THE RAPID DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE: HOW TECHNOLOGY CAN MAKE OR BREAK SPEECH

Daria S. Melnikova (ITMO University)

The article describes how new Information Technology (IT) and the Internet influence modern written and spoken language. The aim is to identify and analyze the positive and negative impact of the Internet and IT on the language (based on English examples).

Introduction. Technology has always been one of the major driving factors in the evolution of language and communication, but in recent years, with the emergence of digital technology, these things have been turned on their head, possibly forever. Language has always been in continuous and rapid development. Nowadays, new words as well as new meanings of existing words and grammatical structures are being invented everyday. However, not all changes occurring in language caused by the technical and social progress are positive.

Body Paragraph. *1. Positive effects.* Having developed technology to the extend we have, we can now communicate in ways that our ancestors would likely have found impossible. We are able to share emotions, stories and simply to communicate with people even from the other side of the world. As a result of this countless communication, new words are being invented everyday. This mostly includes new officially-recognized abbreviations (such as «lol» for laughing out loud, «OMG» for Oh, my God, etc.) and new word, defining the Internet users and the Internet itself (as an example: «Webies» for people who use the Internet everyday and feel themselves confident about doing this, or, «Newbies» for those, who are actually new to this). Moreover, the constant communication through the Internet does not just widen vocabulary in terms of specific words either - but also exposes us to entirely new dialects and grammatical forms. As a result of digital interconnectivity we have an ability to understand dialects we were not previously exposed to (African-American Vernacular English as an example). Grammatical forms and wordplay that have been recently created by the internet users enriched and developed English language a lot. There is an argument that creating and understanding the warped grammar (for example «doge» - «Much digital marketing. Very content. Wow.» or «I are crying cuz I are out of focus») requires at least a basic knowledge of accurate grammar and vocabulary, as to be able to write deliberately incorrectly, you have to be able to write correctly in the first place. IT has also lead to new forms of communication entirely - the so-called «meme». This integration of image and language became a globally recognized form of communication and help to establish a cross-cultural contacts.

2. Negative effects. However, not all changes occurring in language with the technical and social progress are positive. Such rapid development of the language can actually divide people into two big groups. The ones, who understand and use all these new words and grammar structures and the others, who hear them for the first time and cannot recognize even a single word or construction. It is a relatively new phenomenon that in the space of a single lifetime (even sometimes a few years), so many words and grammatical forms can come and go that the speech of our juniors actually does not seem to make sense to us – and it would be fair to say that IT and interconnectivity play a big part in this. Psychologists also suggest that there are quite a number of social problems caused by constant use of the Internet and social media. For instance, only virtual and online communication

can lead to the problems with communication and interaction in reality, which can cause an introvert behavior and, as a result loneliness and depression.

Conclusion. Thus, the issue of the development of language is a complex but thoroughly compelling one. The language is evolving faster than it has ever done before and the way we communicate and the language we use have been reshaped, probably, forever. This language evolution has both positive and negative effects, as every evolution would definitely have. But we cannot talk about the end result right now, the process is still going on. So, the present goal of linguists is to keep up to date with the way people talk online and in person and the goal for the future is to find ways to minimize the negative effects and to continue the development and preservation of language.

Daria S. Melnikova (author)   Signature