VERBAL DEVIATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

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The harnessing development of technology has drastically modified languages that people are using in all corners of the world. It is out of the question that world languages are constantly evolving to meet the needs and requirements of the society. Nowadays social media platforms have undoubtedly become an indispensable part of daily communication. Undeniably various platforms of social media attract millions of people with different ethnic, linguistic, racial and religious backgrounds to interact and take part in various discussions in blogs, microblogs, chat groups, discussion boards, forums, etc.

Over the last 20 years Internet mediated communication has generated many grammatical structures and lexical items that need to be studied and redefined. With the advent of new technologies new linguistic deviations have emerged in social media platforms. It is no wonder that scientists are holding opposing thoughts and conflicting viewpoints of the same or similar phenomena.

Being the most prevalent language of social media and having the highest frequency of usage on the Internet domain the English language has underwent large-scale changes and alternations. These non-standard forms are noted in all levels of language. Over the time linguistic deviations have the tendency to become standard forms. The latter may lead the English language to changes. The current article discusses the marked variations of English verbal system in contemporary English social media platforms.

Keywords: non-standard form, linguistic innovation, deviation, invariant, verbal fusions, contractions, electronic discourse.

Introduction

As it is known communication plays a fundamental role to the existence and survival of human beings. Communication, on the whole, is a multidirectional

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process of creating and sharing ideas, viewpoints, feelings, information and so forth from one place, person or group to another.

Obviously communication is more than language. It involves cultural patterns, non-verbal and visual cues as well.

Communication, traditionally, constitutes an important aspect of human existence through which subjects express themselves in modern life (Baeva, 2014, p. 5).

In the history of communication two major phases should be mentioned: the invention of letters and the advent of technological devices through which digital communication has been launched.

Taking into consideration the communicative aspect of the Internet, it should be noted that the area of implementing Internet communications has widely expanded. Nowadays, the Internet has grown into a means of mass communication among users around all over the world.

In contrast to face-to-face communication, the communication carried on the Internet domain has got some properties that are common only to this mode of communication.

The above mentioned properties of the Internet mediated communication enable speakers from different social classes to use non-standard features of language more excessively than that of the "prestige" way of speaking.

The novelty of this article is the determination of English verbal variations and the revelation of varied grammatical tendencies in modern English social media which can therefore make some changes in English.

The goal of the research is to reveal the pragmatic features of verbs in social media, to study these units not only in social media platforms, but also at different levels of the language structure: from the lexical level to the discourse analysis level.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned goal, the following tasks have been set forth:

- to discuss and specify the linguo-pragmatic features of online communication,
- to analyze the semantic, cognitive, communicative and pragmatic features of verbs and identify the causes of variation,
- to determine the alternations of verbs on different platforms of contemporary english social media,
- to analyze the possible transformative tendencies in different genres of social media.

Literature review

Digital communication has fundamentally changed the nature and process of communication. Referring to this, linguist Atef Odeh AbuSa'aleek in his "Internet Linguistics: A Linguistic Analysis of Electronic Discourse as a New Variety of Language" article states: "The advent of the Internet and the rapid development of electronic communication increases the rise of new kind of language. It caused dramatic changes in the language used on the Internet" (AbuSa'aleek, 2015).

In terms of profound impact of the Internet on languages, linguists and language teachers share absolutely controversial view variables. Some linguists think that the Internet is ruining all language forms, grammar and so forth.

According to them the Internet highly increases the usage of slang words and leads to illiteracy among youth. Justin Adams in his "Understanding the Impact of Internet on Language" mentions:

"While the Internet has played a huge role in making lives easier for many, opening up new avenues of communication, it has also led to the ruin of the English language as we know it. The people of today are commonly using the language used on the internet – the one that has completely destroyed the grammar and writing skills of the young generation" (Adams, 2021).

Volokhov A.A. in his "Features of Internet communication "Internet as a channel of mass communication Features of the Internet as a communication channel" article put forwards the following properties:

- Multimedia - the ability to support interaction with users with sound and visual effects;
- Personalization - creating content for specific segments of the target audience at any level of interest;
- Interactivity - the ability to actively involve users in interacting with the produced content;
- Lack of intermediaries - the possibility of direct access to all available information;
- Time independence - round-the-clock availability of information resources, regardless of the time zone;
- Location independence - no geographic barriers for users seeking information and for users creating popular content. (Volokhov, 2018)

Meanwhile, others like Gretchen McCulloch (the author of Because Internet: Understanding New Rules of Language) argue that, contrary to

common wisdom, online writing has brought creativity and possibility into modern communication (Johnson, 2019).

According to American linguist B. Birner, people tend to think that older forms of languages are more elegant, logical, or 'correct' than modern forms, but it's just not true. The fact that language is always changing doesn't mean it's getting worse; it's just becoming different (Birner, 2019).

In his article "The Internet and Language" Western linguist C. Thurlow mentioned: "The emphasis of Netlingo is on a mixture of speed, efficiency, informality and creative typography whereby many of the traditional rules of grammar rules and styles are subverted. To this end, netlingo relies principally on expression which is qwerty-driven (i.e. whatever is possible with the computer keyboard) and economic (i.e. saving a keystroke wherever possible) (Thurlow, 2001).

Crystal, who investigated the nature of the effect that the Internet is having on language, argued that the appearance of Net-Lingo should not be regarded as either a challenge or even a threat to standard usage (Crystal, 2001).

It is worth mentioning that numerous studies particularly on corpus based investigations of recent years have shown that the so-called "standard form" is certifiably not a solid linguistic element.

In regard to the above mentioned conflicting opinions, as well as linguistic variations, famous British linguist D. Crystal states that invariants have the tendency to become linguistic norms (Crystal, 2008, p. 63).

Language variation and change

As stated by Aitcheson: "Everything in this universe is perpetually in a state of change (Aitcheson, 1991, p. 3). Human languages are not an exception as well. Languages evolve in order to accommodate the requirements and needs of their speakers.

Languages may undergo deep changes due to immigration, new technologies, trade, political and economic pressure, colonization, cultural imperialism, etc. (Boeschoten and Johanson, 2008, p. 25). All the above mentioned for sure will perpetuate a wide variety of outcomes: the emergence of grammatical and lexical structures, new vocabulary, etc.

Language change is a matter of social interaction. Over time human languages undergo various alternations. Linguistic innovations and modifications do not all in once constitute an integral part of literal and standard language. Some alternations are noticeable, while others are time-

consuming. Over time linguistic anomalies to some extent go through linguistic purification and then become part of the linguistic norm. If we try to express invariant conversion to norm phenomenon it will have the following direction:

Online Domain → Daily Communication → 1) Urban/Dialect Dictionary 2) Dictionary

Invariant, semi-invariant, normalization

Virtual communication is a domain which triggers language change and variation.

As stated by Reitz (2012, p. 44), social media have changed the nature of everyday communication by providing a platform for individuals and organizations alike to engage with each other in a dynamic, synchronized, and multidirectional dialogue that represents varied voices.

In contemporary social media platforms speakers' innovations are mainly due to the following factors: freedom of expression, addition of emotive-expressive overtones, illiteracy, economy of time and space /linguistic ergonomy/, anonymity and so forth.

Linguistic phenomenon of change and alternation is not peculiar to every part of speech. Words of high frequency are on the first layer of change. These words include verbs, pronouns, articles, prepositions and so forth. Psychologists Pennebaker and Chung (2007) mention that pronouns, articles, prefixes, verbs and word units expressing emotions help us to understand what people think or feel about each other (Chung and Pennebaker, 2007, p. 347).

The following article attempts to evaluate the current status of verb-form invariants in English speaking social media platforms.

Results of data investigation

For the purpose of this study an electronic user-generated content is required that contains electronic texts (social media text)/online discourse of substantial length and of a variety of genres. Hence more than 500 online texts (content) have been collected and observed. The electronic corpus fulfilling these requirements of current observation is constructed of user-generated posts, statuses, comments, chats, etc, published electronically and made freely

available for all Internet users. During the observation of the electronic user-generated corpus socio-demographic features have also been taken into account: user's age, nationality, educational background if provided. The data findings clearly show that the top writing errors include: verb tense and form, spelling, use of special phrases and expressions and so forth. All the corpus examples can be accessed with the Internet link.

1. Non-standard verbal forms: 3rd person –s dropping

3rd-person –s dropping (sometimes also referred to as 3rd-person zero) has been one of the prominent features of ELF talk since the early 2000s. Discussion of dropping *s* have been carried out in different social media platforms like quora.com, reddit.com and so on.

Some scholars think 3rd person -*s* dropping is all because of non-native speakers. However, in our research we found lots of cases when s dropping is done by native speakers. The reason of 3rd person -*s* dropping varies from user to user: freedom of self-expression, stressing emotive-evaluative overtones, inattention and so on. It should be mentioned that different social media platforms trigger users to drop it more now:

> *I really love and respect how nanon care about ohm and pull him everytime **he take pic** with fan* (Sora, 2022)

> *I want a hug She **want a bag** ** She want a bag ** It's— ** **She want a bag** ** mhm *** (bu ni, 2022)

> *Taehyung talked about scenery and how sunset **makes his** day ends happily and **he also want** to live as a romantic artist no wonder **if he always share** romantic songs* (THV, 2022)

> *My bitch acting like **she don't kno** I'm out here working, I'm like how tf u think u got them purses* (LA, 2022)

> *Tinashe - He **Don't Want** It (Audio)* (Tianshe, 2018)

> ***She Don't Want** Love (Official Video)* (Yadyondatrack TV, 2021)

*Bon Jovi - **She Don't Know** Me* (Bon Jovi, 2009)

*Counting Crows - **She Don't Want** Nobody Near* (Counting Crows, 2012)

2. Non-standard verbal forms: linguistic fusions and elliptical patterns

Undoubtedly, the formal character of contemporary English grammar is still (so far) unaffected by the Internet mediated communication, however there have been some important stylistic and grammatical developments. SMS (Short-messaging services) on different social media platforms, have motivated a new style in which verbal contractions and fusions predominate.

Contractions and fusions are another characteristic feature of Internet mediated communication. Since the time the Internet has launched, online users have started to create new informal contractions which have become so common in conversational speech. Among them pronoun-verb fusions are the most noticeable.

Here are examples of subject personal pronoun-to be fusions (ayem, aiem, aem, im, ima, your, ur, youa, yoar, hes, shes, hiz, shiz, wr, wer, ther, theya and so on):

*KB - **Ima** Just Do It ft. Bubba Watson* (KB Bubba Watson Reach records, 2015).

*Thank you ma'am for your support **your** a whatagirlneeds girl* (WHATAGIRLNEEDS, 2017)

*I lov u all becuse **ur** all so nice maby somtem u could visit da TEM ShoP!!!* (r/UndertaleCringe, 2015)

*Nice try bruh I see what **ur** doing there. (LOL on my fb feed)* (r/opiates, 2009)

*Try **youa** hard boy but u cant cut or make my head down out frm my pride...* (Bill, 2022)

*yes it's highly debatable..... some may say **hiz** giving dog a hug* (Lez, 2016)

***wer** not even pretending this is about superhero registration its literally just bucky* (ChubbyKo, 2020)

In virtual domain verb-pronoun blendings and fusions are also noticeably marked with perfect tenses. Users simplify the verb to have (has) and express it with letters v/ve/s and then combine it with subject personal pronouns: Youv, Iv, shes, hes, its, wev, theyv, shez, itz and so on.

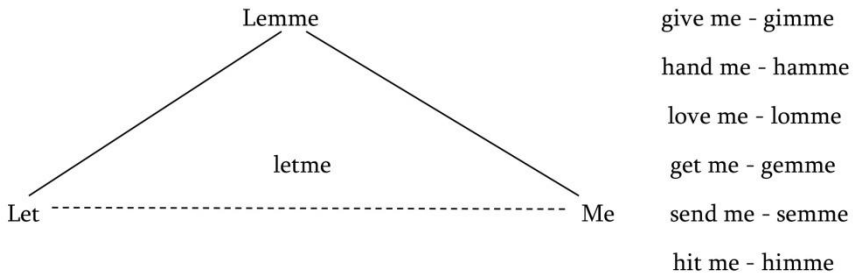| I have	I've	Ive	Iv
You have	You've	Youve	Youv
He has	He's	Hes	Hes, hez
She has	She's	Shes	Shes, shez
It has	It's	Its	Its, itz
We have	We've	Weve	Wev
They have	The've	Theve	Thev

Hello Brisbane! Iv been living here for 12 years now, and in that time iv seen it (r/brisbane, 2009)

*Thank you Chris Wilder, **wev** got our club back! Sheffield United Football Club we   love   you!   #WeAreGoingUp* (Ivesy, 2017)

*someone just told me **theyv** had a cr*sh on me for 4 yrs hurrghh...* (small and very tiny joseph, 2017)

I feel iv been raggin on lorne too much so here's a pic of cody (r/FansHansenvsPredator, 2016)

Pronoun-verb fusions are not bound only with to be and to have. Here are some examples of content/modal verb-object personal pronoun fusions: gimme, lemme, tellem, dunno, wanna, betcha, hatta, hasta, needa, betcha, doncha, dincha, etc.

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                    Lemme                    give me - gimme
                   /     \                   hand me - hamme
                  /        \                 love me - lomme
                 /  letme   \                get me - gemme
               Let - - - - - - - - - - Me    send me - semme
                                             hit me - himme
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*Could somebody pls **temme** whats really wronq wid #African countries?...* (VIC. Michaels, 2018)

*finally linked with bros @bobbycorona_ @jonnyhellbound here is our masterpiece jus **himme** up* (him, 2018)

*@luhanqt aww sweet of him ㅠ **lemme** be his sister as well* (KHUNZ, 2014)

*Hey i just heard from my friend that jimin saw the Thankyoujimin hashtag can u **temme** what it was for sorry lol* (changmute, 2018)

*I **dunno** what they put in the water down there, oh yeah meth, nevermind. Country boy flow yo, even auto-tune can't save this shite (don't know-dunno)* (r/trashy, 2012)

*Does he know what he's doing? You **betcha** he does (bet you-betcha)* (auntunicorn, 2022)

*trying out a pattern I found on pintrest. **watcha** think? (What are you-watcha)* (r/RainbowHigh, 2020)

*Kinda generic, **doncha** think?* (don't you-doncha r/FrostGiant, 2020)

The above-mentioned fusions provide clear evidence that object and subject pronouns are tightly bonded to verbs. These fusions of verbs and pronouns are already recorded and included in many dictionaries. Hence, the

possibility of becoming standard form in future is relatively high. At the same time, it is worth mentioning that these pronoun-verb, verb-negative particle and pronoun fusions will certainly lead to formation of a new part of speech in English which will be unique and will combine the properties of two parts of speech.

3. Non-standard verbal forms: mass-usage of 'ain't'

The next common non-standard verbal form that online users could easily notice is *ain't*. It worth mentioning that *ain't* is a centuries-old contraction which could be found in different writings. The meaning of *ain't* is am not, is not, are not, has not, have not etc. In short, it reflects the meaning of all auxiliary verbs. Interestingly enough, the word *ain't* is still considered unacceptable in formal writing, however it has a secure place in electronic discourse and spoken English. This non-standard verbal form has been recorded in a lot of dictionaries: Cambridge Dictionary, Merriam Webster, Collins Dictionary, etc, so the probability of becoming a standard form is high enough. Here are some examples:

> *Southside Feat. Playboi Carti –* ***Ain't*** *Doin That (Official Music Video)* (Southside Feat. Playboi Carti, 2018)

> *Grabe ung sigawan……… defeaning. WELL THEY* ***AINT THE MOST FAMOUS CLUB TEAMS FOR NOTHIN*** (MessMinchin evicted Sebo fan, 2022)

> ***Ain't*** *no one gonna tell me to wear a mask, but I'll force women and girls into motherhood against their will!* (r/AdviceAnimals, 2010)

4. Non-standard verbal forms: deformation of interrogative structure

It is a well known fact that in English phonological and morpho-syntactic strategies are employed in the formation of interrogative sentences. However, with the advent of modern technologies the structure of Interrogative sentences in different social media platforms underwent certain deformations. Online users do not follow the standard way of formation of Interrogative sentences. In online platforms users tend to write a declarative sentence, then punctuate it with a question mark at the end:

Dming the love of my life: **"Hey u still married?"** (Max
Johnson, 2022)
Hiiiiii. I wanna nap on you. **Wanna bang?** (teo, 2022)

*Making friends as an adult via fandom is great because you
get to skip straight to the* **"wanna do something weird?"**
part. (Sarah will be at Gallifrey One, 2022)

get a job*? no chance still gotta try – prob same old same*
(Crystal, 2017)

5. Non-standard verbal forms: formation of progressive tenses with zero auxiliary

Another innovative linguistic tendency that enjoys great popularity in
electronic discourse is auxiliary verb droppings. Lots of users intentionally omit
the usage of the auxiliary verb. The latter is common in spoken English as well:

You doing *great sweetie, keep it up* (r/Superstonk, 2021)

Jae, remember **you doing** *great, we will always be with you
there and support you* ♡ (r/EajParkOfficial, 2020)

POV Amazonas catches **you speaking** *Spanish*
(r/RedFloodMod, 2018)

*Someone needs to write a "highdea" app for Alexa, so you
just say "Alexa, Highdea", and it records* **you speaking your
idea***.* (r/highdeas, 2009)

Nestor doing *whatever he wants* (Playy, 2022)

Conclusion

To sum up the survey carried out in this article, we can undoubtedly notice that
contemporary English social media play an essential and paramount role in
daily communication. Social media prompt exchanges of information flows and
stimulate the creation of a simple and quick communicative platform where

information dissemination is easily distributed to speakers with different linguistic background. The active use of words by users with different cultural, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds provide an efficient ground for different linguistic deviations and variations. Among these variations, English verbal forms should be highlighted. Social media users intentionally make mistakes while using verbs, shorten commonly used words (verbs and pronouns). Also, many users deform verb forms when they use incorrect grammar and expressions. The latter triggers the rise of verbal deviations, which are noted in all levels of the English language. Verbal deviations have a dramatic impact on phonological aspect of language as well. Over time the above mentioned verbal deviations (third person s dropping, subject and predicate fusions, ing-g dropping) have the tendency to become a linguistic norm, which in turn may lead the English language to changes over time.

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Նինա Հովեյչուն
Գևորգ Գրիգորյան

Սույն հոդվածը նվիրված է է ժամանակակից անգլալեզու սոցիալական մեդիայում անգլերենի բայական այլաձև կիրարկումների ուսումնասիրությանը, որոնք զարգանում են առցանց տիրույթում բազմաթիվ օգտատերերի կողմից լեզվական սերտ շփումների արդյունքում: Առցանց հաղորդակցության ընթացքում տարբեր լեզվակիրներ ազատորեն ձևափոխում են անգլերեն բայերի գրական նորմի տարբերակները, ինչի արդյունքում ձևավորվում և զարգանում են այդ միավորների կիրառության նոր ձևաչափեր: Հարկ է ընդգծել այն փաստը, որ ներկայումս սոցիալական մեդիայի տարատեսակ հարթակներում ինտենսիվ լեզվական շփումների արդյունքում առաջացած բայական շեղումները բավականին մեծ թիվ են կազմում: Վերջիններս ժամանակի ընթացքում կարող են վերածվել լեզվական նորմի, որն էլ, իր հերթին, գրական անգլերենը կարող է ենթարկել փոփոխության:

Բանալի բառեր ՝ ոչ ստանդարտ ձև, լեզվական նորարարություն, շեղում, այլակերպ ձևակերպում, բայական միաձուլումներ, սեղմ գրելաձև, էլեկտրոնային դիսկուրս: