The Impact of Technology on Modern English Language
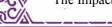
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Abstract

The present research aims at shedding light on the recent changes which take place in the use of the English language that have been caused by the impact of technology represented in the extensive exploit of the internet. Hence, the ever changing world of technology has aided a constant changing of the English language. Though there are some who argue that the impact of technology has 'dumbed down' the language, there are others who would claim that a language that does not evolve, is a dying language.

Technology, therefore, has a big role in changing the way people communicate. To be more specific, the way people speak today is almost the same way they spoke before the internet became what it is, albeit with an enriched vocabulary. However, what is largely different is the way people write today. That is the area where technology has had the biggest impact. So, this research is devoted to highlight those changes occurred in the written English and to show if these changes such as abbreviations, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation, and grammar used by native and foreign speakers, when communicating with each other through the various means of media, become common in formal English language. For example, email altered the structure of the letter as a communicative tool. In this respect, new conventions and new abbreviations such as IMO (in my opinion), FWIW (for what it's worth), IIRC (if I remember correctly) and FYI (for your information).

Keywords: technology, vocabulary, communicate, changes

1. Introduction

Since the spread of the internet in the early 1990's, it became a very significant component in the process of globalization and the widespread of the English language. In fact, the internet also works to preserve the slowly dying languages and dialects of the world in smaller societies. Today the use of technology or the internet represents the newest, broadest and fastest means of exchanging information all over the world. The English language is one of the important means of exchanging various information among different communities.

Therefore, social media or electronic communication technology has revolutionized the process of composing English writing and speech. Communication technology reflects a several number of electronic communication forms. Such forms are normally associated with the internet nowadays access through both computers and mobile phones. They include e-mail, chat rooms, forums, intant messaging devices, social net-working sites, gaming networks, and Web- logs (blogs). According to Omar and Miah (2012), more than four in ten teens (45 %) have both a computer and a cell phone. These devices enable their users to make phone calls and send text messages. The effect of this process is obvious in the daily conduct of young people and in their educational system.

The influence of technology and internet on modern English language is clearly seen and touched in various ways and means. First, it adds lots of "jargon vocabulary". Second, it provides meaning to existing words and terms, such as the meaning of 'mouse' and 'keyboard' and so on. Moreover, it produces words on unifying the utterance of people all over the world as they meet each other via social media although they are from remote places. In addition, technology can lead to special linguistic "memes" faster and much further than ever before. For example, the word 'cloud' stands for nebulous group of people working on computers in a universal use.

David Crystal (2015) argues that new technologies function to facilitate new pursuits by developing new styles of the English language. Hence, the influence of a certain technological medium is considered to be very interesting. It is , for Crystal, a relatively temporary phenomenon that it takes a very long time to be actually recognized as a prominent change. Using some social media, like twitter, can change what people write by
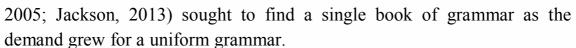
affecting the ways they write. The English language is more or less exactly the same as it was 20 years ago.

It is argued that technological change, to some extent, tends to provoke linguistic and cultural change. That's why dictionaries are permanently ready to add new and typically very trendy words. In this respect, Dewey (2015) and Al-Kadi (2017) believe that old words that have gotten new meanings are more interesting than new words. For instance, the words "cloud", "tablet" and "catfish" are interesting examples of old words with new meanings. She wonders if the internet is ruining proper English. For her, the answer is that looking at the idea that dictionaries. com's 20th birthday is more interesting than most.

1.1 Debate Views about the Effect of Technology on English

Due to the fact that the access to technology doesn't cause any threatening to business and social interactions, it is now easily reached and doesn't face any struggle. Almost all native speakers of English as well as foreign learners use the internet and those who go online tend to have some multiple times throughout the day. It is natural that all live languages change over time, the internet has offered a new medium for these changes to happen. As the internet has become a public device and a means of communication available everywhere, English spelling, vocabularies, pronunciation, and grammar have changed as well.

There have been conflicting views of debating researchers about the changes taken place by the influence of the internet. Ali (2012) and Kern (2006) consider the new changes of the English varieties caused by the effect of the internet are a threat to the standard varieties of English. These arguments are attributed to the fact that the English of the social media used these days often does not conform to the standard varieties. In the late of the eighteenth century, there was an attempt to set an order, identity and stability for the English language style (McCrum et al. 1992). There were also other researchers who demand to protect the language from change. Considine (2014) argues that the English language differs from other languages in that it isn't a language academy tasked with regulating some official version. Additionally, Goring (2005) elaborates the English should be fixed and all posterity must be considered as the founder, and the English dictionary as the corner stone. There were also an adoption of unifying grammar rules, so some researchers like Considine, 2014; Goring

2005; Jackson, 2013) sought to find a single book of grammar as the demand grew for a uniform grammar.

On the other hand, other researchers, such as David Crystal (2001, 2005, 2011) believe that technology has established a linguistic revolution. To Crystal and other linguists like Herring (2011), these changes in English form and usage have introduced a new form of linguistics called *Internet Linguistics*. In some academic institutions Internet Linguistics is widely discussed within the field of digital communication or the term computer-mediated discourse analysis (CMDA). This type of discourse resembles other discourse in which people interact and communicate. Here the interaction takes place by exchanging messages over network linked computers both verbally and written. Using such branch of discourse, social and economic factors affect online or email style. Cho (2010) states that email English is characterized be informality than other varieties of written communication. Yates (1996), on the other hand, concludes that "CMC is more akin to writing than speech in terms of range of vocabulary". In their study, Kadir, Maros, and Hamid (2012) finds that the linguistic features used in text messages tend to include shortenings, acronyms, initialisms, homophones, accent stylization, non-conventional spellings, and chippings.

1.2 The Impact of Technology on Shaping the Internet Language

The excessive use of technology or internet has wrought significant changes in the daily use of the English language, most of these are neither good or bad, merely different. So, people may ask about the ways technology has changed the way they speak and write, both online and offline. In this paper the focus will be on the changes that have taken place in the written pieces of the internet users. Consequently, the changes in the English writing of the language of the internet are found in the new vocabularies, new spelling and punctuation, and grammar.

Despite of the fact that the use of the internet is an English- based network that takes place easily, their users almost encounter problems online because of cross-cultural differences. These problems could be easily solved as they help the users of the internet understand each other. The internet language is viewed as a set of different genres and registers used in different situations.

The internet language has some features connected to speech and writing, e.g., phonetic and phonological ones. In addition, it is seen a fully formed language style, with its own vocabulary, abbreviations, spelling and punctuation, grammar, slang and all other features that define a real language style. As Crystal (2001) states, the internet users have the ability to communicate faster and send short text messages to each other. All the abbreviations, acronyms included in the internet language make up most of Netspeak's vocabulary along with lists of coined words and phrases. In particular words, the new vocabulary manipulated in the electronic communication provide a fascinating insight into how quickly new words can be appeared and then abandoned. It could be argued that each a few years some new words have become outdated and others come to be picked out. This usage is frequently associated with the needs of the internet users.

2. Objective of the Study

The present research aims to find out the new changes taken place in the English language caused by the impact of the use of technology and the internet in the daily electronic communication. This study concentrates on the changes that have taken place in the English writing throughout the use different types of social media devices, such as emails, chat groups, text messaging and blogs.

3. Data Collection and Analysis

The data of the present study were collected via means of written documents. Various electronic written pieces were collected which were produced by the users of the internet. The researcher collected 50 written pieces that were exchanged in emails, chat-groups, text messaging, and blogs which belong to both native and foreign speakers of the English language. In the analysis process of the collected data, the researcher aimed to analyze them according to four criteria: a) the use of new vocabulary, b) the use of abbreviation, c) spelling and punctuation, and d) grammar.

3.1 Some features of the internet language

1) New vocabulary and abbreviations

One of the most obvious and prominent features is the lexicon that belongs exclusively to the internet. This lexicon does not contain the terminology related to computer science and other relevant subjects. A great number of new words other than technical terms like *cable, disk, bit binary*, have emerged to reflect particular situations, operations, activities and so on. A

popular way of creating internet terminology is to combine two separate words to form a new word, e.g., *mousepad, one-click, double-click.*

In the process of analyzing the vocabulary used by the internet users, it was found that, for example, the word *at*, often shown as @ comes to have an increasingly prefixed function: *atcomman, atsign, @-party, @-address.* This use has come to be influential in non-internet settings.
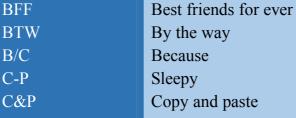
a. Internet acronyms and text messaging

SMS language or internet acronyms are the abbreviated language and slang words commonly used with mobile phone text messaging, email and instant messaging (online chat application, such as Messenger from Facebook, Instagram, Twitter). In the analysis of text messaging, it was found that these messages don't use formal English and have many abbreviations. Texts are supposed to be instant, so the use of abbreviations is considered easier and faster than full forms. Therefore, the various types of abbreviations found in chat-groups, text messages, and blogs have been one of the most distinguished features. Acronyms are so common that they normally stand for new full forms of words, e.g., acronyms like BBS (bulletin board system), BCC (blind carbon copy), CID (consider it done), CIO (check it out) and FAQ (frequently asked questions) are frequent abbreviations found in the daily usage of the language of the internet. The various kinds of abbreviations found in the writings of the internet users have been one of its most remarked features. Acronyms are used frequently that they regularly receive comments and replies.

Acronyms found the language of the internet are no longer a combination of letters. They stand for full meaningful and pronounced as words. Below are examples of various common acronyms.

Table (1) Common acronyms used in the internet language

Acronyms	Meanings
2F4U	Too fast for you
4YEO FYEO	For your eyes only
2MORO	Tomorrow
2NTE	Tonight
AAMOF	As a matter of fact
AFAIK	As far as I know
AKA	Also known as
ASL	Age/Sex/Location

BFF	Best friends for ever
BTW	By the way
B/C	Because
C-P	Sleepy
C&P	Copy and paste
CU	See you
CUS	See you soon
CXT	See you tomorrow
DIY	Do it yourself
EM?	Excuse me?
EOD	End of discussion
FAQ	Frequently asked questions
F2F	Face to face
FOAF	Friend of a friend
HF	Have fun
GR8	Great
IDK	I don't know
IIRC	If I recall
MOF	Male or female
NA2	Name, Address, Zip
NC	No comment
NP	No problem
NUM	Never mind
OIC	Oh, I see
OTOH	On the other hand
OTP	On the phone
POU	Point of view
RN	Right now
RO	Are you
RTFM	Read the fine manual
SFLR	Sorry for late reply
TBC	To be continued
TIA	Thanks in advance
TQ	Thank you
TYT	Take your time
WRT	With regard to
YAM	Yet another meeting

b) Spelling and punctuation

Distinctive graphology is also a remarkable characteristic of Netspeak or the internet language. For example, the status of capitalization is used distinctively and varies greatly. Most of the instances found in the use of capitals in the Netspeak are not case-sensitive which tend to follow a random use of capital letters or no capitals at all. Sentences including letters beginning with small letters in different position are usually acceptable. For example:

-Jack are you travelling to paris next month

In the above sentence, the message wholly in capitals is considered to be "shouting" and always avoided. On the contrary, words with full capitals add some extra emphasis to be recognized.

-She is VERY beautiful.

-This is a VERY important point.

Spelling is also distinctive in the electronic English language. New spelling conventions have been used and emerged, such as the case of replacing plural –s by –z in particular words like *downloadz, serialz, gamez, filez*. Thesespelling errors are frequently used in the electronic writing. But they are not an indication of lack education. Instead, they are purely typical examples of email language.

c) Grammar

As it has been explained earlier the most general features of the internet language distinctiveness are mainly found in graphology and lexicon- the levels of language where it can easily produce innovation and deviation. In related words, grammatical variation or distinction is less frequent. Few instances have been counted in the usage of Netspeak. Particular cases which express verb reduplication take place in some chat=groups but these are not frequent or universal. For instance, a verb is used twice in immediate succession to refer to a group of functions, such as the expression of pain, happiness, pleasure and so on.

-I deleted your message, Lose, lose [I'm stupid]

-How about that! Win, win [the program has performed successfully]

4. Conclusions

It is evident that the electronic communication has a remarkable influence on the use of the modern English language. This tendency of using the internet and the other various social media is expected to continue in the nearest and far future introducing new forms of language, like new graphology and net-speak which don't follow the grammatical and syntactic rules of a systematic English

writing. This study aimed to shed light on the updated and latest changes that have taken place in the English language regarding the lexicon, abbreviations, new spelling and punctuation and any other grammatical deviation. The analysis of the data collected in this study showed that the users of the internet and the other technological media were interested in using vocabulary variation represented in the use of acronyms and abbreviations in their text messages, emails, chat-groups, and blogs. In addition, spelling variation which is seen as spelling errors was also found. It is expected that new vocabulary, new acronyms, spelling errors and punctuation may appear and be used frequently in the future. To be specific, these new forms work in updating the English language. But they at the same time should not change the essence of language.

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