



Electronic Communication Genres And Their Linguistic Interpretation

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Abstract: This article discusses the concept of electronic communication and the role of technical devices and communication channels that ensure and structure the process of interaction. It also analyzes the linguistic and social interpretations of the term “virtual world,” examining its communicative essence and its relationship with real reality from opposing perspectives.

Keywords: Electronic communication, technical devices, communication channels, speech genres, internet genres, forum, chat, e-mail, virtual world, linguopragmatics.

Introduction: When discussing electronic communication, it is essential to distinguish between two related but distinct concepts: the technical devices that enable communication and the communication channels through which it occurs. Technical devices that ensure electronic communication primarily refer to tools that enable the transmission and reception of information. These include the Internet network, computers, laptops, smartphones, tablets, servers, and other types of digital gadgets. Among these, the Internet holds a universal quality, as it connects all technical devices into a single global network, enabling mutual interaction. The Internet serves as a “common field” of modern communication, integrating all processes of electronic interaction within itself.

Electronic communication methods implemented through technical devices include the following:

E-mail, forums, messengers, social networks, websites, online platforms, and others.

Their emergence and service to the communicative environment are closely related to the achievements of science and technology, and over time, newer and more advanced technologies continue to be developed.

Technical devices and communication methods that enable electronic interaction continuously complement one another. In other words, without the Internet or smartphones, social networks and similar platforms could not function in reality.

The roles of these components in ensuring electronic communication can be illustrated metaphorically: technical devices may be viewed as “roads” or “bridges” through which information travels, while communication methods can be compared to “vehicles” that deliver this information to its destination along these routes.

Thus, the successful organization of electronic communication requires the harmonious integration of technical devices and communication methods. Without a solid technical foundation, the methods cannot operate effectively; conversely, without appropriate methods, technical devices remain merely passive tools.

It should be noted that in a number of studies, these communication methods are interpreted as internet genres. At first glance, the concept of genre may appear somewhat alien to linguistics. Indeed, the term genre originally emerged within the field of literary studies, where it was used to classify artistic works according to their type, content, and form. In literature, a genre is determined by the compositional structure, artistic devices, and social function of a work. Therefore, literary genres are traditionally divided into epic genres (novel, short story, narrative), lyric genres (ghazal, poem, rubai), and dramatic genres (tragedy, comedy, drama).

Subsequently, this concept was transferred into the field of linguistics as well, since speech activity, much like literature, is formed on the basis of stable patterns. As a result, the notion of “speech genres” entered scientific discourse. Speech genres are therefore regarded as stable communicative units that people regularly use in interaction. Examples include forms such as greetings, conversations, addresses, and applications, each possessing distinctive structures and stylistic features that differentiate them from one another.

The development of digital technologies has taken the concept of “genre” to a new stage. The various forms of message exchange that have emerged within internet communication – owing to their relatively stable structures and functions—have manifested as independent internet genres. For instance, e-mail represents the virtual adaptation of the traditional letter; chat reflects a rapid and concise version of the conversational genre; forums serve as online equivalents of discussions and meetings; while blogs

and posts constitute digital variations of the article and diary genres. Each of these genres meets the essential criteria of genre formation through their unique linguistic and structural realizations.

Moreover, these genres differ according to the specific characteristics of online communication, the platforms on which they occur, and their communicative purposes. Their emergence and patterns of use have, in turn, become significant sources of data for various linguistic and interdisciplinary studies.

The classification of internet communication genres is carried out on the basis of various criteria. Internet genres can be grouped according to the range of topics they reflect and the target audience they serve. In particular, E. I. Goroshko and T. L. Polyakova, in developing their “Dynamic Model of Genre Typology,” consider the type of speech as a genre-forming factor and divide internet genres into the following subgroups:

- a) **Personal** – personal webpages, personal blogs, forums, and social media pages;
- b) **Political** – official webpages of political parties, political blogs, and microblogs;
- c) **Business** – corporate websites, business e-mails, and related resources;
- d) **Mass media discourse** – online news outlets and information agency webpages, among others [4, p. 17].

Linguist O. I. Lutovinova, who studied the linguistic features of the forum genre, identifies it as one of the core genres of internet discourse. Forums represent a form of remote electronic communication intended for the discussion of specific topics, and they may be classified as non-traditional internet genres typical of virtual reality. A distinctive feature of forum communication is the unlimited number of participants. Forums differ in terms of subject matter, structure, degree of democracy, and design [2, p. 395].

Similarly, Russian linguist Shipitsina also classifies e-mail, chat, and forum as distinct internet genres [8].

However, researcher N. Nosirov rejects the aforementioned views, arguing that these forms do not fully meet the criteria of a genre. Instead, he regards them as modes of interaction that provide opportunities for the exchange of utterances belonging to various speech genres. In forums or chats, a communicator can participate by posting comments and exchanging information or opinions with multiple interlocutors. The notions of forum and chat are closely related, differing mainly in terms of whether the interaction is goal-oriented or spontaneous. In forums, discussions are typically conducted within a specific thematic framework and in a mixed style, while in chats (from the English chat — to talk, to converse), communication

usually takes place in informal spoken language, often in a casual and unstructured manner [6].

In our view, defining forums and chats merely as “forms of communication” narrows their linguopragmatic essence. Both possess distinctive communicative patterns and, from the perspective of key genre-defining features – recurrence, communicative purpose, audience, and form of expression – they can be considered independent genres. In forums, discussions generally revolve around a specific topic, characterized by coherent texts and the use of arguments, whereas chat interactions occur in real time, marked by brevity, immediacy, and informality.

As a result of the Internet’s unrestricted movement across the globe, a new realm has emerged that captivates humanity—commonly referred to as the virtual world. The term “virtual” came to represent the essence of this realm. Consequently, new expressions such as virtual world, virtual reality, virtual games, and virtual travel have become widespread in contemporary discourse.

According to the Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language, the word “virtual” denotes “existence within a digital environment, electronic space, or software system designed for communication and various forms of activity” [1, p. 700].

The term “virtual reality” was first introduced in the 1970s by Jaron Lanier, a researcher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT); however, it was American filmmakers who popularized it within the cinematic sphere. They employed the term in their films to depict imaginary possibilities that could not be realized in the physical world but could be graphically or visually simulated, thus bringing the notion of virtuality into artistic expression [7].

The virtual world refers to a digitally constructed environment created through computer technologies, distinct from physical reality. Within this digital realm, users communicate, interact, and engage in diverse forms of activity through computers, the Internet, and other technological means. As technology continues to advance, the virtual world is becoming increasingly complex and is gradually transforming into an inseparable component of real life.

This emerging virtual reality offers new opportunities and experiences for individuals, exerting a profound influence on the formation of society and communication practices. Therefore, studying the virtual world and analyzing its social, economic, and cultural dimensions is of significant scientific importance.

Among many linguists, there are ongoing debates regarding the nature of the virtual world and the communication processes within it, with some scholars viewing it as a non-material environment. For instance, G. N. Trofimova defines virtuality as a process that manifests as an imitation of reality [5].

O. V. Lutovinova, meanwhile, outlines a series of distinctions based on the contrast between the virtual and material (physical) worlds. The material world represents the tangible physical reality surrounding us, whereas the virtual world consists of data and images, possessing immaterial characteristics. The real world is localized, as a person can occupy only one physical point in space, while the virtual world is global – spatial boundaries are dissolved, and distance ceases to exist.

Moreover, the material world is resistant to change, being subject to the laws of physical permanence, whereas the virtual world can be easily modified or modeled by human intervention. In real-world communication, individuals interact face-to-face, perceiving each other and exchanging authentic sensory information. In contrast, communication in the virtual world is characterized by anonymity: users can conceal their identities through pseudonyms or fabricated images, thereby masking their true selves.

For this reason, many researchers regard virtuality as a phenomenon that is non-real and imitative in nature – a constructed simulation of reality rather than reality itself [2, p. 395].

D. L. Makarov, however, challenges the aforementioned perspectives, asserting that within the communicative environment, the central role belongs not to the means of communication but to the individuals themselves. Although virtual reality is based on non-material constructs – such as data, ideas, and images – users nonetheless experience a “sense of presence”, perceiving it as a form of material reality [3, p. 366].

As observed, interpretations of the essence of the virtual world tend to follow two main directions. The first approach views it not as a replica of material reality but as a form of “immaterial imitation”. The second approach, by contrast, places the user’s perception at the center, elevating the virtual environment to the level of social and psychological reality.

In our view, these two approaches are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary. On the one hand, the virtual environment is not a direct copy of the material world but an immaterial construct created through technological means; from this perspective, it can indeed be regarded as an imitation. On the other hand, this imitation transforms into a real experience within human consciousness: the user perceives emotional responses, communicative interactions, and

social relations within it as authentic aspects of reality. Thus, virtual reality embodies a dual nature: while it is technologically modeled and simulated, it simultaneously becomes, in communicative-pragmatic terms, an integral and genuine component of human life.

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