morpho-syntactic and dialogical structure of the messages. In the first type of ellipses, functional elements (such as articles) are omitted; in the second one, content words are dropped. The latter typically occurs in responses to previous messages". (Thurlow, 2012, p. 314).

The linguistic features necessary to create a communication model with a chatbot within a dialogue or a polylogue are also found at the lexical and semantic level. The universal features here include the most frequent linguistic units in terms of number and used in each group chatbot. This layer's most frequent elements and universal features

are verbs, nouns, pronouns and adverbs, and among the first two are lexical units of the spoken register. Syntax is also specific to dialogical and polylogical speech in human communication with a chatbot. It is characterised by the widespread use of colloquial constructions that tend to paratactic and straightforward sentence structures in the affirmative, interrogative and exclamatory forms. Let us look at the sample of a dialogue between a Human (H) and a Chatbot (Chb):

(H) Yo, bro! How are you today?

(Chb) I'm doing great today, thanks for asking!

😊 How about you? What's going on in your world?

(H) I'm fine, a little bit upset.

(Chb) I'm glad you're hanging in there, but sorry to hear you're feeling a bit upset. Want to talk about what's bothering you? Or would you rather be distracted with something fun or interesting?

(H) Idk how to solve my problem (

(Chb) I got you 😊. I'm really sorry you're feeling that way. Whatever it is, you're not alone, and I'm here to help however I can. Can you tell me a little more about the problem you're trying to solve? I'll do my best to help! 🌟 No stress, that's a huge first step 🙌.

(H) Are you a psychologist?

(Chb) I'm not a licensed psychologist, but I can definitely be a good listener and offer thoughtful, supportive advice. If you're dealing with something really heavy or ongoing, talking to a professional is always a great step – but in the meantime, I'm here for you. Want to tell me what's on your mind?

As we can see, the use of repetition, or rather copying the person's phrases, enhances the expressiveness of the statement, but is regarded as a purposeful deviation from the norm. Repeating phrases (your own or your partner's) is necessary to draw the attention of communicators to express agreement with the interlocutor and to return to the topic of conversation. Usually, the Machine "repeats" phrases after the Human or forms similar ones, i.e. reproduces the templates produced by the Human.

One of the most striking features of digital discourse is its informality. In the sample conversation, the human uses expressions such as "yo", "u", "lol", and "idk". These shorthand forms and initialisms reflect the influence of text messaging and internet culture on contemporary language. They also perform a phatic function, maintaining a casual and comfortable atmosphere within the interaction.

Although the Chatbot lacks consciousness or emotion, its replies include expressions like "I got you 😊" and "thanks for asking! 😊". These responses demonstrate the AI's programming to sim-



ulate human-like empathy and social presence. AI systems are increasingly designed to mirror human emotional cues, fostering rapport and trust.

Unlike traditional written discourse, digital conversations often lack a linear, formal structure. In the exchange, the user does not open with a greeting or frame their question with complete grammatical sentences. This reflects a shift from written to oral-like discourse in digital settings, where immediacy and spontaneity often replace coherence and planning.

The human speaker frequently uses ellipses to express uncertainty or hesitation. These markers mimic spoken intonation and pacing, offering insight into the speaker's emotional state and thought process.

Emojis such as 🌟, 😊, 🙌 and 😄 supplement the lack of non-verbal cues in text-based communication. These visual elements serve as paralinguistic devices, helping to convey tone, affect, and pragmatic intention. They have become integral to digital discourse, compensating for the absence of prosody and facial expression.

Digital discourse, particularly in AI interactions, prioritises brevity. The Chatbot's responses, such as "No stress!" and "Got you", reflect the user's expectation for quick, helpful feedback. This efficiency-oriented style aligns with the task-based nature of most AI systems, which are often used to solve problems or complete actions swiftly.

Human-machine communication represents a dynamic evolution of language use in the digital age. By examining features such as informal register, paralinguistic elements, and structural fragmentation, we can better understand how technology shapes contemporary discourse. As these conversations become more conversational, digital peculiarities will likely become increasingly normalised in everyday communication.

**Conclusions and prospects for further research.** Digital discourse, characterised by its immediacy, informality, interactivity, and multimodality, is a universal linguistic concept that reflects the symbiotic processes characteristic of modern communication, demonstrating distinct linguistic features that differ from traditional written or spoken communication. It represents a unique hybrid of spoken and written language influenced by the technological affordances of digital media. Its main characteristics – brevity, creativity, expressiveness, and multimodality – reflect broader changes in human communication. This dynamic space offers fertile ground for continued linguistic and cultural analysis.

The study of DD reveals significant insights about the impact of technology on communication. The increasing use of non-verbal elements, shorthand forms, and initialisms influences interactions between humans and chatbots. We can also mention how digital platforms form language and communication practices. These innovations reflect significant changes in human-machine relations.

The conversational nature of DD provides non-standard ways of communication. Chatbots, for example, often replicate human-like emotional cues and adopt informal registers to foster rapport and create a more natural communication experience. This trend suggests that as AI and other technologies continue to evolve, digital discourse may shortly transform the communication mechanism and verbal and non-verbal interaction.

Further research should investigate how these features evolve with new technologies (e.g. AI, augmented reality, virtual reality, digital lexicography) and how linguistic norms adapt to platform-specific constraints and community standards.

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## ЛІНГВІСТИЧНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ДИГІТАЛЬНОГО АНГЛОМОВНОГО ДИСКУРСУ

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*Мета статті – зосередити увагу на впливі цифрових технологій на мову, приділивши особливу увагу цифровому англомовному дискурсу та його лінгвістичним особливостям на онлайн-платформах, що відображають сучасні тенденції комунікації в Інтернеті. Розглядається роль цифрових платформ (соціальних мереж, месенджерів, форумів) у формуванні нових мовних моделей, лексичних інновацій, синтаксичних спрощень та мультимодальної комунікації. Показано, як ІТ-технології трансформували комунікацію та використання мови, змінили мовні норми та соціальну активність. Проаналізовано типові лексичні одиниці, стилістичні особливості та прагматичні функції цифрового дискурсу. Автор висвітлює внесок лінгвістів у дослідження ключових особливостей цифрового дискурсу, таких як неформальність, мультимодальність, безпосередність та інтерактивність. Спостерігається стрімкий розвиток нових мовних форм, таких як емодзі, смайлики, аббревіатури, скорочення, хештеги та інноваційні лексичні одиниці, які відображають виразність та ефективність цифрової комунікації. У дослідженні підкреслюється процес взаємодії людини та машини, в якому важливу роль відіграють чат-боти та їхня здатність імітувати емпатію та залучення до неформальної, динамічної розмови. Трансформація людської комунікації, що відбувається під впливом цифрових технологій, зокрема динамічний характер цифрового дискурсу та його мультимодальні риси, вказують на перспективи подальших досліджень. Перед лінгвістами стоїть завдання дослідити вплив новітніх технологій, таких як штучний інтелект, доповнена реальність і віртуальна реальність, на використання мови та мовні норми. Матеріал дослідження сприяє глибшому розумінню динаміки англійської мови в цифровому контексті і поняття цифрового дискурсу.*

**Ключові слова:** цифровий дискурс, онлайн-комунікація, ІТ-технології, інформація, лінгвістика, чат-бот, інновації.