The Analysis of Netspeak Used on Instagram

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ABSTRACT

Analyzing netspeak used on Instagram involves examining the linguistic and communicative features that are common on the platform. Instagram is a highly visual social media platform, and while it primarily revolves around sharing images and videos, text-based communication in the form of captions, comments, and direct messages plays a crucial role in enhancing the user experience and conveying meaning. This study attempts to discover the use of written communication features on researchers Instagram explore bar. The qualitative method is applied and the data was gathered through observation and documentation and then analyzed in terms of graphology, typography, grammar, vocabulary, and discourse features. This research found some distinctive graphic features such as emojis, correct spelling, lack of punctuation, hashtags, and turn-taking that presents unique coherence and chronological order. The result highlights the complex aspects available in the data, including informality and anomalies that frequently break the rules of conventional language enforced by internet users. Furthermore, the discovery demonstrates that written language development on Netspeak is a method for overcoming expressive obstacles in Instagram communication.
Keywords: Netspeak, Language variety, Instagram

INTRODUCTION

Language is important in Internet and Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) because it allows people to communicate and exchange information in a virtual environment. (Herring, 2013). Some of the functions of language in CMC include facilitating communication that allows users to interact with one another and convey their thoughts, ideas, and emotions (Crystal, 2006). Other function is to create communities where individuals with similar interests or goals can connect and engage in discussion (Thurlow et al, 2004). It supports collaboration between individuals in different locations and time zones, allowing them to work together on projects and share ideas.

A digital platform that has revolutionized the way people communicate, share information, and connect with people around the world is social media. It has become an integral part of people's daily lives, with billions of users accessing various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok (Pew Research Center, 2021). Social media provides a platform for people to express themselves, share their ideas, opinions, and experiences with a global audience. It allows users to create, share and exchange information, ideas, and content in virtual communities and networks. Furthermore, social media has revolutionized the way people communicate, connect and interact with each other. It has brought people closer together, breaking down geographic barriers, and enabling real-time communication.

Social media channels for language learning that enable students to develop communication and language skills. Social media consist of interactive forms of media that allow users to interact with and publish to each other, generally by means of the internet. English is currently the leading language online. It is estimated that around 25% of all websites are in English, and a significant portion of online content, including social media, news, and entertainment, is also in English (The Wall Street Journal, 2023).

Speaking of language, electronic language or Netspeak is the language of today's generation in computer-mediated communication (CMC). As a new language variant, Netspeak has been a part of English, and plays a more and more significant role in modern communication (Tong, 2019). Netspeak is an alternative to Netlish, Cyberspeak, electronic language, electronic discourse, interactive written discourse, computer-mediated communication (CMC) and other cumbersome locutions (Crystal, 2006). It is a colloquial vocabulary that frequently used by the internet user and a way of speaking or writing on the internet that is distinguishable by words, phrases, emoticons, and acronyms (Wahid & Farooq, 2022). In actuality, it is slang that has been popularized and, in many instances, coined by Internet users.

The term 'Netspeak' refers to the online language, which is primarily utilized on social media platform and it is a brand-new form of electronic communication (Wahid & Farooq, 2022). Instagram is a popular social media platform that allows users to share photos and videos with their followers. The platform was launched in 2010 and is now owned by Facebook. Users can create a profile, follow other users, and like and comment on their posts. In addition to the main Instagram app, the platform also offers Instagram TV (IGTV), Instagram Reels, and Instagram Stories, which are all additional features that allow users to share different types of content.

This research looks into the English Netspeak used on the Instagram, especially on the Instagram explore of the researcher herself. There are so many contents appear and the way people communicate and share their thought and feelings are very interesting to be analyzed. That is way, the researcher makes effort to survey and

analyze the forms and characteristics of English Netspeak and attempts to study the new language variant under the title "The Analysis of Netspeak Used on Instagram".

LITERATURE REVIEW

Online Communication

Online communication refers to the exchange of information, ideas, and messages using digital technologies such as the internet and social media. The widespread use of online communication has revolutionized the way people interact and communicate with each other. Hampton et al. (2011) conducted a study to examine the impact of social networking sites (SNS) on people's lives. The study found that SNS users are more likely to have larger and more diverse social networks, and are also more likely to engage in civic and political activities. The study suggests that online communication can have a positive impact on social connections and community engagement.

Barak and Gluck-Ofri (2007) examined the degree and reciprocity of self-disclosure in online forums. The study found that people tend to disclose more personal information in online forums than in face-to-face interactions, and that self-disclosure is positively associated with a sense of online community. The study suggests that online communication can facilitate self-disclosure and foster a sense of belonging. Joinson (2008) in his study found that people use Facebook for a variety of reasons, including socializing, maintaining existing relationships, and monitoring the activities of others. The study suggests that online communication can serve different purposes for different people, and that social media platforms can facilitate a range of social interactions. Heavy Facebook users had lower GPAs than non-users, and that the negative impact on academic performance was particularly pronounced among students who used Facebook while studying (Kirschner and Karpinski, 2010). Online communication can have both positive and negative effects. it can facilitate social connections, self-disclosure, and community engagement, but it can also be a distraction that negatively impacts academic performance. Further research is needed to fully understand the benefits and challenges of online communication in different contexts and for different populations.

Social Media Communication

Social media platforms have revolutionized the way people communicate and interact with each other. Social media communication involves the exchange of information, ideas, and messages using digital technologies such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Ellison et al. (2007) stated that Facebook use was positively associated with social capital, which refers to the resources available to individuals through their social networks. Social media communication can enhance social capital and facilitate social connections.

Bazarova et al. (2015) conducted a review of the literature on cyber bullying on social media platforms. The review found that social media platforms can provide a breeding ground for cyber bullying, which refers to the use of digital technologies to harass, intimidate, or harm others. The review suggests that social media communication can also have negative consequences, including the potential for cyber bullying and other forms of online harassment. Van Dijck (2013) provides a critical history of social media, examining the cultural, social, and political implications of these platforms. He argues that social media communication has transformed the way people communicate and interact, but has also introduced new challenges and inequalities. The book suggests that social media communication is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that requires critical analysis and reflection.

The existing research on social media communication suggests that it can have both positive and negative effects. Social media communication can enhance social connections, academic achievement, and emotional well-being, but can also introduce new challenges, including the potential for cyber bullying and other forms of online harassment. Further research is needed to fully understand the benefits and challenges of social media communication in different contexts and for different populations.

Netspeak

Netspeak refers to the language and writing styles used in online communication, particularly in instant messaging, texting, and social media. Netspeak is characterized by a number of features, including acronyms, abbreviations, emoticons, and other non-standard linguistic forms. This literature review examines the existing research on netspeak, including its features, functions, and implications. Crystal (2001) provides an overview of the language used on the internet, including netspeak. He examines the linguistic features of netspeak, such as abbreviations, acronyms, and emoticons, and explores their communicative functions. Crystal suggests that netspeak is a new and evolving form of language that reflects the unique characteristics of online communication.

Thurlow (2003) examines the language used by young people in text messaging, including the use of netspeak. He analyzes the linguistic features of text messages and explores their social and communicative functions and suggests that netspeak is a key feature of text messaging that reflects the social and cultural practices of young people. According to Tagg (2012), netspeak is a dynamic and evolving form of language that reflects the changing social and technological landscape of online communication. Netspeak is a unique and evolving form of language that reflects the demands and constraints of online communication.

Stylistic Features Distinctive to the Netspeak

Stylistic features in Netspeak refer to the various ways in which users manipulate language to create unique and distinctive communication styles in online settings (Thurlow & Poff, 2013). It reflects its informal and creative nature, and allow users to communicate in new and dynamic ways. By using creative spelling, slang, and other unique features, Netspeak users can create a distinctive communication style that reflects their personalities and communities.

a) Graphic Features

Various graphic features have been developed and used to enhance and convey meaning in Netspeak. Forms and functions of graphic features in Netspeak are emoticon and emoji, acronyms and abbreviations, capitalization, typography, and memes.

b) Orthographic Features

Orthographic features refer to the spelling, punctuation, and other conventions of written language. These features are important for effective communication, as they help to convey meaning and make written texts easier to read and understand. Forms and functions of orthographic features in Netspeak are spelling, punctuation, capitalization, abbreviations, numbers and symbols. Orthographic features play an important role in written communication by conveying meaning and organizing information. By using proper spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and other conventions of written language, writers can ensure that their messages are clear, accurate, and easy to understand.

c) Grammatical Feature

Netspeak is a unique form of communication that has emerged with the rise of online communication and social media platforms. Due to its digital context, grammatical features in Netspeak often differ from traditional written or spoken language. the grammatical features in Netspeak reflect its informal and conversational nature. While traditional grammar rules may be disregarded or modified, these features serve to enhance communication and convey meaning in a digital context where tone and body language are often absent. Forms and functions of grammatical features in Netspeak are shortened words, abbreviations, non-standard capitalization, lack of punctuation, and the use of emojis and emoticons.

d) Lexical Features

Lexical features in Netspeak refer to the unique words and phrases that are commonly used in online communication. lexical features in Netspeak reflect its fast-paced and efficient nature, and allow users to communicate complex ideas quickly and effectively. By using acronyms, memes, and other unique lexical features, Netspeak users can convey meaning and emotion in a way that is both creative and efficient. Forms of lexical features are chatbots and virtual assistant, and hashtags.

e) Discourse Features

Discourse features in Netspeak refer to the ways in which language is used in online communication to structure conversation, convey social meaning, and

negotiate relationships between participants (Herring, 2013). Forms of discourse features such as topic shifting, turn-taking, self-disclosure, Irony and Humor, and the use of non-standard grammar.

Characteristics of English Netspeak

As a language variant, Netspeak not only has the common features of language, but also possesses some unique characteristics. Tong (2019) summarize the characteristic of Netspeak from four aspects as follows:
a. Innovation

Innovation is a distinctive feature of the network buzzwords. Compared to the traditional written language, English Netspeak is more creative and productive. The innovation is mainly reflected in vocabulary. Innovation refers to the coinage use based on the words or expressions already existed, namely, entitling the existing words new meanings.
b. Conciseness

As society develops fast, people have a great sense of time. Netspeak seems to be simple and convenient to save time to communicate effectively. If one has conversations with several friends at the same time on Internet, the concise Netspeak can help him/her save a lot of time to maintain conversations with friends. English Netspeak tends to be concise and easy to understand, so just several words or signs could carry many meanings. No doubt it is shared as a fashion. In addition, network buzzwords have changed some conventional word-formation patterns to create a new form of combination of sound and meaning, such as emoticons and figures talked above.
c. Flexibility

English Netspeak is flexible in creation and distribution. The word "flexibility" has two layers of meanings. Firstly, we can freely invent any form or kind of Netspeak. In other words, no authority can dominate the creation of Netspeak and everyone can create new words on the Net. For example, now everyone knows "B2B", and we can follow the example and invent "B2W" (business to women), "B2K" (business to kids), "B2P" (business to parents), "B2Y" (business to youth) and even "B2A" (business to job applicants) and "B2D" (business to decision makers). Secondly, Netspeak is easy to be distributed, free of charge. With these kinds of favorable features, English Netspeak has no reasons for not being popular all over the world.
d. Humor

In modern society, people face much more competition and severe pressure. Many people tend to get rid of the pressure through all kinds of recreational activities. Netizens always deliberately use surprising language to cause a shock effect. They use different word patterns to interact with others, for instance, they use emoticons to show their facial emotions. No one will deny that the use of emoticons and homonyms in QQ will bring us a lot of joys. The emoticons can shorten the distance between people in online

interaction. Many people are attracted by the Internet and Netspeak. They think that Netspeak enriches the traditional language and bring people a lot of joys.

METHOD

Design and Samples

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method. The qualitative research is considered to be applied to the study's main purposes that aimed at collecting the data, and then analyze it for explaining the existing occurrence (Heigham & Crocker, 2009). This research had some data to be analyzed. The data of this research from Instagram user posts and comments that appear on the researcher's Instagram explore. There were ninety posts and comments were taken on Instagram. The data was gained from August to early September 2023. The 90 posts and comments taken by the researchers were considered sufficient to meet the qualitative data analysis. This is because the researcher has reached a saturation point where the available data is sufficient to the research objectives and has provided a comprehensive insight into the topic. Researcher have gathered different perspectives and have explored various aspects of the subject.

Instrument and Procedures

The data were collected by applying the documentary technique. According to Sugiyono (2008), documentary technique means reading, studying, and analyzing documents created by others about an object. The data of this study were collected by following steps:
1.   Reading and choosing the post on the Instagram.
2.   Sorting and find out language variation that is used in the status.
3.   Selecting and finding out the dominant of Netspeak.

Data Analysis

The technique employed in this research would use content analysis. According to Cresswell (2007), content analysis included data managing, describing, classifying, interpretating, representing, visualizing

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data obtained are the posts and comments that appear on the researchers' Instagram Explore bar. There were 90 posts and comments from August to early September 2023 shown below;

Stylistic Features	Forms	Frequency
Graphic Features	Emoticons	1
	Emojis	60

	Acronyms	6
	Abbreviations	13
	Capitalization	28
	Typography	-
	Memes	8
Orthographic Features	Spelling	71
	Punctuation	25
	Capitalization	28
	Abbreviations	13
	Numbers	9
	Symbols	40
Grammatical Features	Shortened words	17
	Abbreviations	13
	Non-standard Capitalization	31
	Lack of punctuation	65
	Use of emojis	34
	Use of emoticons	1
Lexical Features	Chatbots and Virtual assistants	-
	Hashtags	21
Discourse Features	Topic Shifting	8
	Turn-taking	74
	Self-disclosure	29
	Irony and humor	20
	Use of non-standard grammar	34

Table 1. Stylistic Features Distinctive to Netspeak on Instagram

The table above shows that there were five features distinctive to Netspeak took from researcher's Instagram Explore. One primary form of graphic features which is emojis, the frequency of appearance is 60 times.
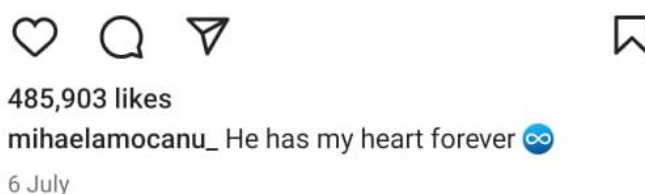

Figure 1

Emojis play various forms and functions in netspeak which can enhancing and conveying emotions, context, and tone in online conversations. Emojis serve as a versatile tool in netspeak, allowing users to enrich their online communication by conveying emotions, tone, context, and cultural nuances effectively. The

interpretation of emojis can vary, their meaning depends on the context and the users involved in the conversation. Following the frequency of occurrence in graphic features is capitalization, abbreviation, memes, and acronyms. They serve multiple functions, including enhancing user experience, conveying information, branding, navigation, and more. Effective use of graphics is essential for creating visually appealing and functional websites.

Orthographic features are dominated by the correct spelling which are appear 71 times. Proper spelling is important for clear communication, as misspelling can change the meaning of a word or make a text difficult to understand. Symbols are the second most appear form of orthographic. Symbols are used to shorten or simplify words and phrases, saving time and space in online communication. For example, "gr8" represents "great," and "cu l8r" stands for "see you later."

Figure 2

Symbols in netspeak, also known as internet symbols or online symbols, serve various functions in online communication. They are often used to enhance and clarify the meaning of messages, express emotions, convey tone, or create a sense of identity and belonging within online communities. The infinity symbol (∞) has various meanings and interpretations in different contexts. From the figure 2 above, the infinity symbol is used to represent the concept of eternity or endlessness. It can symbolize something that goes on forever, such as love, friendship, or time itself.

Grammatical features as the form of stylistic features serve informal and conventional nature. Grammatical features in netspeak are context-dependent and can vary widely between different online communities, platforms, and generations of internet users. Understanding the conventions and nuances of netspeak can be essential for effective communication in online environments. Lack of punctuation in Instagram posts become the most common grammatical feature which is appear 65 times.

Figure 3

Instagram originally had a character limit for captions and comments, which encouraged users to keep their text concise. While this limit has been expanded over time, the habit of using minimal punctuation to save space has persisted. Social media platforms, including Instagram, are designed for quick and convenient posting and engagement. Users may prioritize speed over formal grammar and punctuation when composing posts or comments. Instagram has a significant user base among younger demographics who are often more comfortable with informal online communication and may not prioritize traditional punctuation. Emojis and emoticons are commonly used on Instagram to convey emotions and reactions. Users may rely on these visual symbols to supplement or replace punctuation and textual expressions.
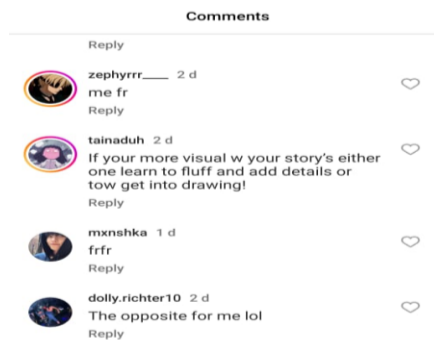
Hashtags become the most appearance form of lexical features which is 21 times. In netspeak and online communication hashtags are commonly used to categorize and organize content.

Figure 4

When people use a hashtag, it becomes a clickable link that leads to a feed of posts or messages that also include that same hashtag. This helps users easily find and engage with content related to specific topics. Hashtags are often used to highlight trending topics or discussions on social media platforms. Users can click on a trending hashtag to see what others are saying about a particular subject, event, or news item.

There are five forms of discourse features, namely topic shifting, turn-taking, self-discourse, irony and humor, and the use of non-standard grammar. The most appearing form is turn-taking which is 74 times. Turn-taking in netspeak, which refers to the online communication practices of people taking turns to speak or interact in text-based conversations, follows certain conventions and dynamics.

Figure 5

Turn-taking in netspeak, which refers to the online communication practices of people taking turns to speak or interact in text-based conversations, follows certain conventions and dynamics. These conventions help maintain orderly and meaningful discussions in various online platforms, such as chat rooms, social media, messaging apps, and forums. Participants may use emojis, reactions, or other symbols to express agreement, approval, laughter, or other emotions without typing a full response. This can be a way to participate in the conversation non-verbally.

CONCLUSION

The results validated Netspeak as a variety of English that can be compared to other linguistic varieties, as demonstrated by the distinguishing features that reveal the difference in terms of semantics, has a distinct structure, and a rich idea in writing. Netspeak discovered in the data source contains stylistic variation, allowing a goal to be attained by utilizing many various qualities present there. The data source's properties are sometimes modified by outside factors. The writing on the data source demonstrates advancement and development, where writing recognized for its de-contextualized communication can be addressed by data source features.

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