

ЯЗЫК, ПЕРЕВОД, КУЛЬТУРА, КОММУНИКАЦИЯ

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SOCIOLINGUISTIC PECULIARITIES OF TEXTS IN ENGLISH BY BELARUSIAN INSTAGRAM USERS

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The turbulent, transient and unpredictably complex XXI century has changed the social, cultural and political life of the entire planet beyond recognition.

It is obvious that language as a means of communication and self-expression of the individual has also undergone great changes, losses, but also has acquired certain gains. The global spread of the Internet computer network, and especially the rapidly growing popularity in the society of such social networks as *Facebook*, *Instagram* and *ВКонтакте*, have clearly demonstrated the reform of the human cultural paradigm.

The author of the research noticed that comments and posts in English of Russian- and Belarusian-speaking users periodically appear on the *Instagram* social network. In this regard, we asked ourselves a number of questions: What makes these users turn to the language of Shakespeare? Is there a shortage of linguistic means in the native language for self-expression? The author also wondered if the spread of social networks, in general, and *Instagram*, in particular, influences us. How widespread has English become in the new reality? Have social media affected the number of people looking to learn a language? If they have, then to what extent and how? The search for the answers to these questions led us to the idea of this research paper.

Based on the above questions, the object, aim and tasks of the research have been singled out.

The object of the research is the English language in posts and comments of Russian and Belarusian-speaking users of the social network *Instagram*.

The subject of the research is lexical and grammar peculiarities of the language of Internet users and its functioning in publications and comments on the social network *Instagram*.

The aim of the research is to study the lexical and grammar features of the English language in the Belarusian segment of the *Instagram* social network.

The tasks are:

to determine the conceptual and terminological apparatus for the study;

to conduct a sociological survey among Belarusian *Instagram* users who write comments, stories and posts in English;

to select and systematise a collection of comments and posts in English by Belarusian *Instagram* users and carry out their linguistic analysis.

To achieve the aim the following **methods** have been used:

the method of working with appropriate written literature (observation, selection, research);

the systematisation of information;

the method of contextual and conceptual analysis.

Researched material: publications and comments of Belarusian *Instagram* users in the English language.

Today, scientific research is characterised by the use of the anthropocentric approach, i.e. the strengthening of the role of the *human factor* which leads to a shift in the focus of concentration of research efforts from the problems of describing the linguistic structure to the area where the speaker becomes the centre (M.N. Gordeeva *Speech Portrait and Ways of Describing It*). In the context of the given research this centre is a Belarusian *Instagram* user.

The basic concepts of sociolinguistics are "speech portrait" and "language personality". These concepts are studied in the works of such linguists as Maria Gordeeva, Yury Karaulov, Yury Sorokin and others.

Instagram is a popular social network. It was created in 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger as a smartphone application for creating and sharing photo and video files. Unlike traditional social networks such as *Facebook* and *Vkontakte*, where images and photographs are used to draw attention to the text component, on *Instagram* the visual component is primary. It is the photos that users leave comments to. They are rated by clicking "like", and the post is remembered by them.

Instagram has expanded widely and turned into a selling platform thanks to the news communication, blogs, comments and sending messaging systems. As a result, maintaining an *Instagram* page in two or more languages has become effective for attracting the target audience. In addition, bilingual accounts provide the user with a number of advantages, such as expanding the target audience, improving language skills, contributing to one's own career, and realizing creative and intellectual potential. However, significant disadvantages of the new form of Internet communication are the transition from live human communication to virtual one and the formation of psychological addiction.

Thanks to the growing popularity of *Instagram*, we can talk about the peculiarities of the language personality of an *Instagram* user. This social network is used by millions of people of different age, territorial, social and professional backgrounds. A characteristic feature of their language is the combination of verbal and non-verbal elements that form one visual, structural, semantic and functional whole. It is aimed at a complex impact on the addressee.

A sociological survey of *Instagram* users was carried out. The survey involved 342 people who use English in comments and posts. They represent various social groups. The author was interested in how often *Instagram* users write comments and upload stories in English, as well as how often other users comment on these posts in English. In the course of the sociological survey, the motives for the transition to English of the survey participants were determined.

Based on the diagnostics, it was concluded that the main motives for using the foreign language in comments and posts are the desire to improve the level of language proficiency, passion for the English language and enlargement of the target audience. Analysis of the social groups showed that the most active users of the *Instagram* network are female representatives (53.3% of respondents) aged from 14 to 30 years. Only 20% of the respondents often post stories and write comments in English. 46.10% of the survey participants sometimes use English. Based on the data obtained, a model of the Belarusian *Instagram* user was compiled. It is a 24-year-old well-educated female, who knows English and has a broad outlook. She is responsive to all the developments in the world and society.

We analysed and systematised the textual material in English created by Belarusian *Instagram* users selected in the course of the research. A total of 500 texts in English were selected including posts, comments and non-verbal messages in the form of memes and emoticons. This made it possible to determine the most used lexical units and their non-verbal equivalents and highlight the following groups of graphic signs and symbols:

Hashtags: e.g. #Selfie, #POD, #OOTD, #FBF

- abbreviations: such as

A) truncated words (lil, sis, fam) and

B) abbreviations made from the first letters of words (LOL, ROFL, WTH, BFF);

- distorted words: b4, u, cos;

- emoticons: ._. o_O ;) = ();

- memes.

The texts of posts and comments were also analysed in terms of grammar. Most often users deliberately skipped such parts of speech as pronouns, articles, prepositions, conjunctions, as well as punctuation marks. For example, *Laugh out loud; Touch wood.*

Evaluative adjectives (e.g. *Cool, Nice, Awesome*) are often used in comments.

As a result of the study, the **conclusion** was made that in the modern world, communication on social networks has become an integral part of linguistic interaction. On the Internet, in general, and on *Instagram*, in particular, people correspond and exchange messages, i.e. participate in dialogical speech, and their messages more often resemble oral recordings or even stenography than a correct written text. In

other words, a new form of linguistic interaction appeared - written colloquial speech, which has its "own" language.

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