THE PHENOMENON OF TEXTING
E. Dolzhich, S. Dmitrichenkova
RUDN University (RUSSIAN FEDERATION)

Abstract
Traditionally, the concept of communication is considered as the exchange of information between individuals through the common system of symbols.

According to the type of relations between the participants, there are such forms of communication as interpersonal, public, mass communication; by means of communication it may be written, oral and paralinguistic (gesture, facial expressions), real sign communication like visual arts.

Nowadays there is also an electronic form of communication, used not only in the virtual space, but also in everyday life. Language mediated by electronic discourses like chats, SMS texts, e-mails significantly differs from the standard form of the language and is known as the texting language.

In the course of such communication, oral speech is used, transferred to a written format without a corresponding edition, with preservation of mimicry and intonation at the expense of written means.

Texting language is creating its own sort of grammar and vocabulary using symbols of different semiotic systems, forming the phenomenon of telescoping, that is contraction of a phrase, word, or part of a word, reduction of a series of words to some of their component syllables.

The relevance of this study is due to the particular popularity of the SMS language and its influence on the culture of writing and speaking, since writing has been recognized as a leading tool in learning. The use of SMS is constantly expanding, which leads to the universalization of SMS language and to its emergence beyond the limits of electronic communication in teen slang, media language, and advertising.

The aim of the research is to investigate how the texting influences the language, to systematize a set of lexical, grammatical and semiotic characteristics used in SMS language and to analyze if the texting has a really negative effect on the literacy skills of students or a text whole arises under the influence of a certain set of extra linguistic and text forming factors.

The methodological base of the research are communicative and discursive approaches, the linguistic concepts of creolized and polycode texts.

The results of the research refer to the text in continuous connection with the situational context, which determines everything that is essential for generating this text, in connection with the system of communicative and pragmatic goals of the text author, interacting with the addressee. In this regard it becomes obvious the distinction in text writing depending on different communicative situations external to the text.

The research results may find use in further development of Internet Linguistics and the language of electronic communication.

Keywords: text, discourse, electronic communication.

1 INTRODUCTION
Scientific and technological progress brought to life a completely new means of communication that combines the functions of the phone with its ability to communicate in real time and a telegram with its written summary form providing cost-effective communication at any time and from anywhere in the world. A new type of communication contributed to the emergence of a special "oral-written" SMS language with a number of characteristic language features designed to facilitate the implementation of the most effective communication: fast, concise, informative, clear, emotional and as close as possible to oral dialogue.

Texting started in the 1920s when RCA Communications in New York City first introduced the telex service. The first text messages were sent from New York to London via RCA’s transatlantic circuits.
The history of texting massage began in 1991, when the ETSI proposed a mechanism for exchanging small blocks of text information between mobile subscriber stations and in 1992 the engineer Neil Papworth typed the first text message wishing “Merry Christmas” on a computer and sent the first SMS message to the cell phone of Vodafone director Richard Jarvis. Texting received official recognition as a means of communication and information transfer. Today, using SMS, you can receive announcements of movies, subscribe on SMS news, connect information from weather reports, horoscopes, etc.

Nowadays the Internet as an information and communication environment is used as a tool for communication and cognition. Language becomes not only a means of communication, but also a means of creating a virtual reality. Text messaging is a fundamentally new type of interpersonal communication, implemented using a specific communication channel - a mobile phone. Technical characteristics of this channel have a direct impact on the design, length and methods of encoding texts of short messages.

We can define the concept of communication as follows:

1. Merriam Webster Dictionary defines it like “the act or process of using words, sounds, signs, or behavior to express or exchange information or to express your ideas, thoughts, feelings, etc., to someone else; a message that is given to someone: a letter, telephone call, etc” [8].

2. Oxford Dictionary gives the following definition: “the activity or process of expressing ideas and feelings or of giving people information; methods of sending information, especially telephones, radio, computers, etc. or roads and railways” [9].

Thus, communication is the exchange of information. The process of communication is determined by the technology, the characteristics of the sender and the recipient, their cultural code, communication protocol and goals. Meaning can be understood only in the context of social, professional relationships or purposeful activities in which communication takes place.

The polyphonic nature of online communication which combines different types of discourse is one of its most important discursive features. The combination of verbal and non-verbal information (picture, sound fragment) characterizing the creolized text is also typical of some genres of electronic communication.

Internet discourse is characterized by distantness and mediation, which, on the one hand, facilitates the process of communication, and on the other hand, makes it more difficult. As Crystal points out [3, p. 20] Internet discourse is distinguished by a synthesis of written and oral speech. There are genres that are either verbal or written texts. For example, chat is closer to colloquial speech, and the Internet conference is closer to the written text. However, despite the fact that one of the types of discourse (written or verbal), almost all genres that function on the Internet, occupy an intermediate position between oral and written. In chat rooms, blogs, forums, e-mails there are texts that combine the properties of both types of speech.

Crystal [3, p. 24] introduced the term ‘netspeak’ that is a new linguistic medium. The term ‘netspeak’ serves as an alternative to terms such as Netlish, Weblish, Internet language, cyberspeak, electronic language, computer-mediated communication, etc. Both Netlish and Weblish can be said to have been simply derived from English, ‘electronic discourse’ highlights the interactive nature of Internet dialogues, while ‘computer-mediated communication’ focuses on the medium itself.

The language that serves communication on the Internet undergoes a transformation at the level of vocabulary, rules for constructing statements and a coherent text, genre-stylistic norms, the ratio of oral and written speech, communicative strategies and tactics.

2 METHODOLOGY

The methodological basis are the researches in the electronic communication of such scientists as: Crystal 2001, 2006 [3]; Baron, 2010 [2]; Varnhagen, McFall, Pugh, Routledge, Sumida-MacDonald, & Kwong, 2010 [10]; Jonge & Kemp, 2010 [7]; Volodina, 2011 [11]; A.O. Abu Sa’aleek, 2015 [1]; Alejandro Gomez-Camacho, 2017 [6].

By employing discursive and communicative approaches, the main objective is to explore the specific features of texting. Based on the discourse theory [5], [4], we deduce that e-discourse should be understood as texts in close connection with the situational context: in conjunction with the social, cultural, historical, ideological, psychological and other factors, with the system of communicative-
pragmatic and cognitive target settings of texters that interact with the target determination of a specific ordering of linguistic units of different levels at implementing within the text. E-discourse characterizes the communicative process leading to the formation of a certain formal structure that is the text. One of the central issues in the study of electronic communication is the question whether the traditional distinction between written and oral speech forms is applicable to e-communication. While investigating the phenomena of texting methods of corpus analysis, cognitive-discursive analysis, elements of statistical and content analysis have been used.

3 RESULTS

The texting language is a language mediated by electronic discourses like chats, SMS texts, e-mails that significantly differs from the standard form of the language. In the course of e-communication, oral speech in written format is used without appropriate revision, with preservation of mimicry and intonation at the expense of written means.

The use of SMS is constantly expanding, which leads to the universalization and democratization of SMS-sublanguage, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to the emergence of this sublanguage beyond the limits of mobile communication, i.e. in the language of the media, advertising, literature, business correspondence.

The recognition of the SMS language occurs at different levels. J. Milton’s poem “Paradise Lost” and “Canterbury Tales” by G. Chaucer were translated into the text messages language. The Australian Bible Society created a world first – the entire Bible translated into SMS message form. The SMS Bible is intended to cross the digital divide and reach a wider audience. Bible Society spokesman Michael Chant said: “The old days when the Bible was only available within a somber black cover with a cross on it are long gone…. We want to open it up for people of all ages, backgrounds and interests, and the SMS version is a logical extension of that”.

The main distinguishing feature of texting is text compression. The message volume is limited and therefore it is necessary to figure out how to put the maximum content in a minimum of characters. Methods of speech compression may be different:

1. Telescoping: LOL – Laugh out loud; BTW – By the way; KIT – Keep in touch;
2. Use of digits for words: 4 – for; 2 – too, to;
3. Combination of digits and letters: B4 – before; L8R – later; GR8 – great;
4. Unusual spelling tending to compression: Sory-sorry; Gud - good;
5. Replacing of entire words with single characters: r – are; y- why.

Features of the texting in Russian are practically the same with some shortenings borrowed from English and not so shaped structure. The sender should strive for easy decryption of his/her message by the receiver; otherwise, communicative failure is possible. Despite the fact, that many researchers note that the texting neglects the grammar rules, spelling and does not have any rules; its own grammar began to take shape. Texting dictionaries on the Internet, courses that teach texting [https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/texting], evidence this. The Oxford English Dictionary included the most popular expressions of texting language [https://public.oed.com/updates/].

The most discussed questions concerning texting were its influence on the general literacy and the way of young people thinking. Concern among scholars and educators is not the use of texting directly in the framework of virtual communication, but the fact that it becomes the norm of language communication.

In our opinion, texting does not cause low literacy, but reflects the negative processes in modern culture i.e. a falling interest in reading, especially, reading classical literature, a low level of many media texts, advertising and dissemination of pop culture, that forms a clip consciousness complying with shortened text messages.

It is also necessary to take into account the extra-linguistic situation in which the message is created. A broad understanding of the communicative situation includes five extra-linguistic factors:

1. Functional-communicative sphere in which the text is created;
2. Individual social characteristics of the addressee generating the text (age, professional, social);
3 Attitude of the addressant to the addressee (unconstrained, official, collegial);
4 Attitude of the addressant to the topic (emotional, neutral, evaluative, objective, professional-special);
5 Interaction with the language code. All language units included in the text become included in the communicative situation.

Based on the experiment conducted among the students of RUDN University, we conclude that the form of the message directly depends on the communicative situation, namely, on the status characteristics of the communication participants, their age and their position. Thus, SMS texts can be viewed from the perspective of the communicative participants belonging to a certain social and age group. The same addressant can vary the text form and style depending on the message receiver.

The students note such positive aspects of texting as the possibility to maintain social ties, to support emotionally since a large number of SMS messages consist of wishes of good luck, success, express support and interest.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Language usage over computer mediated discourses, like chats, emails and SMS texts, significantly differs from the standard form of the language. An urge towards shorter message length facilitating faster typing and the need for semantic clarity, shape the structure of this non-standard form known as the texting language.

The use of SMS is constantly expanding, which leads to the universalization of SMS language and to its emergence beyond the limits of electronic communication in teen slang, media language, and advertising.

Texting, being a linguistic phenomenon, cannot be considered outside the peculiarities of the cultural environment and the communicative situation. The results of the research refer to the text in continuous connection with the situational context, which determines everything that is essential for text generation in connection with the system of communicative and pragmatic goals of the text sender, interacting with the addressee. In this regard it becomes obvious the distinction in text writing depending on different communicative situations external to the text.

The special feature of the SMS messages refers to the fact that they serve not only to exchange information, but also to maintain social contacts.

The development and dissemination of new communication technologies harbor a wide variety of opportunities for people. They are able to change our reality, generate new cultural phenomena, modify the cultural system. Thus, researches of electronic discourse are particularly perspective as everything that is connected with new technologies. It is obvious that new means of communication will continue to develop and will be directly dependent on the speed of information transfer in a short and simple way.

REFERENCES


