

ЛЕКСИКОЛОГІЯ. ФРАЗЕОЛОГІЯ. ЛЕКСИКОГРАФІЯ

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IMPLEMENTATION OF UKRAINIAN-SPEAKING MEMES IN CYBERSPACE

Богданова О. В., Заботнова М. В. Реалізація україномовних мемів у кіберпросторі. *Стаття присвячена дослідженню мемів як ключових аспектів взаємодії під час мережевого спілкування. Автор висвітлює їх комунікативні особливості та специфіку формування. Стаття бере за основу взаємодію інтернет-користувачів у сучасних соціальних мережах та вибірку найуживаніших мемів. Робота розглядає окремі складові мемів – зображення, відео, мотиватори та демотиватори. Автор наголошує, що актуальність роботи полягає у швидкому та безконтрольному розвитку соціальних мереж, які є основним джерелом та середовищем використання мемів, та їх малодослідженості саме в процесі україномовного спілкування. Стаття ставить за мету виокремити основні принципи утворення україномовних мемів та скомпонувати особливості їх реалізації, які стануть основою майбутніх досліджень.*

Ключові слова: мем, кіберпростір, комунікація, інтернет-чат, соціальні мережі, мотиватори, демотиватори.

Bohdanova O. V., Zobotnova M. V. Implementation of Ukrainian-Speaking Memes in Cyberspace. *The article is devoted to the analysis of memes, as a key aspect of interaction in chatrooms. The author highlights the communicative specificity of memes in cyberspace. The article is based on the interaction among Internet users in modern social networks, on the sample of the widespread memes. The work examines the definite units of memes, such as: pictures, videos, inspirational posters and demotivational posters. The author puts a stress on the actuality of a work due to the speed and uncontrolled development of social networks communication, which are endless source and area of memes, and its narrow exploring especially in the process of the Ukrainian interaction. The article's goals are to set the main principles of the Ukrainian-speaking memes' forming and to describe key features of their implementation which will serve as a basis for future researches. It highlights the specificity of the Ukrainian-speaking memes' usage and underlines the importance of its being analyzed due to the growing interest in the lexical, grammatical, phonetical, semantical and other aspects of the Internet interaction. The author shows up the main principles of memes forming and examines this phenomenon observing the examples from two languages – English and Ukrainian. Moreover, the article presents issues which are turned to the comparison of the memes forming and the influence the English language has on the Ukrainian one.*

Key words: meme, cyberspace, Internet chatroom, communication, social network, interaction, inspirational poster, demotivational poster.

Memes, including all their faces, have been enriching the wide area of cyberspace for more than a decade as a separate and independent item of interaction. There are numerous ways of their implementation due to the specificity of different social networks, chatrooms and their area of usage, as well as due to the influence which is had on the lexical, pragmatological and other aspects of the Ukrainian-speaking

posters themselves. Nowadays, communication becomes the key feature of problem solving and emotion expressing – it has been developing itself using and sharing emojis, stickers, motivational/inspirational posters, demotivational posters, GIFs, photos and some video fragments which in modern society serve to present speakers' ideas, reactions as well as the emotional state. But why did people start using this extra language? The answer is proposed in 2011 by British linguist, academic and author David Crystal in his book "A little book of language" [3; p. 192], he stressed out that the reason is in time and energy saving. Though, it is obvious that memes are used to ease the process of communication and to make it visually fulfilled.

Many **scientists** throughout the world have been devoting their works to memes' analyzing, it is possible to figure out the following – Crystal D. [3], Dawkins R. [4], Rushkoff D. [5] and many others.

The role of memes in modern Ukrainian-speaking Internet interaction forms the wide **range of problems** such as their implementation, formation, using and dependence on other widely used languages.

The goal of our work is determined by the low level of memes' analyzing in the field of Ukrainian-speaking communication which is influenced by trendy interaction on the Internet. **The practical material** of our work includes numerous social networks and chatrooms such as Facebook, Tweeter, WhatsApp, Instagram, Telegram, Messenger and others. It presents the analyze of the frequency of Ukrainian-speaking memes' using and provides the examples coined by authors to illustrate key aspects.

Ukrainian-speaking memes have started their development at the end of 2014 and this rising is not connected with pleasant events. The increase of so called nationalism has caused strong desire to implement communication on the Internet in mother tongue interrupting long-term dependence on the Russian language, thus it is possible to see numerous Ukrainian-speaking memes which are formed basing on the close connection with history and, as it has been once mentioned by the English ethologist, evolutionary biologist and author Richard Dawkins in his famous work "Selfish Gene" in 1986 [4], memes are the reflections of historical events and serve to represent them in acceptable manner in accordance with the time. What is behind that? How can one event become another with the help of simple sentences written by different people from the whole globe? These are the questions we are going to answer in this article. We take the following definition as a base for this work: "*Meme* is a cultural, linguistic phenomenon which depends on emotional, educational and imaginary possibilities of its author and further Internet users and which serves as language unit in the process of modern electronic communication" [1; p.154]. Moreover, these language units have a wide range and include numerous ways of their expressing based on appearance and components among which there are emoticons/emojis, stickers, motivational/inspirational posters, demotivational posters, GIFs, photos and some video fragments and if the first one (emoticons or emojis) can not have lexical preferences the rest can be represented in different languages sharing, at the same time, identical ideas and thoughts. The basic intentions can also vary – it can be desire to inspire, to drop, to help, to make someone laugh,

to disappoint as well as the desire to express no ideas at all, some memes can be even created accidentally and they usually do not live for a long time or even can be used only once or twice – such phenomenon we can name “*temporal meme*”. Memes have various features which influence the process of their formation among which we can enlist – *time* (mostly, memes do not depend on it), *information* (which can be divided into two steps – obvious and hidden), and *form* itself (fixed from the beginning, but can be changed in the process of interaction lexically as well as stylistically and semantically).

As it has been already mentioned every meme has its own history which bears one or another story with numerous intentions – these can be inspirable drives forward or demotivate ones – the key feature is their origin. Ukrainian language is relatively young on the wide field of Internet and has just started forming its own memes which are mostly based on more popular English and Russian versions, some are lexically common, some have been literally translated, others can be transcribed or transliterated. They can consist of sentences, phrases, word combinations, abbreviations and acronyms. Let’s look through some spread examples of similar memes in the English and Ukrainian languages – “*LOL*” (Laugh out Loud)– *LOL* is used in both languages unchanged, “*no comments*”, “*who knows*”(WK) these word combinations are rendered using word for word translation – “*без коментарів*”, “*хто знає*” (хз), and “*know how*”, “*ІМХО*” which are transcribed and transliterated into the Ukrainian language and has the same sounding form with the original phrase “*ноу хау*”, “*ІМХО*”. Now let’s analyze a meme which is used in both languages (Pic. 1 and Pic. 2).



Рис. 1
“No comments”



Рис. 2
“Без коментарів”

It is possible to see from the example proposed above that the intention of the author can be implemented with the help of two different imprints – lexical (*no comments* and its Ukrainian equivalent – *без коментарів*) and the background picture which reflect the event and conveys its atmosphere. In this case signature serves to put a stress on the importance of the image. Predomination of the black color shows up negativeness and mourning at the same time which is a kind of hidden information as opposed to the written message. Let’s observe this example depending on their being verbal, non-verbal and complex [2, p. 153]. Verbal aspect here is lexical capacity of a message, non-verbal is represented with the help of a

picture, but as well as we can see here both of these factors we can call this meme a complex one. Though, the world of memes' linguistics is to pay attention to the fusion of lexical aspect with its surrounding (musical composition, video fragment as well as pictures).

Today there is a big increase in the quantity of Ukrainian-speaking stickers and GIFs which are widely used on the Internet. That is caused by the users' demand to interact in the Ukrainian language. Mostly, such stickers are based on the Ukrainian TV-shows, sitcoms, popular characters from the history as well as celebrities, politicians and sportsmen (let's remember numerous funny memes with famous football player – Andrii Shevchenko, ex-president of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich, mayor of Kyiv Volodymyr Klychko, politician Yuliia Tymoshenko and many others who are heroes of memes due to different events which have become a *historical linguistic heritage* and are already transformed, changed and paraphrased in accordance with other emotionally similar situations).

Having analyzed the frequency of Ukrainian-speaking memes' usage it is necessary to point out that the quantity of such units has grown up in comparison with the beginning of 2010th, and what is more – this number continue growing. If in 2010 the percentage of the Ukrainian-speaking memes have not exceeded 5 % of the whole amount of interaction among the Ukrainian Internet users (who were mostly from the Western part), this number has significantly increased due to the broadening of mother tongue communication. For today the quantity of Ukrainian-speaking memes has grown almost up to 60 % and continue increasing. That can be seen on the Pic. 3 proposed below. That positive statistics can be proved by tens of social groups which have been created or started developing from 2014 in international social networks such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and others (in the frames of our work we have analyzed the most numerical groups, such as “Цікаве до кави” (*Tsikave do kavy*), “Слухай українське” (*Slukhai Ukrainske*), “Український вісник” (*Ukrainskyi Visnyk*), “Україна” (*Ukraina*), etc.); mostly, these pages serve to share Ukrainian language. Thus, it is possible to stress out that in recent years Ukrainian-speaking memes have been rooting in the cyberspace in different ways of implementation – motivational and demotivate posters, GIFs, emojis, video fragments, photos, etc.

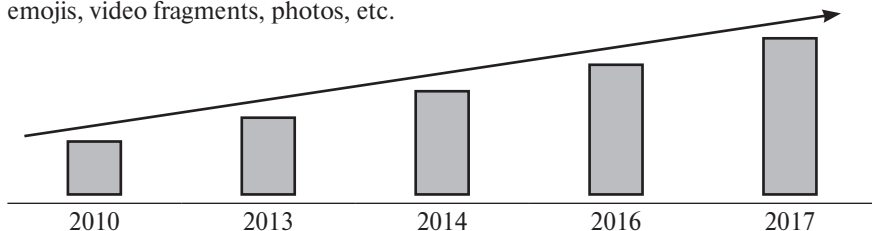


Fig. 3. Frequency of Ukrainian-speaking memes' usage

Nevertheless, Ukrainian-speaking memes still depend on other languages due to its young age. But soon the main picture may be changed because the longer the meme exists and is used the more ways of its realization are formed [2, p. 153]. Memes are replicating units and can be widespread in several seconds due to the

sphere of their existence – Internet. There are not any doubts that in several years the appearance of memes will be transformed and, probably, become live.

Summing up it is necessary to point out that the Ukrainian-speaking memes, being at the very beginning of their development, have identical ways of implementation with other languages – *form based on appearance* (emoticons/emojis, stickers, motivational/inspirational posters, demotivational posters, GIFs, photos and some video fragments), *form based on components* (verbal, non-verbal, complex).

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