

## THE LANGUAGE FEATURES OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Yedgar Jafarov<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** In Azerbaijan, as in many other countries, the number of internet users increases day by day. This means that Azerbaijani language spreads in the virtual space as the main communication language of these users. Issues of language usage cause several specific reasons in the virtual world. This creates new language trends linked to the social media phenomenon. Language in the virtual world is not only the mode of communication, but also the mode of self-expression of each internet user, particularly the member of the social networks. In the virtual environment people use language more creatively, than in real life. All these forms peculiar language and style of social media. Sometimes this peculiarity exceeds the bounds of rules and norms of traditional linguistics. Often it also affects the verbal environment of the real life. Therefore, new verbal trends, which we can observe in the virtual space, can both create new perspectives and incur some danger for preserving national linguistic traditions. Also, because of

using social media as the tool of communication, adoption of their peculiar style turned into necessity. From this point of view, learning peculiar features of the social media is actual issue for contemporary linguistics. This article is following new linguistic trends observed in the virtual space. It provides detailed information about typical characteristics of the virtual communication, main and additional tools, cases of breaking borders of common language norms and their conditioning factors and new genres created in the virtual space. It also pays attention on the new development perspectives of national languages, created by social media. The article offers suggestions to gain benefits from these perspectives and preserve national languages from the negative impact of the virtual space.

**Keywords:** social media, social network, language, virtual space, communication, virtual personality.

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<sup>1</sup> Institute of Linguistics of ANAS named after Nasimi, Baku, Azerbaijan. [E:mail yedgar@yandex.ru](mailto:yedgar@yandex.ru)

## Introduction

Social media, along with other fundamental changes that it has brought to various areas of the society today, is also creating a new look with its ever-increasing influence on the national languages. The most distinctive characteristics of this are tendencies such as deviations from language norms in social media environment as in verbal speech, the inclination towards the compact expression of opinion, substitution of words, sentences and texts with characters, images, emergence of new words, development of new meanings of existing words, and so on [Reed J. ,2014].

The number of words and terms that Facebook alone has brought to the Azerbaijani language or has added new meanings to the ones already available in the language in recent years, are dozen: hashtag, follower, friend, friendship, friendship request, post, like, status, wall, page, profile, troll, fake and so forth.

Furthermore, the wide-spread use of argots and slang words among internet users, revival of the epistolary style in the form of the electronic texting, expression of opinion by the means of as simple units as possible are also

955  
examples of the innovations that virtual reality has brought to the language environment. Thus, the playful nature of the virtual space reinforces the verbal speech manner in communication. Even in the most serious sites, this content which is a reminiscent of that manner can be observed. This is the formation of a completely new functional style in the language, which we can call the Internet style. This style, which has emerged in the context of the internet communication, is gradually influencing people's speech culture in the real world. Italian scientist, Marino Niola, has made a very interesting statement about this in his book "#Hashtag": "Today we are starting the very beginning of the era of "homo digitalis" (the man of digital era). Digital communication is changing the way we are communicating. This change affects our thinking and begins to manifest itself in other forms and types of communication. The nature of the media (books, newspapers, radio, TV) has always made certain changes in the format of information. Similar changes have occurred in both the manuscript and the print eras, as well as during the period witnessing the emergence of the electronic media. If I was given a chance of posting only 140 characters on Twitter

today, every text that I wrote would definitely remind me of a slogan. We are talking about the gradual transformation of our thoughts and thinking to a digital essence. If we removed the marks, then we would automatically remove the data capacity” [Language of the era of social networks: epoch-making changes, 2014].

Today, language is not only a means of communication; it is also fulfilling the mission of creating a virtual reality. Now artificial languages are being generated for technological purposes. Virtual reality has a very significant impact on the development processes happening in the national languages. At the same time, virtual space itself becomes one of the main sources for the enrichment of the national languages. For instance, when it is not possible to obtain internet terms from other languages in the UK today, terminology experts consider the functionality of the Weblish (a short form of Web + English expression used in the Internet environment) and try to get some words out of it [Johnstone, Barbara, 2016]. New language trends in the virtual space are also gradually infiltrating business documentations and enhancing democracy in this area

956  
[Vinogradova T.Yu, 2015]. As texting takes place online, it alleviates the office standards for business communication.

### **Development.**

#### **Description of research.**

Features of the virtual communication. We can summarize the main features of the virtual communication as followings:

1. Anonymity. Although a virtual person’s profile contains some information and photos, this is not sufficient for the real and adequate perception of the individual. Additionally, chances of one’s concealing his/her identity and presenting it in a different image in the virtual environment are vast. This poses certain socio-psychological risks. It provides a wide platform for non-normativeness and irresponsible behavior of users during communication. Users try to use offensive words, expressions that are censored, and tricks that serve various purposes.
2. Freedom. In the virtual environment, the individual eases the communication process by “wearing various masks”. By overcoming the psychological barrier, he/she releases the creative “self”. The interactive dialogue gives the individual

- unique opportunities to express himself/herself. This not only relieve communication conditions and weight of the responsibility of the conversation but also activates the virtual individual's attention and draws this attention to the language tools. He/she becomes so much attentive and determined on the use of the language tools. All of these also generate a new attitude to the language. The virtual individual no longer views the language only as a means of communication but also as a means of expression of the individual creativity capacities.
3. Occurrence of the mutual understanding process between individuals in a non-verbal information environment. The high-level self-expression of the interlocutor in the virtual environment has stereotyping and identification mechanisms. This effect determines the qualities expected from the partner.
  4. Willingness and desirability in communication. In the virtual environment, interlocutors either voluntarily contact or stop the communication whenever they want. At the same time, they get a chance of getting back in touch.
  5. Inadequacy of emotional components in communication. To compensate for

957

this deficiency, usually, special characters are used.

6. Exhibition of non-standard behavior. In the virtual environment, users present themselves in a way that does not reflect real social conditions.

7. Similarity of the virtual communication style to the conversational style. This brings the virtual personality image closer to the reality and strengthens the credibility of words which is one of the most important factors in the communication [Vinogradova T.Yu,2015].

There are many reasons why people engage in the virtual communication. As a first reason, we can point out the lack of communication in real life. If this need was met in real life, then the internet communication would probably not be needed. However, we must also note that if the virtual communication was merely a repetition of the real communication, people would lose interest in it very quickly.

In our opinion, one of the most important factors that motivates people to use the virtual communication is the fact that there are infinite opportunities for the realization of the character. Freedom, anonymity, role play, expression of emotions, imitation

conditions, the ability to create one's dream character, and many other features that are not possible in real life are factors that draw people to the virtual communication.

Non-rigid normativeness also play a very important role here. Communication in the virtual space is more informal and open than in real life.

A person is more detailed and flexible while communicating on social media than in real life. It also urges him/her to be creative and express himself/herself in a more compact way. The newly created acronyms, abbreviations and neologisms are very characteristic for this new form of communication. As the communication tools evolve, the number of new language units emerging in this environment also increases and develops. All this helps us to understand "the language" of technology. During the virtual communication, these acronyms accelerate the process of writing chats in real time. For instance, emoticons such as ;- ) and acronyms like LOL (laughing out loud) add useful elements for the non-verbal communication. As you know, participants of the virtual communication are deprived of paralinguistic auxiliary means such as sound timbre, logical emphasis,

958  
emotional tones, diction, gesture, facial expressions and so on. that play a very important role in real communication acts. So, these elements, by replacing some of the aforementioned means, create the conditions for the visual imagination of the emotions of the interlocutor [Reed J., 20141].

According to psychologists, the use of non-verbal means in the act of communication provides approximately 55% of the results. In this sense, the tools used to address emotional deficiencies during the virtual communication have a significant impact on the outcomes of the communication. We must also note that they are surrogate means and their generated reactions are surrogate in character. For instance, many people try to hide their true emotional state by using the smile emoji (☺) during the communication. Although sometimes it might not be so successful, the smile emojis in general provide information about the emotional color that the author has expressed in the text, determine the level of his/her emotions, and guides the thoughts of the other party.

In addition to the smile emojis, the capital letters are sometimes used to specifically emphasize the pace of the speech that falls under the logical

emphasis. Or users use the exclamation mark when they replace the color, sound, movement, or emotion deficiencies with their verbal or gesture analogues.

As every sign in a language has its own function, each of these symbols in the virtual communication has a corresponding meaning as well. For example, LOL, which means to laugh out loud, is used as a way of empathizing with the partner or as a sign of reconciliation. These situations encountered in social media are called the “pragmatic practice” by linguists. Although the word or phrase used here is not semantically related to the context of the sentence, it can better convey the attitude of the speaker. Uh, um, hm, aha and other expressions like this can be considered examples of the pragmatic practice. The usage of such pragmatic practice reflects the evolutionary nature of the language. However, one factor which should not be overlooked is that the excessive use of these expressions can annoy people and negatively affect the communication process [Angie Pascale, 2012].

Another phenomenon that emerges in social media communication is the level of prudence in the communication. This is also generated through the use of

959  
language units. If the interlocutor uses language units neatly and completes the words and sentences, this may be the indication of his/her patience. Fractured words and sentences, the incomplete use of the language units, and the misuse of the punctuation marks may be considered as manifestations of the time limitation, anger and aggression of the interlocutor, or his/her dissatisfaction with the flow of the conversation.

It is worth noting that sometimes the punctuation marks are also often summarized in a specific sign in social media. For instance, the broken lines can replace many punctuation marks. In addition, there are also the punctuation marks on social media that change its meaning. For example, !?... sign which implies appeal, excitement in the literary language, does not have the same meaning when used in social media. Nevertheless, it displays that the person understands the meaning of the text that has been sent to him/her. We observe that the question mark on the social networks is also subject to the meaning change. In this environment, the question mark does not just imply a question but also hints a disagreement [Hilte, Lisa, 20186].

We also see that the ellipsis, widely used in the literary language, which implies that the idea is not completed yet or creates a long pause, also has different connotation in social media communication. The sign here displays the openness of the conversation, or insistence of one of the interlocutors on the continuation of the conversation, and provocation towards the other interlocutors for the unavoidable answer.

Another phenomenon encountered in social media language is that sometimes each word conveys separate ideas. For example, “Worst. Breakfast. Ever.” or “Best. Party. In History.” Sign limitations in some social media networks, distortion of the harmonization between the speed of thought and speed of fingers plays a certain role in the emergence of such phenomena.

There is an ambiguity in social media in terms of the violation of rules as well as the usage of coded initials, incorrect abbreviations, emotion signs during communication processes in this environment. Many people believe that social media has caused a great damage to the national languages. At the same time, whether the language used in social media is actually a fact of the written

960  
literary language is still a matter of debate. Because this language cannot be compared with other manifestation forms of the literary language examples [Hilte, Lisa, 2018].

American linguist John McWhorter in his TED lecture presented abbreviations, emoticons, idioms as an essential part of social media messages and considered virtual communication parties' use of them completely natural in terms of social perspective [John McWhorter, 2015].

According to him, the language used in social media is not a real written language. However, this language cannot be considered purely verbal either. Because the verbal language is more spontaneous and less pondered and informal compared to the written language. The social media language, however, is more formal compared to the verbal language. Thus, the social media language is placed in the middle position between the written language and the spoken language. John McWhorter calls this language, which reminds more of a written verbal language, with an interesting name – “finger speech”. McWhorters' theory demonstrates that people write on social media as in the way they speak. This also has its own

specific reasons. Virtual communication is mainly realized through the words, sentences, texts that the interlocutors mutually address to each other. It happens in real time, and during this time there emerges an involuntary inclination towards the verbal communication. In real life, there is a harmony between a person's thoughts and speech. A person can put his/her thoughts into words at the same time while he/she is thinking. In virtual communication though, a person's pace of writing lags behind the speed of his/her thinking. That is why virtual personalities seek to find shorter expressions to accommodate this speed. Thus, even if the language units are mainly used in the written variant in the internet environment, the interactive conditions of the network communication and the temp of speech give it a completely different form. This introduces the "Olbanian language", which is now widely studied in Russian linguistics as a new phenomenon. This phenomenon is also often referred to as the "Padonkaffsky jargon". The main characteristics of the "Olbanian language" are that, excluding few exceptions, words are written correctly from the orthoepic point of view but incorrectly orthographically, and the

961  
non-normative lexicology is used widely in the communication process. Another key feature of the "Olbanian language" is that the spelling error can later turn into a peculiar cult for other users. Meaning, the same error is regarded as some kind of norm [Rogacheva N. B.,2011].

Although the "Olbanian language" is more commonly used in blogs, chats, web forums, text messages, it can be observed that this language tends to gradually penetrate the spoken language. Psychotherapist D.K Kovpak believes that the "Padonkaffsky jargon" does not appear as an element. This is the result of purposeful activities of a number of amateurs, that it initially appears in writing forms on the internet and then enter the oral discourse [Kovpak D. V. ,2012].

There are some reasons for the emergence of these mistakes. First, as John McWhorter also pointed out, is the factor that words are written in the way they are pronounced. Second is the difficulty with the pronunciation of the voiced consonants at the end of many words. Restrictions on the use of certain letters on the computer may also lead to the emergence of the "Olbanian language" examples. For instance, the letter "ş" which exists in the orthography

of the Azerbaijani language is written primarily as “sh” in the virtual environment in case of the appearance of these restrictions. Or limitations concerning the vowel “ə” are overcome. These situations are sometimes so standardized that, even in the absence of such restrictions, the user will naturally begin to use such spelling forms.

Dialect affiliations of participants in the virtual communication can also lead to the emergence of the "Olbanian language" examples. In particular, some users with relatively low literacy or language skills unconsciously write certain words and expressions in their own dialect instead of the literary language. In some cases, such tendencies are also observed in the virtual communication style of those who are sufficiently literate and have a high speech culture. In our opinion, this is largely due to the intention of these individuals to accentuate their sense of belonging to the subculture they represent. Manifestations of the "Olbanian language" in Azerbaijan can also be found in primitive announcements of various commercial and public catering enterprises.

This phenomenon negatively affects the development of the literary

962  
language in all cases, preventing people from mastering the norms of the speech culture. It should not be forgotten that the mother tongue is the spirit of the people: the national psychology (mentality) of the people is expressed through the language. In the language, the character of the people is reflected, their mentality is preserved, and the uniqueness of their artistic creativity is formed. From this point of view, the "Olbanian language" is a serious threat to the national languages. Because the vocabulary of a young internet user who does not have a thorough knowledge of the literary language norms and linguistic mistakes he/she makes gradually become a benchmark for other people, and also lead to the primitiveness of thinking as well as the language. Because the primitiveness in language is an indicator of the primitiveness in thinking. Obviously, not everyone can utilize the language capabilities at the same level. It depends on the level of the speech culture; therefore, it is definite that there will be certain differences between language users. Therefore, two levels of the speech culture are distinguished in the modern linguistics: low and high. For the low level, it is necessary to master the first level of the literary

language. At this level the speech is quite clear and the lexical, orthoepic, grammatical, word-building, morphological and syntactic norms of the language are followed. The high level is the perfect level of the speech culture. If a person has a fluent speech, it means that he/she has reached the highest level of the speech culture. A person can make certain mistakes in his/her speech at this level too. Nevertheless, these errors are not primitive in character. The person gets the opportunity to approach properly each point of words and constructions, creates vivid, memorable expressions that correspond to the content of the communication, follows the orthoepical norms of the language, and avoids any mistakes in pronunciation. For if the word is the material mold of our mind, then the sound is the dress of our speech.

### **Discussion**

All this demonstrates that regardless of the level of the speech culture, during the use of the language, the basic norms of it must be followed. Language is made of human experience. Like a culture, it is produced and improved in a generally accepted sense. The ultimate result of the language in our

963

daily lives is the extent to which we can understand each other as individuals, the neutrality and general acceptance of the language units used at this time as normal. Furthermore, leaving a positive impression on the interlocutor and ensuring the consistency and sustainability of the communication are also the part of the result.

The analysis of the "Olbanian language" phenomenon displays that it contradicts these factors and leads to the social disintegration of the society. The widespread use of slangs, argos, and jargons, violation of word order in sentences, tendency towards the reduction of words damage the relevant norms of the language. Therefore, researchers' position on the perspectives of the "Olbanian language" is clear:

- The "Olbanian language" should remain only on the computer keyboard;
- The "Olbanian language" should not be disseminated from internet to television and radio;
- It is desirable to cope with this language, and its restriction is necessary;
- Learning this language is important for recognizing virtual interlocutors.

In general, the language of social media is currently undergoing rapid evolution, and it is in the interest of many

people that what language situations this process will be accompanied with in the future. According to the forecasts of the The New York Times, in the future, people will begin to talk in virtual space only in the form of images. [Richard Dawkins,1989].

Images, symbols, ideographical and pictographic text examples, that express the interlocutor's mood and messages he/she wants to convey in a very compact and specific way, will replace conventional texts. We are already observing this trend on social media channels that are based on the image concept such as Instagram, Vine, Tumblr, and others. As technology develops, this trend will grow stronger.

In fact, one can argue that nothing new has happened regarding the language on social media, but the language which has been used by mankind for thousands of years at various levels, has just begun to be used in social media. That means that the language, with its potential in real life, is now transformed into the virtual reality. Argos, jargons, slangs, vulgarisms, etc., which seem to be one of the main attributes of the virtual communication today, in fact, have been also used for centuries in real communication of

964  
people. Individuals' adaptation of the language to their wishes and needs is a social norm. In this sense, one can assume that social media has done nothing regarding the language. The social media tools that have come into our lives in relation to the development of the internet are just technical means. Because the only force that can change the language is the people who use it for pragmatic purposes. 50-100 years ago, too, it was possible to communicate through some pictures published in the journal. Or, the ultimate goal of an artist working on a particular artwork is also to transmit a message, in other words, to communicate through image. And social media tools are increasingly expanding such transmission capabilities. The effect of sharing a material on social media and sharing something in real life is different. Individuals have an incomparably larger audience on social media channels than in real life. Here the materials that are shared by an individual - texts, pictures, videos, music and so on., the mass interest he/she causes, the number of people in his/her friendship, etc. play an important role. At the same time, it is also crucial that the language used by the individual is understandable to the audience.

The massive impact of social media channels on people has made them one of the main means of communication between various business entities, private and public institutions and their target audience today. Activities conducted for the effectiveness of the communication, attracting more followers to various individual and corporate pages and not losing them, drawing the attention of page followers to a particular product, service, etc. have led to the emergence of a new and extremely promising type of activity – digital marketing today. One of the main directions of this activity is related to the language.

The proximity of the language units used to produce different contents to the social media audience is claimed to be one of the most important conditions for digital marketing. If purely the academic rules of the language not the opinion of the audience are considered essential while developing contents for any company's corporative site on social networks, then the language mismatch will have a negative effect on customers. Therefore, it is advisable to take into account a few important considerations regarding the use of language units when developing contents:

- Who is the target population, and what is their demographic distribution? If the majority of the audience is women over the age of 55, it is not advisable to use smiles or other emoticons in the content. On the contrary, if the target is made up of teenage girls, then such signs and symbols should be an integral part of the content. Only in this way the language of the content can be adapted to the language of users.
- Is the represented brand included in B2B or B2C as indicated in the marketing language? The B2B brands are usually intended for a specific professional group that uses the formal, academic language. The B2C brands, on the contrary, are unofficial, and their presentation language, by being simple and playful, is designed for people from different professions.
- How is the voice tone of the brand? The tone of the presentation may be overly noisy or too low. The key issue here is to adapt its harmony to the common language of the social media.
- What social media channel is your content being developed for? If the Twitter is used, then the use of contents adapted to a specific character limit is mandatory. Or, if the LinkedIn's social network is used, in this case there is a

great need for the content to be written in a more professional and specific language [Ukhova L.V.,2011].

Taking these points into account can help the parties understand each other more easily and build effective, purposeful communication. Being knowledgeable about the language used in social media can help to understand the virtual audience and determine practices that are in compatible with them. For example, being unaware of the meaning of many of the characters used by Facebook users may cause certain difficulties in terms of responding accordingly to written comments. One of the main features of the communication carried out through social networks is that many of its types are semi-transparent. Only those who are aware of their meaning know these. All of this is the subtlety of the social media communication.

There is another phenomenon, which researchers call internet-meme, that is evolving very quickly in virtual communication and social networks in recent years. The term meme is brought by the English biologist Richard Dawkins. He used the term to describe the process of preserving and spreading a particular element of culture [Breen,

966  
Patrick; Kelly, Jane; Heckman, Timothy; et al.,2016].

Internet memes are ideas and behaviors that are spread across the internet and social networks. Internet memes can be in the forms of pictures, hyperlinks, videos, web pages, hashtags and more. We can briefly explain its essence like this: any thought, idea, or speech that has never been so popular until recent times suddenly emerges in various audiovisual forms (sound, video, picture, text, etc.), starts to rapidly gain popularity by disseminating from one user to the internet and becomes a major trend in social media over time. The internet meme is essentially information in nature. However, from a functional point of view, it can sometimes lead to serious consequences. Memes can spread both horizontally and vertically. Horizontal spreading is its dissemination among representatives of only one generation. In the vertical dissemination, the meme is also transmitted from generation to generation. Popularity periods of different memes may vary. The existence of a meme depends on its popularity. Each meme loses its popularity over time, and thus, its existence as a phenomenon. Its

resurgence depends on the user seeking to revive the existing meme.

The popularity of a meme corresponds to its content. It is impossible to artificially popularize a meme. The effect of the information it carries should psychologically persuade social media participants to share this content with others. A meme may undergo changes for the development of another meme. In this sense, there is a natural selection process in the virtual space, and the winner is the one that has a stronger psychological impact on internet users.

If we examine the trends that have been followed in Azerbaijan's social media environment in recent years, we will observe that the most popular memes mostly have satirical contents. This fact is not only characteristic for Azerbaijan, but for the whole world. Currently, the most popular meme genres on the internet are demotivators, caps, vines, strip comics, and cartoons.

In general, all these internet memes, especially demotivators, are a fairly complex sociocultural phenomenon of the internet communication and need an extensive scientific research. Verbal and visual components do not include details in

967  
internet memes. The addressee should come to some conclusions by analyzing these components. In many cases, he/she perceives the material in the literal sense – in the way he understands it.

Therefore, when exploring this phenomenon, one should also look at the communication chains created through internet memes. As it is known, any idea goes through several stages, by travelling from its source to the end point of the communication, until it forms a certain attitude for the addressee. This is the case in any form of creativity (literature, movie, music, painting, etc.) presented to audiences of readers, viewers, listeners. Internet memes, which are spreading on social media, are also an example of creativity, and through them the communication chain can be displayed as follows: source, message, encryption mechanism, transmission channel, decryption mechanism, addressee, communication outcome, feedback. The main condition here is that the addressee's worldview should be at the level that is sufficient to decode demotivators' visual image. If this condition is not met, the encrypted message indicated in the demotivator will not reach its destination or will be distorted.

A number of specific features of demotivators and functions they perform bring them very close to the language. Because most of these are functions and features that are in common with language: 1) it is a means of communication between people (communicative function); 2) it is a means of acquiring new knowledge about activities (cognitive function); 3) it is a means of accumulating and transferring knowledge about activities, traditions, cultures and history (accumulative function); 4) it is a means of expressing feelings and emotions (emotional function); 5) it fulfills an effect function (voluntative function) [Boulton, C. A.; Shotton, H.; Williams, H. T., 2016].

After all this, the question arises: can demotivators be considered as language units? In our opinion, they are a special type of language. Demotivators are made up of two types of symbols. The relationship between them is not just semantic, but also international.

Internet memes are not just a set of characters but have a synergistic effect. As it is known, the synergistic effect is considered to increase the efficiency of the activity as a result of the integration. A classic example of this is

968

that if two people exchange their apples, each will still have one. Thus, there will be no increase in the number of apples. However, if two people exchange their ideas, then each of them will have two ideas. Internet-memes shared on social media, in fact, are exchange of ideas, and they affect multilateral relationships through the synergistic effect.

Another distinctive feature of demotivators is the multivariate usage level of visual components of text and mobile verticality. In this case, one visual image is used with different slogans. Or a particular slogan is used in different forms. Despite the repetition of certain components, synergistic effects of these demotivators also vary.

In social networks, demotivators are used to correlate speech situations in the private interpersonal communication (discussion initiatives, debate, lifting the interlocutor's mood, stinging the interlocutor, impressing the interlocutor, attaching special meanings to words, reconciling, sharing expressions and emotions, confessing love, using for holiday congratulations, traditional jokes, presentation of ideas in an original manner, quotes, pseudowords and so forth.). Many of these are collected based on pre-existing examples in the

language, including aphorisms, winged expressions, humorous phrases, etc. Therefore, due to the spread of internet memes on social media, there also emerges some changes in the status of the language used in this environment. The intention of expressing as wide content as possible with few words, makes it necessary to expose the rich layers of the language.

If we accept demotivators as a specific language of the internet communication, then users of this language and whether learning this language is possible are also the urgent questions that arise. Practices show that, like other languages, demotivators can be learned as a language and used whenever necessary. Some websites create their own demotivators and give each user an opportunity to use it according to their own wishes. Demotivators can also be created independently without the need for anybody's help.

### Conclusions

All these notes demonstrate that the digital era has already laid the groundwork for a new phase in the development of the national languages and the need to ensure the proper

969  
development of the Azerbaijani language, which today is the language of communication for millions of virtual participants.

According to statistical estimates, by the end of 2019, the number of internet users in Azerbaijan was 79.999,431 amounting to 80.6% of the country's population [Dernoncourt, Franck, Lee, Ji Young; Szolovits, Peter. P.,2017].

As can be observed from this figure, the number of internet users who use the Azerbaijani language as a means of communication in the virtual space in our country is growing rapidly. In this context, there is a great need for a research and the implementation of relevant research projects in this area in order to preserve and develop our native language.

Social networks provide a favorable environment for tracking changes and new vocabulary trends in the language. By making observations here, you can see how words become common in usage. In this regard, social networks mean great opportunities for developing the literary language, carrying out experiments regarding the language and performing reforms in this area.

Discussions held on social networks, highlighting of the facts regarding the emergence of new words and their acquisition of functionality, development of new words and their dissemination with viral effects provide great prospects for the development of the language. By organizing virtual public referendums on social networks, it is possible to determine to what extent both the words taken from foreign languages and the newly created words in the language have been successful, and whether these words will be assimilated in the Azerbaijani language.

Overall, the virtual space is like a litmus paper and exposes the language literacy status of the mass audience. It is well-known that a person's grammatical habits and orthoepic abilities appear in a spontaneous speech act. Before the emergence of the internet, the spontaneous speech was purely verbal and instantaneous. Therefore, the investigation of the general situation in this area and the scientific analysis of characteristics of the public speaking did not appear to be so easy. However, now it is possible to save speech acts carried out on the internet, print them on paper, use them for various scientific purposes, identify inherent flaws in people's speech

970  
and take comprehensive measures in order to eliminate them.

Preliminary studies in the country display that Azerbaijani internet users mostly make the following violations when using their native language in the virtual communication process: the tendency to use words and terms taken from foreign languages unnecessarily widely; the use of words taken from foreign languages without adapting them to the rules of the Azerbaijani language; shortening of words and sentences; the improper use of punctuation marks; the use of argos and vulgarisms, etc.

Considering that the dangers posed by the rapid increase in the number of internet users in our country is becoming more and more important for the national treasure of the Azerbaijani people – our mother tongue, it is necessary to take some measures to improve the level of the language literacy of citizens.

In order to prevent language violations in social media, first of all, students must be taught special subjects during secondary education, to perfect their writing skills in their native language. Today, there is a great need for social media to be taught as a separate subject in secondary and higher

education institutions. Because violations committed by people during the use of the language are mostly education-related violations. The defective use of the native language by people is not due to the expressive power and deficiency of the language. The main reason for this is the low educational and cultural level of people who use the language. Therefore, an early and serious consideration of this issue in the educational process would ensure that in the future, the younger generation would use the language in the virtual space at a desirable level. To this end, the curriculum of the Azerbaijani language should be changed in educational institutions. A particular attention should be given to pupils' and students' development of habits of expressing themselves in written forms in their native language. For this purpose, mostly, alternative methods that are based on practical activities should be used. Activities such as implementing distant learning projects in the Azerbaijani language, making video tutorials for the development of writing and speaking skills of people and offering them for public use in online resources, as well as monitoring the use of language on social media as on radio

971  
and television etc. can be helpful in this regard.

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