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Language and the Internet: Exploring the Interaction

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Content:

1. Abstract:

The Internet, the network of networks, today represents one of the most commonly used means of communication, helping people of various cultures and continents connect only in a matter of seconds. Since its commercialization in the early 1990's, the Internet became a very important part in the process of globalization and the widespread of the English language. It also helps preserve the slowly dying languages and dialects of the world in smaller communities. Having developed so many new types of communication, such as e-mailing, chat, blogging and many others, it was no surprise that through the use of the Internet a new language was created and formed as well as a new type of discourse along with it. This new type of discourse was appropriately named computer-mediated discourse. Today Netspeak or the Internet language represents the mostly text-based language comprised out of different registers of different Internet situations. Although the Internet language seems to be a newly formed universal language it still requires the basic knowledge of the English language in order to help you communicate. This is due to the fact that both the Internet and the Internet language are English–based. This type of language is basically no different than any other spoken or written language. It includes words, numbers and numerous graphical tools, such as emoticons and pictures, as well as abbreviations and initialisms. To make the understanding of this even easier, the Internet today provides you with a variety of Internet dictionaries which contain lists of abbreviations, initialisms and their explanations, as well as appropriate ways of their use. The influence of the Internet and its language on other languages surpasses the borders of the virtual world in which it is used. The frequent and daily use of the Internet has affected the daily face–to-face interactions, as its abbreviations and acronyms have infiltrated even the spoken language. To help study all the styles and forms that have arisen under the influence of the Internet a new sub-domain of linguistics was formed, called Internet linguistics. In addition, it has to be noted, that the relation between the Internet and language goes both ways as they simultaneously affected one another in various ways.

Key words: *Internet, language, Netspeak, discourse*

2. Introduction

The Internet is "a global computer network providing a variety of information and communication facilities, consisting of interconnected networks using standardized communication protocols".[1] Since it was created back in the early 1960's the Internet has gone through some dramatic changes. It was originally created so that the military, specifically defense researchers, could use it in order to exchange information in a quick and unnoticeable way. Today, the Internet represents the network of networks, the newest, broadest and fastest way of exchanging information all over the world. In the last 50 years the Internet has penetrated into our lives becoming one of its crucial parts. Doing this it has influenced almost every part of it. The Internet changed the way the think, interact, do business, share information, exploit and present ourselves to others etc. It provides us with unlimited possibilities when it comes to communication, meeting new people, preserving our past and gives us access to unlimited information about everything and everyone, including oneself, leaving you feeling almost bare naked. Many studies have been made on how the Internet affects us, our social skills, intelligence, personal lives, opinions etc., and thus giving us an insight into the changes in our lives that have already been accounted for and brought upon by the Internet.

With every day passing, even more people are being drawn into the virtual worlds with which the Internet provides us. Due to this, new online communities are forming and their number is growing exponentially with every day. Online or virtual communities can be defined as "an aggregation of individuals or business partners who interact around a shared interest, where the interaction is at least partially supported and/or mediated by technology and guided by some protocols or norms".[2] Like any other community even a virtual one needs to have its own language and a way of communicating. Luckily, the Internet provides its users with numerous ways of virtual interaction, such as electronic mail, blogs, message boards, chat rooms, forums, various social networks e.g. Facebook and MySpace etc. It even gives a person the opportunity to live his life as a virtual character of his or her own choosing. This is possible through on-line virtual gaming, various virtual worlds or even MUD's which "(originally meaning Multi-User Dungeons; now commonly interpreted to mean Multi-User

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[1] "Oxford Online Dictionary" (Oxford University Press), http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/Internet, 2012. Accesed:August 28th, 2012.
[2] C.E.Porter, "A Typology of Virtual Communities: A Multi – Disciplinary Foundation for Future Research" in *JCMC 10(1)* (Indiana:University of Notre Dame), http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol10/issue1/porter.html, November 2004; Accessed: August 12th, 2012.

Dimensions) are synchronous environments in which multiple players interact with one another in a textually-created imaginary setting".[3]

To help people communicate over all of the previously mentioned virtual devices (e-mail, chat…) or, as the linguist David Crystal named them, Internet situations[4], a new language was formed. Today this language bears the name Netspeak or more commonly Internet language. As it will be seen in the following text, Netspeak has, like any other written or spoken language, various features, ranging from the grammatical ones to lexical or even discourse features. When analyzed closely one can see that Netspeak is in fact a total sum of all the Internet situations and provides a specific language for each of them. Although Netspeak represents a universal language and almost every Internet user is acquainted with it, some people insist on using their mother language as their language of choice even on the Internet. This is more common in close-knit communities, while in most cases English is seen as the language of choice dominating the Internet. It has to be taken into account that the new numbers and statistics say that, relating to quantity, the use of English is slightly deteriorating.

As the Internet language developed, along with it developed a new type of discourse. This type of discourse was named computer–mediated discourse. Computer–mediated discourse or in short CMD is "the broader interdisciplinary study of computer-mediated communication (CMC), distinguished by its focus on language and language use in computer networked environments, and by its use of methods of discourse analysis to address that focus".[5] Along with it came the discourse communities which formed within the already mentioned virtual ones. All of these, including the other previously mentioned terms, and others which will be mentioned during the analysis, have to be taken into account when discussing Internet language and its connenction and relation with any other spoken or written language.

Because speech and language are a crucial part of our everyday lives it is safe to presume that they have also been influenced by the Internet phenomena. The question here is: how did they affect them? Is the influence only one-sided or does it go both ways? Provided that the Internet does influence language is it in a prospering or a harmful way? Does the jargon used on the Internet help enrich or diminish the vast vocabulary of a language? How

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[3] Baron, Naomi S. "Language of the Internet" in *Ali Farghali (ed.), The Stanford Handbook for Language* Engineers, http://www.american.edu/cas/lfs/faculty-docs/upload/n-baron-language-internet.pdf, PDF, 59-127, 2004, p.75. Accessed: August 12th, 2012.

[4] Crystal, David, "Language and the Internet" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), http://irenechc89ukm.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/david-crystal.pdf , PDF, 2004, p.6; acc: August 10th, 2012

[5] Susan C.Herring, "Computer-Mediated Discourse" (Oxford: Blackwell), www.let.rug.nl/redeker/herring.pdf, PDF, 2001, p.1. Accessed: August 11th, 2012.

do the users deal with cross-cultural and cross-linguistic issues? How does the language on the Internet differ from spoken language, relating specifically to English?

3. The Internet language - the language in which the whole world participates

Before analyzing how the Internet affects a language and vice versa, one has to get acquainted with the base term in their relation. The base term, of course, being the Internet language, which itself is the sum all the other terms needed to help study this relation. Netspeak or the Internet language is the online language constructed and formed through the use of the Internet and for the use on it. It has been slowly evolving since the Internet's commercialization in the early 1990's and the first online conversations. At first being an Internet user was a privilege, but today it represents a commodity available to almost everyone. In addition to this, the Internet today provides us with unlimited and quick access to every part of the world thus broadening our communication range and possibilities. This is one of the main reasons why Netspeak was created. Having so many connected individual users of different mother languages, a universal language had to be created in order to make communication between the users easier or in some cases even possible.

Although the Internet is an English-based network and most of the communication on it takes place in English, still almost everyday people encounter problems online because of cross-cultural differences. Such misunderstandings are today easier to solve because of Netspeak. It helps the users understand one another, even if it is on a basic level. This is possible because of the universal linguistic tools that Netspeak offers us and which vary from graphic tools to globally known abbreviations, acronyms and initialisms, which represent one of the special features of Netspeak. Each of the emoticons and other graphic aids with which Netspeak provides us, as well as most abbreviations, phrases and initialisms have a universal meaning recognizable to anyone who regularly has interactions over the Internet. For those users who are new to using these tools, online dictionaries have been set up so that they could navigate more easily through the Internet, learn what each of them means and learn faster how to use them. One of the facts which also helped lower the number of such misunderstandings is the rapid growth of English speakers in the world. In one of his articles David Crystal states that "there are now three times as many people who have learned English as a foreign language than have learned it at their mother's knee".[6] The conclusion is that the more

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[6] David Crystal, "A new linguistic world" in Keith Ryan (ed.), *The Official Commemorative Album for the Millennium* (London: Citroen Wolf Publications, 1999), http://www.davidcrystal.com/DC_articles/English26.pdf, PDF, 228-31, p.230. Accessed: August 15th, 2012.

English spreads as the *lingua franca* (a language adopted as a common language between people whose native languages are different) among Internet users the more Netspeak will extend as well, due to the fact that it is an English-based language, thus becoming a language in which the whole world participates.

4. The influence of the language and linguistics on the creation of Netspeak

After getting acquainted with the term Netspeak and its purpose in communication it is time to see how English helped form this newly emerged modern language. Being an English-based language it is only logical that Netspeak took on most of its characteristics. Its vocabulary is mostly based on already existing English words, while newly coined ones are being created to replace them. In the following chapter one will be able to see what ties Netspeak to English, and in which ways it was affected by it. In addition to this, the chapter will provide explanations of key terms related to the Internet language, as well as all other language constructions that have arisen out of it.

4.1. How did the English language help shape Netspeak?

When talking about the Internet language, David Crystal noted that, although having the word 'language' in its name, the Internet language itself is a set of different genres or registers used in various numerous situations and it itself does not refer to one particular language. In his book *Language and the Internet,* he appropriately named and listed five of the previously mentioned Internet situations – electronic mail or e-mail, synchronous and asynchronous chat groups, virtual worlds and the World Wide Web[7]. Nevertheless, being mostly a text–based language, it still obtains the distinctive features recognizable in every other written language. Some of these features are grammatical features (like any other language IL provides the user with many possibilities when it comes to sentence syntax and morphology, defined in terms of such factors as the use of a distinctive sentence structure, word order etc), lexical features (IL has its own set own vocabulary), graphical features (the visual structure a message sent via the Internet (heading, paragraphs etc)) and discourse features (e.g. asynchronous and synchronous conversations, not to mention the individual structure of messages specific to each Internet situation). The Internet language even obtained some features connected to speech, e.g. phonetic and phonological ones (through the use of Internet communication which includes sound and video, such as online video chat, one can

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[7] Crystal, David, "Language and the Internet" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), http://irenechc89ukm.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/david-crystal.pdf , PDF, 2004, p.6. Accessed: August 10th, 2012.

notice different vocal norms (voice quality, vocal register etc – phonetic features) and phonological features such as the distinctive use of consonants, intonation, stress, pronunciation etc).[8] It is safe to assume that because the Internet and its language are both English based, the previously mentioned features of the Internet language are closest to those of English. This is just one of the many ways in which the English language helped form Netspeak.

Having taken on all of these features Netspeak was now a fully formed language style, with its own vocabulary, style characteristics, slang and all of the other characteristics that define a real language style as such. By shortening expressions taken out of the English language new abbreviations and acronyms were coined (examples of this will be given in the following chapters 4.2 and 4.3). These were made so that the Internet users could communicate faster and send clear and short messages to their co-speakers. Now, these abbreviations, acronyms and initialisms (because of their simple formation and construction as well as easy and simple use) make up most of Netspeak's vocabulary along with newly coined words and phrases (Urbandictionary.com counts over 10.5 million all-together). Most of these words were coined on the Internet itself by the Internet users. These newly constructed words were created with a goal of explaining a new process, trend or anything else connected to the happenings on the Internet. In addition to these, Netspeak provided its users with graphic tools, such as emoticons, to make communication even easier.

The further Netspeak is developing the more it is becoming a unique language and the more newly coined terms are replacing the original English ones. Nevertheless, the sole base of the language will always be English-based. This fact should in no way be considered as bad or in any way negative. It is due to this particular fact that Netspeak is so wide-spread and easy to understand. More than half of the world's population speaks and understands the English language, making it the perfect choice for the base of a universal Internet language.

4.2. Internet slang or Internet jargon

When discussing jargon and slang in a language, it is important to note that these two terms are understood in two different ways. In a language slang usually means the use of informal words and expressions, not considered to be standardized, in everyday social interaction, while jargon is the terminology which is attributed to a specific activity, group, profession or event. In the Internet language, these two terms are used as synonyms. In

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[8] Crystal, David, "Language and the Internet" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), http://irenechc89ukm.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/david-crystal.pdf , PDF, 2004, p.7-9. Accessed: August 10th, 2012.

definition, Internet slang represents a whole variety of different language styles which are used amongst various Internet communities on the Internet. Some of the slang examples are abbreviations and acronyms expressed with letter homophones such as BTW ('by the way') or CYA (meaning see you). Others include onomatopoeic or stylized spelling such as 'hahahaha' which of course is used to express laughter. Another form of Internet slang is the so called 'Leetspeak' which is characterized by its alternative alphabet in English word spelling. An example of 'Leetspeak' would look like this – I_33t5p34k (in English 'Leetspeak')[9]. In addition to these 3 examples, there are countless more varieties of slang that can be found on the Internet.

The purpose of Internet slang is to make communication online easier and faster, or to make communication seem innovative and different (e.g. 'Leetspeak'). As seen in the previous paragraph the biggest part of the vocabulary of Internet slang is made out of acronyms, abbreviations, initialisms and even smiley faces or smileys. Most of them are not only found on the Internet but also in short message texting or SMS texting. Frequently some of the abbreviations have infiltrated even the spoken language making Internet slang a part of even our everyday spoken language. The most recent case of such infiltration is the addition of acronyms OMG ('oh my God') and LOL ('laugh out loud') to the Oxford dictionary[10]. Of course the vocabulary of Internet slang does not consist only of these. It includes a whole variety of newly coined phrases and words which have been created by Internet users themselves mostly young people such as gamers. Using this newly coined terminology they have allowed themselves to express their emotions in a minimal number of key-strokes and to communicate in a faster way understandable to all of them. Some of the words are *noob* ('a person lacking gaming skills') and the very popular phrase *epic fail* relating to a situation when somebody does something very embarrassing or stupid. The list of all the words, phrases, acronyms, initialisms and smileys can be found in any of the countless online dictionaries created especially to help keep track of all of the growing newly coined Internet phrases. According to Elise Moreau, an online web trends guide, the most popular online dictionary seems to be the Urban Dictionary which, according to her, contains a list of over 10.5 million Internet words and phrases.[11]

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[9] "Internet Slang"on *wikipedia.com,* http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_slang. Accessed: August 17th, 2012.
[10] Ehrlich, Brenna. "OMG, the Oxford English Dictionary Added New Words! We 'Heart' It!LOL!"on *mashable.com,* http://mashable.com/2011/03/24/oed-omg-lol/, March 24th, 2012. Accessd: August 18th, 2012.
[11] Moreau, Elise. "The Internet Slang Dictionary: Online Acronyms, Phrases and Idioms – The Evolution of Language in Relation to Internet Culture"on *http://webtrends.about.com,* http://webtrends.about.com/od/profile1/a/Internet-Slang-Dictionary-Online-Urban-Dictionary.htm, April 2012. Accessed: August 17th, 2012.

4.3. Acronyms, abbreviations and initialisms

The list of abbreviations, acronyms and initialisms found on the Internet is endless and it would be foolish and impossible to account for all of them. They do not only vary according to length and meaning, but most of them are specifically used in different Internet situations. Some of them are used in gaming communities, some of them in chat rooms, date sites; social networks etc. This also means that some are more widely understood than others. The list of the ways of how and where to use them, is almost as long as the list of them itself. Their primary use is to express emotions in a quick and simple way. The other function is to help make communication easier, faster and to lift the conversation to a level of universal clarity so that all of the conversationalists could understand one another, regardless of their nationality and mother language. Due to the impossibility to list them all, only definitions and a few examples will be given here for each them. This is done to help the reader better understand each of them as well as how to use them in online conversation.

The definitions of each of these Internet language components do, in no way, differ from the definitions of their real language counterparts. For example, abbreviation is still just "a shortened form of a word or phrase used chiefly in writing to represent the complete form, such as *Mass.* for *Massachusetts* or *USMC* for *United States Marine Corps*"[12], while initialisms are types of abbreviations "formed from the initial letters of a string of words and are pronounced as a sequence of letters, e.g. BYOB, USA, DVD. Acronyms are formed from the initial letters or parts of words in a sequence, but have the distinction of being pronounceable words, e.g. RADAR, SCUBA".[13] Although all three share similar graphic features (in terms of written form), abbreviations differ from the other two due to the fact that they can be created by any method of shortening. This means, that when making an abbreviation there is no rule one should follow. Some notable initialisms on the Internet include examples such as DIY ('do it yourself'), BRB ('be right back'), FYI ('for your information'), AFK ('away from keyboard')[14] and countless others, while some of the acronym examples used on the Internet include L8R ('later'), B4 ('before'), UR ('you are') etc.[15] One can notice that both letters and numbers can be used in combination to form both initialisms and acronyms, and that in terms of form and their construction, they do not differ from their 'offline' language counterparts.

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[12] "The Free Dictionary by Farlex"on *thefreedictionary.com*, http://www.thefreedictionary.com/abbreviation, 2012. Accessed: September 2nd, 2012.
[13] The Free Dictionary by Farlex"on *thefreedictionary.com*, http://www.thefreedictionary.com/acronym, 2012. Accessed: September 2nd, 2012.
[14] Internet Slang – Internet Dictionary" on http://www.internetslang.com, 2002. Accessed: August 28th, 2012.
[15] Internet Slang – Internet Dictionary" on http://www.internetslang.com, 2002. Accessed: August 28th, 2012.

4.4. Emoticons (smileys) and other graphic tools

One of the main characteristics of Netspeak is that it provides the user with numerous graphic tools in order to make communication flow faster. The principle is the same as it is with acronyms, abbreviations and initialisms. By using these tools one can express himself with a minimal number of key–strokes. The most popular ones among a variety of graphic images are smileys. In definition smileys are "a strange and fun Internet phenomenon, more correctly known as emoticons, which have the purpose of conveying emotion".[16] They are common in informal Internet conversations and mostly used in chatrooms or on social networks, sometimes even in informal e-mails. Through the years emoticons have become universal signs of emotional expression. Each of these signs is known to almost every Internet user regardless of their nationality, mother tongue or culture. Some of the smileys are ☺ (expressing happiness), :* (meaning kiss), ☹ (expressing sadness) or -.-' (expressing annoyance). The number of smileys and their variations is almost endless. Other graphic tools include charts, graphs, images, meme's (an idea that spreads like a virus by word of mouth, email, blogs etc)[17] and others all of which can be sent or received over any of the previously mentioned Internet communication methods (e-mail, chat etc.)

4.5. Internet linguistics

The creation of this newly emerged language was soon followed by the creation of a new linguistic discipline, whose purpose would be to study both it, and its features and styles. The new discipline was appropriately named Internet linguistics, and is just one more feature Netspeak inherited from its mother language – English. This new sub-domain of linguistics was and still is advocated by the British linguist David Crystal, who is in fact considered to be its top researcher. He defines it as a sub-domain of linguistics which studies new language styles and forms that have arisen under the influence of the Internet and other New Media, such as Short Message Service (SMS) text messaging[18]. In the same paper Crystal states that the study of Internet linguistics can be effectively done through four main perspectives. These are sociolinguistics, education, stylistics and applied perspectives. He also states these four are effectively interlinked and affect one another in various ways.

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[16] Net Lingua (Internet Language) on *http://www.fun-with-words.com/smileys.html*, 1999. Accessed:August 12th, 2012.

[17] "Internet Slang – Internet Dictionary" on http://www.internetslang.com/MEME-meaning-definition.asp, 2002. Accessed: September 2nd, 2012.

[18] Crystal, David , "The Scope of Internet Linguistics", *paper presented at the American Association for the Advancement of Science meeting,* http://davidcrystal.com/DC_articles/Internet2.pdf *,* PDF, 2005, p.1. Accessed: August 10th, 2012.

Each of the perspectives examines a specifically assigned area. The sociolinguistic perspective examines the relations between the Internet and society, as well as how society views the impact of Internet development on languages. It studies the changes in communication that the Internet has brought upon society. Some of these changes are heightened informality in conversations and people's fear of language deterioration because of it. It also studies the new modern ways of communicating such as e-mailing, text messaging, chat groups as well as many others. Some themes the sociolinguistic perspective researches are multilinguism on the Internet, its metalanguage, the changes in language influenced by the Internet etc. The educational perspective of internet linguistics examines the Internet's impact on formal language use, specifically on Standard English, which in turn affects language education.[19] Examples of these changes are the increase of informal written language and the use of new abbreviations and acronyms in Internet chat rooms as well as SMS messaging. The stylistic perspective studies the new and different forms of creativity found both in written and spoken language, but especially in literature. The Internet did not only provide us with new ways to communicate but it also gave us the liberty to manipulate everything about the message the user is sending. This is what stylistic perspective examines. The new fonts in writing, the manipulation of the color in which someone is writing, the possibility to answer to someone's e-mail by fragmenting the message and commenting each fragment individually etc. These are some things that are not usually found in written language. Last but not least, is the applied perspective which views the exploitation of the Internet in terms of its communicative capabilities. One has to take into account, that these can be both good and bad depending on how an individual uses the Internet, and for what purpose. While the bad ones are those such as the promotion of terrorism or pedophilia via the Internet, the good ones include the countless possibilities for communication and the preservation of endangered languages.[20]

Due to the rapid changes going on on the Internet, the linguists in the field of internet linguistics are going to have to try and keep up with all of them. This includes both changes in Internet communication and the Internet language, as well how the new changes are affecting the real language and vice-versa. The Internet itself is a rapid-changing media and thus the possibilities of communicating on it are changing and growing with each passing day. It is

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[19] Crystal, David , "The Scope of Internet Linguistics", *a paper presented at the American Association for the Advancement of Science meeting,* http://davidcrystal.com/DC_articles/Internet2.pdf *,* PDF, 2005, p.2. Accessed: August 10th, 2012.
[20] Crystal, David , "The Scope of Internet Linguistics", a *paper presented at the American Association for the Advancement of Science meeting,* http://davidcrystal.com/DC_articles/Internet2.pdf*,* PDF, 2005, p.3. Accessed: August 10th, 2012.

this process that will encourage more changes in the Internet language and it is the job and goal of internet linguists to take account of all of them.

4.6. Internet situations

In his book *Language and the Internet,* published in 2001 and revised in 2004, David Crystal accounted for five different Internet situations. Nevertheless, he was careful enough to mention, that because of the Internet's rapid growth and changes connected to it countless more could arise. The five mentioned in the book are e-mails, synchronous (the interaction takes place in real time) and asynchronous (the interaction take place in postponed time, which means that first one of the users types his message and then waits an undefined period for a reply) chat groups, the World Wide Web and virtual worlds. New ones which have arisen over the years and could be included into this list are those such as online video chat groups, free online telephone service e.g. Skype, forums etc. But what are Internet situations in definition and why does anyone even study them?

Briefly explained, Internet situations happen during communication on the Internet between two or more users, in which each of the users has to decide on what kind of language style, is appropriate for that certain situation. There are many factors which influence this choice. The choice will vary from situation to situation depending on your co-speaker's gender and age, the nature of the conversation (business, informal conversation between friends…) etc. According to Crystal, one user can learn a lot about his co-speaker through these Internet situations. He also states that through the analysis of the Internet situations one can learn "precisely about the strategies that people employ and the linguistic attitudes they hold, and thus enable us to begin evaluating their beliefs and concerns about Internet language".[21] Each of the situations is, as already mentioned, characterized by its own unique language. Some of the elements may vary from situation to situation, but the basis of it stays the same. Such is the example of e-mailing. Throughout the years the structure of e-mails has become standardized. One can analyze it in the same way one analyzes a news article or a scientific paper. It contains structural elements (title, authorship, introduction…) and content which can be fragmented into a fixed sequence of discourse elements. Nevertheless, as previously mentioned, the way one constructs the e-mail and the language he chooses to use, depends on the situation at hand. The same factors relate to chat-discussions, where the language usage depends on our co-speaker.

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[21] Crystal, David, "Language and the Internet" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), http://irenechc89ukm.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/david-crystal.pdf , PDF, 2004, p.10. Accessed: August 10th, 2012.

When discussing Internet situations there is one important thing specific only to virtual worlds making it different in relation to the other previously noted Internet situations. The main difference is, that while "e-mails, chat groups, and the Web have one thing in common: they are all electronic interactions where the subject-matter comprises – apart from the occasional aberration – real things in the real world", in the virtual world the subject-matter is totally imaginary and "all communication between participants takes place with reference to the characters, events, and environments of a virtual world".[22]

5. Computer–mediated discourse and online communities

In terms of the evolution of the Internet language, computer–mediated discourse was a logical extension to the already founded computer–mediated communication. Having already defined CMD from a linguistic perception all that is left is to list and explore some of its characteristics. Computer–mediated discourse does in many ways resemble real life discourse. Like any other discourse it appears when people interact and communication is produced. What makes CMD special, lies in the fact that all interaction takes place by exchanging messages over network linked computers. These messages can be either verbal or written. This is the main reason why CMD researchers speak of electronic medium effects rather than treating CMD as a form of writing or speaking. The CMD also takes place in the previously mentioned Internet situations. Each type of CMD is specific and unique for each of them just like their language, and each of them has different linguistic structures which resemble their Internet situations (examples of these can be seen in Chapter 4.6). In resemblance to chat groups CMD can also be either synchronous or asynchronous. Other variables which determine the construct of CMD are those of social character. This indicates that even age, gender, class etc. can affect the course of the discourse[23]. For instance, when talking about gender as a variable in construction of CMD, Herring notes that males on the Internet "are more likely to post longer messages, begin and close discussions in mixed-sex groups, assert opinions strongly as "facts", use crude language (including insults and profanity)", while females " tend to post relatively short messages, and are more likely to qualify and justify their assertions, apologize, express support of others, and in general, manifest an "aligned"

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[22] Crystal, David. "Language and the Internet" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), http://irenechc89ukm.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/david-crystal.pdf, PDF, 2004, p.171. Accessed: August 10th, 2012.

[23] Susan C.Herring. "Computer-Mediated Discourse" (Oxford: Blackwell), www.let.rug.nl/redeker/herring.pdf, PDF, 2001, p.9. Accessed: August 11th, 2012.

orientation towards their interlocutors".[24] CMD will also be different in conversations of different nature (business, casual, flirting…). Herring gives us an example of how synchronous CMD in a workplace would look like. She states that this type of CMD would include such characteristics as deleted subject pronouns, determiners and auxiliaries; the use of abbreviations; non-corrected typos etc.[25] She also states that, while having CMD in which flirting occurs, the increased presence of smileys and informal language would be noted, as well as, textually represented physical actions.[26] Taking into consideration all of these characteristics one can come to a conclusion that CMD cannot be viewed as a single genre. Like any other discourse, CMD has to take place between two or more participants. CMD allows multiple participants to communicate simultaneously in ways that are difficult if not impossible to achieve in other media, due to cognitive limits on participants' ability to attend to more than one exchange at a time.[27] A group of such participants on the Internet form online communities among which CMD takes place.

When it comes to describing what online discourse communities really are, many problems occur. The main one is that, until now, it was impossible to find a universal explanation or definition which would suit all the linguists. Because of this when researching online discourse communities one will stumble on many different definitions of what they really are. In her article for the *Journal of Sociolinguistics,* Jannis Androutsopoulos summed up some of these definitions. Some of those definitions describe online communities as "social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on [. . .] public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace", some of the definitions are brief and define online discourse communities as groups of people who interact in a virtual environment, while others just list conditions which have to be satisfied in order to name a group of Internet users a virtual community.[28] These conditions include "regular interaction around a shared interest or purpose; the development of social roles, hierarchies and shared norms; a sense of common

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[24] Susan C.Herring. "Gender Differences in CMC: Findings and Implications"on *CPSR.org,* http://cpsr.org/issues/womenintech/herring/, winter 2000. Accessed: September 2nd, 2012.

[25] Susan C.Herring. "Computer-Mediated Discourse" (Oxford: Blackwell), www.let.rug.nl/redeker/herring.pdf, PDF, 2001, p.5. Accessed: August 11th, 2012.

[26] Susan C.Herring. "Computer-Mediated Discourse" (Oxford: Blackwell), www.let.rug.nl/redeker/herring.pdf, PDF, 2001, p.11. Accessed: August 11th, 2012.

[27] Susan C.Herring, "Computer-Mediated Discourse" (Oxford: Blackwell), www.let.rug.nl/redeker/herring.pdf, PDF, 2001, p.2-3. Accessed: August 11th, 2012.

[28] Androutsopoulos, Jannis. "Introduction: Sociolinguistics and Computer-mediated Communication"in *Journal of Sociolinguistics*(Germany: University of Hannover), jannisandroutsopoulos.files.wordpress.com/2009/12/jslx_10-4_intro.pdf, PDF file, October 4th, 2006, p.421. Accessed: August 15th, 2012.

history; and an awareness of difference from other groups".[29] Although linguists cannot come to terms with one another when it comes to the definition of online communities, they do agree around some of its characteristics. In addition to the ones already mentioned some of the characteristics of online communities are that on the Internet the user's social class, ethnicity, age and gender, as well as other variables can be invisible.

One can conclude that communication over the Internet is not as 'rich' with information as is face-to-face interaction, which reveals almost everything about the co-speaker. Nevertheless this handicap does not seem to bother Internet users as the number of online communities is growing exponentially. This would argue that Internet users do enjoy some of the anonimity provided to them. The important fact is that it does not affect the foundations of comupter-mediated communication and discourse and its flow on the Internet.

6. The influences of the Internet on language and their connections

After reviewing how the language influenced the Internet and the development of its own language, how it helped form discourse and discourse communities as well as linguistic branches, such as Internet linguistics, it is time to explore the vice-versa effect. Although the Internet language or Netspeak is a young and newly formed language it still has a major affect on, both spoken and written, English language. In these modern times, where people are dependent on technology, which is used in every segment of their lives, this kind of major influence cannot be surprising. Throughout this chapter various ways of this influence will be explored and debated. Why debated? Because, like every other process and phenomenon in the world, the rapid spreading of Internet slang causes, according to experts, both positive and negative feeling amongst people. In addition to this a person will be able to se how the Internet helped spread both English and other native languages, as well as how it can be used to preserve and save dying and endangered ones.

6.1. The influence of the Internet on the English language

Throughout the previous chapters one could already see some of the examples of how the Internet influenced the English language. Reaching out of its virtual domain, the Internet, having aleready shaped its own language, started changing the languages and communication habits in the 'offline' world as well. Until now its newly coined phrases and words have

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[29] Androutsopoulos, Jannis. "Introduction: Sociolinguistics and Computer-mediated Communication"in *Journal of Sociolinguistics*(Germany: University of Hannover), jannisandroutsopoulos.files.wordpress.com/2009/12/jslx_10-4_intro.pdf, PDF file, October 4th, 2006, p.422. Accessed: August 15th, 2012.

infiltrated both the spoken and written English language. This example shows how the frequent use of Internet slang influences the vocabulary of the English language by actually broadening it. The question here is whether this is considered to be a good or bad influence? Some of the examlpes have already become offficial, as is the example of the Internet slang acronyms being enlisted into the Oxford dictionary. The examples of Internet slang infiltrating the English spoken language do not require much evidence as young people can be heard using it in conversations on an everyday basis. James G. Camargo thinks that, this is due to the fact that as Internet slang saves key-strokes, "today, it seems like people are trying to save their breath by saying "OMG" instead of "oh my gosh."[30] By doing so, it has even affected our social interaction on a personal level, as the language between younger people has never been so informal as it is today. This is one of the facts that people, especially educated ones, see as negative (such as Eleanor Johnson in Chapter 6.3). They are afraid that through the frequent use of such language the English language will become a shadow of its former self, not only in means of informality, but also full of grammatically wrong and syntactically deformed sentences.

Another way the Internet influences language is through the creation of new genres, or at least the transformation of old genres into new functions. Becuase of its countless technological posibilities, the Internet enables the creation of these new genres which hold the potential to redefine and change social structure and networks.[31] As one can see there are numerous ways in which the Internet has or can affect a certain language, in this particular example, the English language. In addition, the Internet does not only affect the English language, but as will be shown later, it also helps spread it and preserve it (Chapter 6.3).

6.2. The influence of the Internet language on face-to-face interaction

It was mentioned before in the text that the influence of the Internet on a language surpasses the boarders of the virtual world. This means that both the Internet and its newly formed language can affect even our conversations, speech and language in one's everyday face-to-face interactions. Previously one could see that the Internet language has already infiltrated the written forms of communication as well as dictionaries. Today, people find themselves facing the fact that the Internet language, as well as its abbreviations and

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[30] James G. Camargo. "Internet Slang in Face-to-Face Conversations" on *ComputerMediatedBabble,* http://cmc-babble.blogspot.com/2011/02/its-internet-slang.html, February 24th, 2011. Accessed: September 2nd, 2012.
[31] Elliot Harrison, Marlene. "Online Communities and Their Facilitation of New Language" in *Online Communities and Language,*doctormarlen.files.wordpress.com/2007/02/808-final-complete.doc, DOC file, fall, 2006, p.2. Accessed: August 15th, 2012.

acronyms, have become a part of our everyday interactions even in the real world. This phenomenon is, as is expected, very common among younger people. This lies in the fact that, in these modern times, children are born into a world dependent on technology, while in the previous century the situation was, in fact, much different.

Evidence, which would support the previous claims, can be found in almost every conversation, especially in ones in which younger people are involved. Acronyms, such as LOL (meaning: 'laugh out loud'), OMG ('oh my God'), FTW ('for the win'), JK ('just kidding')[32] etc., have become parts of everyday language, even when it comes to speech. In addition to these acronyms one can find even the newly coined Internet phrases in everyday Interactions. 'To google something' (meaning: "to search something via the Internet") or 'being a troll' ("a deliberately provocative message board user")[33] are both terms coined on the Internet, but found in spoken language. These are just some of the countless examples that have found their way into spoken language. To keep track of all of them would be almost impossible. Because of this, online dictionaries such as internetslang.com or urbandictionary.com have been created. Their main function is to help their users keep up with all of the new acronyms and phrases. The trend of such words infiltrating the language is increasing with each day.

The first question, related to this topic, is whether this trend is corrupting the English language or is it adding more words to its, already broad, vocabulary? In her article, Rachel Adams summed up the opinions of many professionals who take part in this kind of debates on a regular basis, first of them being Eleanor Johnson, a professor in the English and Comparative Literature Department at Columbia University. She "attributes a growing misuse of language to the explosion of electronic communication", thinks that it "has made students believe that it's far more acceptable than it actually is to just make screamingly atrocious spelling and grammatical errors" and connects all of this to a noted "increase in incorrect word use, with students reaching for a word that sounds correct, whose proper meaning is just a bit off from what they intend to say"[34] These are obviously negative comments on the effect of the internet and instant messaging on the language, but still they do not lack empirical evidence which would support them. On the other hand, some people, like Erin Jansen the founder of Netlingo (one of the many online dictionaries of Internet acronyms, terms, and

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[32] "Internet Slang – Internet Dictionary" on www.internetslang.com, 2002. Accessed: August 28th, 2012.

[33] "Internet Slang – Internet Dictionary" on http://www.internetslang.com/acronym.asp, 2002. Accessed: August 28th, 2012.

[34] Rachel Abrams, "Internet's effect on language debated" on *newjerseynewsroom.com,* http://www.newjerseynewsroom.com/science-updates/internets-effect-on-language-debated, January 20th, 2010. Accessed: August 15th, 2012.

smiley faces...) and David Crystal, the already mentioned British linguist, do not have such negative opinions on this topic. Both of them see the effect of the Internet as a positive process. Jansen claims that "the new technology has not fundamentally changed existing language but added immensely to the vocabulary", and that "the expanding means of expression brings benefits to the classroom as well".[35] David Crystal, who is the top researcher of this area in linguistics, supports Jansen's opinions. He does not deny the effect of the Internet on the English language but still says that "when we look at the specific effect of the Internet on language, languages asking the question, has English become a different language as a result of the Internet, the answer has to be no".[36] According to him all of these changes are nothing more but additions to language. To support his theory Crystal mentions research studies made by scholars of Coventry University. In accordance with the results of these studies he has come to the conclusion that "the main effect of the Internet on language has been to increase the expressive richness of language, providing the language with a new set of communicative dimensions that haven't existed in the past".[37] Knowing this, one can shape his or her own opinion about this topic, and give an answer to the question, whether this is considered to be good or bad influence? The logical one would be that the Internet is in fact helping the English language by broadening its vocabulary. The Internet language is in no way corrupting the spoken or written English language. People just have to learn how to use the terminology appropriately. Some difficulties and problems can arise in everyday interaction. This can happen when speaking to a computer illiterate person or a person who was not born in this technology era and is not accustomed to Internet use. Both groups are mostly made up of older people in their 'golden years'. Nevertheless these difficulties and problems are not unsolvable. People who are not acquainted with Internet language and its slang can easily learn about it on the Internet itself, thus increasing their understanding of the newly spoken Internet affected language. Due to the fact that the Internet language is English-based, and not that different from what they are accustomed to, this should not pose a problem. This way the amount of misunderstandings between the 'old' and 'new' generations

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[35] Rachel Abrams, "Internet's effect on language debated" on *newjerseynewsroom.com,* http://www.newjerseynewsroom.com/science-updates/internets-effect-on-language-debated, January 20th, 2010. Accessed: August 15th, 2012.
[36] Rachel Abrams, "Internet's effect on language debated" on *newjerseynewsroom.com,* http://www.newjerseynewsroom.com/science-updates/internets-effect-on-language-debated, January 20th, 2010. Accessed: August 15th, 2012.
[37] Rachel Abrams, "Internet's effect on language debated" on *newjerseynewsroom.com,* http://www.newjerseynewsroom.com/science-updates/internets-effect-on-language-debated, January 20th, 2010. Accessed: August 15th, 2012.

would surely diminish in face-to-face interactions at work, in the classroom and even on the street.

The second question is how far does this influence reach? The fact is that the influence of the Internet and its language has spread beyond the everyday chatter of young people. Its influence is spreading rapidly influencing even the language of the media. Internet slang can now be heard even on radio broadcast networks and television news. The truth is that nothing is beyond the reach of Internet slang. On the question whether the Internet language has a place in the media an anonymous Internet user answered that it should, in no way, be banned from the news and media. His arguments, with which many would agree, were that "firstly, many Internet slang terms [. . .] are widely spread and commonly used among young people. Since we can find them used here and there, there are good reasons for them to exist in our language.", and that it should not be banned from the news because "coming from virtual world, Internet slang largely derives from real communications between people, reflecting their true thoughts and serving their actual needs of expression".[38] The author of these arguments was generally referring to the Chinese language, but still, the same arguments hold their ground even in the English language. If foreign languages can assimilate the Internet slang as an everyday part of their native language, English should as well, especially because Internet slang is in fact English-based and should assimilate itself very easily.

6.3. Is the Internet helping in the globalization of the English language and its domination on the World Wide Web?

Although it was mentioned many times throughout the text that the Internet and its Internet language are in fact English-based, it is time to see whether the English language still holds such a dominant position over other languages on the Internet. Because its base language was in fact English, it is no surprise that during the first decade of its commercialization process English was by far the most represented language on the Internet. In one of his articles David Crystal states that "by the mid-1990's, a widely quoted figure was that about 80% of the Net was in English".[39] Trying to adapt to the Internet was just one of many reasons to learn, the already global, English language. On the Internet, where even its codes are in English, the language itself took on a commercial role. Spreading like wildfire

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[38] "Internet slang should not be banned in news" on *Oppapers.com,* http://www.oppapers.com/essays/Internet-Slang-Should-Not-Be-Banned/1012412, May 26th 2012. Accessed: August 14th, 2012.

[39] David Crystal "Languages on the Internet" in *Lingua Franca,* http://www.davidcrystal.com/DC_articles/Internet11.pdf, PDF, March 2001, ABC, p.2. Accessed: August 18th, 2012.

English dominated the Net during the last decade of the 20th century becoming the number one lingua franca amongst non-English Internet users. Some people had a negative outlook on these developments. One of them was Jukka Korpela who claimed that "generally speaking, English is the universal language on the Internet, but it has no official status, and it will never have. The reasons for the position of English are the imperialism and economical and political importance of English-speaking countries. Linguistically, English is extremely unsuitable for international communication, and the actual wide use of English tends to polarize the world into Internet users and Internet illiterates".[40] With this remark he implied that people were practically forced to learn English and the people behind this were in fact misusing the Internet.

With the years passing by the situation has somewhat changed. The dominance of English on the Internet is weakening. This decline in numbers has happened as a result of numerous factors. As the Internet was becoming more available to a large number of new Internet users of different cultures, it became over-flown with a variety of new languages. Multilinguism now dominates the Internet. This was also the result of the newly non-English formed websites, which provided the Internet users with documents and texts in various languages. Crystal noted in one of his articles that "a Global Reach survey has estimated that people with Internet access in non-English speaking countries increased from 7 million to 136million between 1995 and 2000. In 1998 the total number of new non-English websites passed the number of new English websites".[41]Here one can see that the decline in the use of the English language on the Internet started in the end of the 20th century. In addition to this, numerous chat rooms and message boards as well as social networks were created where the people could communicate in a language of their choosing. When it comes to predicting the future, a further decline seems to be the most logical scenario. This lies in the fact that even now the Internet is becoming available to areas and people who were, until now, deprived of it. One more fact supporting the conclusion is that new documents in different languages are uploaded to the Internet every second making its current content more diverse as every single second passes by. In today's times the Internet seems to be leaning more towards multilinguism than it is to the dominance of one single language, in this case English.
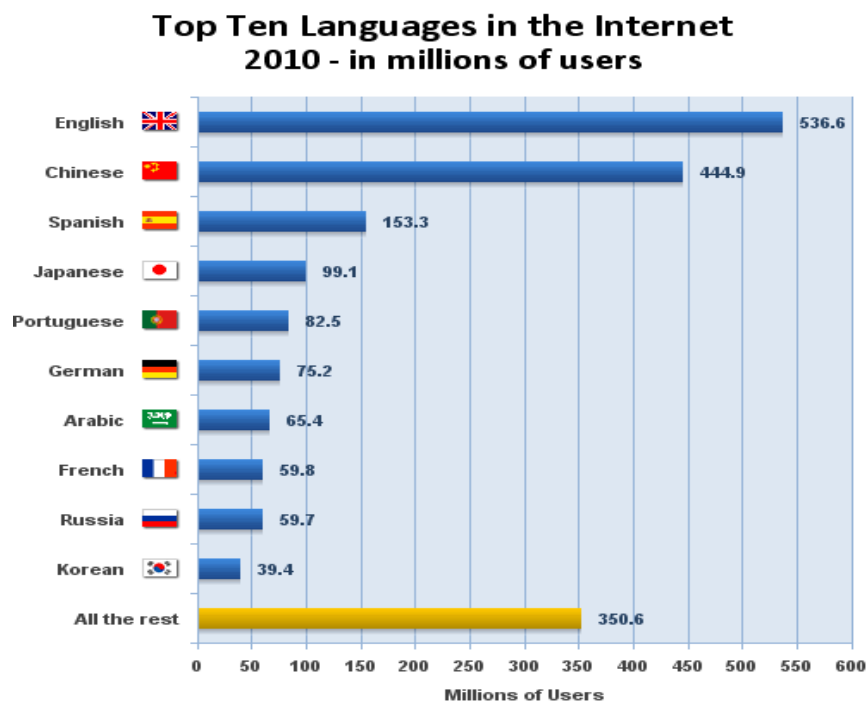
It is not all black for the English language and its Internet usage. According to statistics provided by intenetworldstats.com English is still the number one language on the

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[40] Juka 'Yucca' Korpela "English – the universal language on the Internet?"on *IT and communication*, http://www.cs.tut.fi/~jkorpela/lingua-franca.html, October 9th, 1995. Accessed: August 19th, 2012.
[41] Crystal, David. "Languages on the Web" in *Guardian Weekly* (London: Guardian Public Media), http://davidcrystal.com/DC_articles/Internet6.pdf, PDF, January 25th, 2001. Accessed: August 19th, 2012.

Internet[42]. It is followed by Chinese, whose number of speakers on the Internet is growing with each passing day. Other languages include Spanish, Japanese, Portuguese an others as one can see in the following chart.

Figure 1: The chart of top ten languages used in the Internet in 2010, according to Miniwatts Marketing Group (2010), estimated in millions of users

The answer to the question whether the Internet helps spread English is of course affirmative. It is partially thanks to the Internet that the English language has established itself as the number one lingua franca in the world. Even though the numbers are deteriorating, the future does not seem so negative for the English language. As a result of English colonial conquests it will always have a large native and non-native English speaking population. It is logical to conclude that English will in fact always be the dominant language on the Internet, not only because it is widespread already, but because the Internet language is English-based to begin with. It holds in itself the key to the preservation of the English language in online communities. This is because all of its abbreviations, initialisms, phrases, and even acronyms are formed using mostly English words. One can see that the Internet has not only help English spread but is, in its own way, helping preserve the heritage of the English language.

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[42] "Internet World Stats", *Internet World Users by Language –Top 10 Languages,* Internet Coaching Library, http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.htm, May 31st 2010. Accessed: August 19th, 2012.

[43] "Internetworldstats.com" on *http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.htm*, Internet World Stats, June 17th, 2012, PNG image. Accessed:August 18th, 2012.

Although it still holds the number one position, it has to be noted that recently Chinese slang has also gained on popularity, while the other languages such as Spanish, Portuguese, French, etc, do not jeopardize the top position and are used only in local area networks. In her article about Chinese Internet slang, Crystal Tao states that "Chinese internet slang follows similar rules to English slang. It is either direct abbreviation – like "BRB" (be right back) or phonetization of certain symbols which produces a different meaning – like "c u" (see you)".[44] She also notes some of the most popular expressions in Chinese slang such as 88, which is read in Chinese as 'ba' 'ba'(English translation: 'bye bye') and PLMM, which in Chinese is shortened for 'piao liang mei mei' (English translation: 'beautiful girl').[45] Tao even provides one with the insight into some differences between Thai and Chinese Internet slang by giving an example of a chat conversation between a Thai and a Chinese person. While they were chatting a misunderstanding occurred because of the different meanings of the abbreviation '555' in Chinese and Thai Internet slang. Crystal explained this happened because "while their chat was mainly in English, they sometimes exchanged some Internet slang in Chinese. But this time the girl made a mistake and used "555" in Thai variant which sounds as "hahaha" (something that English speaking netizens cipher as LOL or ROFL). However, my friend used the Chinese variant and it sounds as "wuwuwu" which stands for crying."[46]

6.4. The Internet as a savior of languages

The conclusion has been made that the Internet is helping spread English as a lingua franca, but how does this fact affect other languages on the Internet? In these modern times people are faced with a troublesome fact that "half of the world's 7,000 languages are in danger of disappearing".[47] The website linguistlist.org provides people with the information that until today five hundred and seventy-three languages have already become extinct. Nevertheless people are doing everything in their power to prevent even more languages from experiencing the same fate. This is where the Internet comes in. Over the years many

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[44]   Tao, Crystal. "Why Thai laugh when Chinese cry?"on *LoveloveChina.com,* http://www.lovelovechina.com/entertainment/why-thai-laugh-when-chinese-cry, 2010. Accessed: September 2nd, 2012.

[45]   Tao, Crystal. "Why Thai laugh when Chinese cry?"on *LoveloveChina.com,* http://www.lovelovechina.com/entertainment/why-thai-laugh-when-chinese-cry, 2010. Accessed:September 2nd, 2012.

[46]   Tao, Crystal. "Why Thai laugh when Chinese cry?"on *LoveloveChina.com,* http://www.lovelovechina.com/entertainment/why-thai-laugh-when-chinese-cry, 2010. Accessed: September 2nd, 2012.

[47] "The tragedy of dying languages" on http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/8500108.stm, February 10th, 2012. Accessed: August 18th, 2012.

campaigns have been started with the aim of preserving endangered languages. One of these campaigns was started by one of the most famous corporations known to Internet users, Google. On the web-page techcrunch.com we find the information that "Google, along with other major forces of our dot-com times, has played a huge part in making English the *lingua franca* of the Internet, but today brings news of an effort it's making to counterbalance that, at least a little. It is kicking off the Endangered Languages Project, a site for interested groups and individuals to share research and collaborate on projects to help preserve languages that are under threat in the modern age, with the aim to document some 3,000 languages — half of all the world's languages — "on the verge of extinction".[48] This is only one of the many initiatives started by numerous corporations in order to preserve the world's linguistic heritage. Other such campaigns were started by Microsoft, Yahoo and many others.

Before the Internet was commercialized, there were a lot less techniques which could have helped save endangered languages. Because the Internet today is available almost to everyone it is a lot easier for those people, whose language is on the verge of extinction, to keep in touch with others who share their problem. Long distances and geographical obstacles have all been removed thanks to the Internet and online communication. The Internet also provides you with various chat rooms to help the user find his or her fellow language speakers. This makes the preservation of languages easier because it can be done on an everyday basis, helping the language spread from closed or small communities onto a larger audience.

The Internet provides even more means which should help endangered languages survive the threat of extinction. One of them is the creation of various online dictionaries which can be modified anytime by native speakers or any other Internet user. This is common in smaller communities where people work together to keep their heritage live another day. In an online article Jonathan Amos, a correspondent for BBC News, notes that scientists believe that even "Facebook, YouTube and even texting will be the salvation of many of the world's endangered languages".[49] One can see that even that the popular social networks can be of much use, when it comes to saving various endangered languages, by giving the people the opportunity to make their voices heard. In his article Amos notes one more interesting example when it comes to saving languages. It says that "Tuvan, an indigenous tongue spoken

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[48]   Lunden, Ingrid. "Endangered Languages Project: Google wants to Save 3,000 Languages Under Threat (Thanks Partly To Google)" on *TechCrunch.com,* http://techcrunch.com/2012/06/21/endangered-languages-project-google-wants-to-save-3000-languages-under-threat-thanks-partly-to-google/, June 21st*,* 2012. Accessed: August 18th, 2012.

[49] Amos, Jonathan. "Digital tool 'to save languages'" on BBC News, UK, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-17081573, February 12th, 2012. Accessed:August 18th, 2012.

by nomadic peoples in Siberia and Mongolia, even has an iPhone app to teach the pronunciation of words to new students. "[50] Although this example is not directly linked to the Internet, it shows that any kind of modern technology can be used with the aim of saving a dying language.

7. Conclusion

After analyzing the influences of a language on the Internet and the Internet language, and vice-versa, from different angles and perspectives, one can come to the conclusion that this influence is not only a bidirectional process, but a process which just keeps on evolving. This process was started by the effect of the language on the Internet, but as one could see through the text, it is the Internet which is steadily increasing its influence on the language. David Crystal shares this opinion, as he says, that the current Internet situations are likely to change and evolve with time. He contributes this rapid change to technological development which is, according to him, "putting users under constant pressure to adapt their language to the demands of new contexts, and giving them fresh opportunities to interact in novel ways".[51] When looking back on history, this would be the logical conclusion to make, due to the already seen changes, technological development has brought upon mankind. Regarding this, Crystal states that the Internet will not only be isolated to computers, but is likely to be found on many new communication related innovations (some examples of this exist even now: iPhones, PDA-s, Tablets etc). This new technology will, according to him, bring new language styles and new sub-genres of it, as did the "radio" which "brought a new kind of language, which quickly yielded several sub-varieties (commentary, news, weather…)" and "then television added a further dimension, which similarly evolved sub-varieties".[52] Through this kind of evolution new Internet situations will arise accompanied by their appropriate types of computer-mediated discourse. The number of newly coined abbreviations, initialisms and acronyms will rise with each day, following the evolution of Internet language, making communication on the Internet even easier, faster and more creative. These newly coined terms will probably keep on infiltrating dictionaries and vocabularies of all languages,

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[50]Amos, Jonathan. "Digital tool 'to save languages'" on BBC News, UK, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-17081573, February 12th, 2012. Accessed:August 18th, 2012.

[51] Crystal, David. "Language and the Internet" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), http://irenechc89ukm.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/david-crystal.pdf, PDF, 2004, p.224. Accessed:August 24th, 2012.

[52] Crystal, David. "Language and the Internet" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), http://irenechc89ukm.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/david-crystal.pdf, PDF, 2004, p.225. Accessed: August 24th, 2012.

assuming their use in face-to-face interaction and the media keeps on increasing. Due to the probable and announced technological development this is a very likely outcome. All of the above mentioned elements will also help in the evolution of the newly emerged linguistic discipline, Internet linguistics.

Through the text one could also see the functions the Internet plays in preserving and spreading various languages. The ways in which the Internet and its users are doing this increases each day, and one can only hope that new and more permanent possibilities will arise out of the, already mentioned, technological development. Whether English will continue to be the number one language of the Net depends only on the Internet users and their language of choice. Nevertheless, as it was already seen, the number of English language Internet users is decreasing in contradistinction to other language Internet users whose numbers are steadily increasing, especially when it comes to the Chinese language (Chapter 6.3).

The future of the co-relation between language and the Internet is hard to predict. This is due to the fact that no one can predict the changes new technologies will bring. Nevertheless, some facts are certain, such as that the process of influence between the both will only evolve and is not likely to stop in the near future, and that the increasing influence of the Internet on the language is likely to increase even more, because there is not much language can give the Internet that has not already been given. When this process will stop, or when will it be changed, depends only on the rapid technological changes. Seeing how the radio and the television brought on new linguistic changes and then passed the torch to a new technological novelty, it is safe to assume, that somewhere in the future, the Internet will do the same.

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