Language and the internet

Technology, Internet

Despite this, I do not believe the internet is the destroyer of language that some paranoid scientist may claim it to be. Rather, I believe the internet is a tool for refining and improving language in the modern era. I believe that the internet creates new rules for language and even changes some old rules that have been in place since the medieval times. I daresay the internet may even be the next step in the evolution of language. The introduction of online social media sites have been such a huge hit with people that it would not be an understatement to say that they are all over the internet.

The wide-spread success of these cites has done more than Just give bored individuals something to do Rather, these sites are some of the main catalyst for some of the changes occurring to language. To elaborate on this however, I must first explain how some of these sites work. Many social cites have an option to allow the posting of comments and user feedback on videos, pictures, and various other kinds of media. These comment sections however, are very constrained and usually allow an individual only a few words to express oneself.

This is where the ingenuity of the internet comes in though. In an effort to save time and space, the users of these sites have and shortened words created new acronyms in the effort to say as much as possible with as little words as possible. " The use of acronyms - LOL, TTYL, IMHO, TMI, OMG - alleviates the need to type long phrases, and reduces space" (Denser). This allows the users of these sites to say as much as they can, with as little words as possible. Some have argued however that these acronyms are nothing but fractured words.

They mutilate meanings and distort words more than necessary as well as revere only to confuse others. While it is true that these acronyms may distort words to a degree, this can also be seen as language evolving and adapting to the new rules of the internet. What should also be taken into consideration is the fact that these acronyms are not constantly changing. Rather than being transient and subject to change, much of the acronyms introduced on the internet have fixed rules.

Much like speech, they can only be used in certain ways, have their own connotations, and are spelled in a specific way. " Testing is a new method of communication with its own ales, structure and purpose (Think of the communication purpose and style differences between speech writing and formal speeches, newspaper and magazine articles, blobs, emails and now tweets)" (Denser). In this sense, language is flourishing and evolving rather than in danger. One of the most widespread ideas about the internet is that the introductions of techno speak will be the downfall of language. Techno speak will become the new standard of English, standards will be lost, and creativity diminished as globalization imposes sameness" (Crystal; 24). This however is not the case. Rather than diminish creativity, I believe the internet has increased creativity and diversity through the World Wide Web. The limitations and constraints of the internet, and the computer, have led to some innovations by individuals who want to get their point across. Rather than inspire sameness, the internet inspired creativity and ingenuity. It is even suggested that net speak mimics actual speech.

Internet chats are " time- governed, expecting or demanding an immediate response; they are transient, in the sense that messages may be immediately deleted (as in e-mails) or be lost to attention as they scroll off the screen (as in chat groups); and their utterances display much of the urgency and energetic force which is characteristic of face-to-face conversation" (Crystal; 29). If net speak really does destroy creativity and inspires a sameness in others, then it would be accurate to say that speech does the same since both are so closely related.

Some may argue that human interaction and net speak are not the same on the grounds that human interaction requires face to face conversations between people. While this may be true, it is false to discredit the similarities between the two on those grounds alone. The fact of the matter is that speech and net speak mirror each other, for obvious reasons, and as such, it is accurate to say that both forms of speech allow innovations and creativity to exist. Another innovation the internet has done to language is introducing text translators.

This simple innovation has allowed a vast array of communications to be done between groups that may not normally understand a certain language. At a glance, this may seem like a negative consequence of the internet. For example, the fact that anyone can now use a text translator may lead some to believe that this will issued the learning of a new language in favor of the text translation. Another problem of the text translator is that it is prone to making mistakes in translation.

Some aspects of a language cannot be so easily translated such as the slang a language may have, the accent a word may be pronounced with, and other limitations which may confuse the meaning of a sentence or translate it wrong. Not only that, but there is also the argument that people would not understand the meaning of a translated piece unless it has been incorporated into deep memory which " retains the thoughts and the functional rules of language and thinking" (LATA; 65).

Put simply, the text translator is ineffective because if the reader does not take the time to deeply think about the language translation, then they will forget it. While it may be true that the text translator does little to properly translate the full meaning of a sentence, it is effective at translating small and simple sentences. This allows for communications between different languages without having to go through the hassle of learning the said language. This in itself at the very least allows people of different cultures and languages to communicate to each other, even if they are limited.

Due to the text translator being part of the internet, and many major websites today, this also means that it can only improve alongside people. " With automated translation services becoming more and more sophisticated by the day, we also have tools to bring the entire corpus of knowledge from one tongue to another. Preserving or learning another language is now a feasible and even fun adventure for coming generations" (Shaker). Another positive factor of the internet on language is the fact that the internet can act as an archive for many different languages.

In many parts of the world, language hat becomes unpopular with people is doomed to the fate of being forever forgotten. " When a language dies, so does a culture-its mores, meanings, values and outlooks, inextricably bound in daily discourse, the living embodiment of a community's history' (Shaker). With the internet acting as an archive for language however, some languages are protected from the fate of forever disappearing and may even be able to make a so-called comeback. For example, Sanskrit is not only " alive but thriving on the Internet.

There are multiple Sanskrit dictionaries, lexicons, mobile APS and even daily Sanskrit news" (Shaker). This is clearly possible because of the internet and its ability to act as an archive of language. If the internet was able to help this language pull itself out of the brink form extinction, then it can most certainly do the same for other endangered languages around the world. At the very least, the internet can preserve these languages for others who may one day want to study and even learn about them.

The internet also has the potential of being a sort of " melting pot" of various different languages. Due to the very nature of the internet, it is constantly being bombarded with various data form all over the world. Although this may seem of little significance to language, it is actually the reverse. With so many cultures connecting and even coming together through the internet, what is to say that the same cannot happen to different languages? With so much language fragmentation on the internet, new languages, or sub-languages, are forming between different groups and communities.

With so many people communicating with each other, and more online social sites becoming popular, the formation of new words and even languages occurring in no time at all, " rather than the many hundreds of years it took or all of the different languages of the Germanic people settling Great Britain to melt together into English, we have very fine-tuned communities coming together in zero time, relatively speaking, and spending tons of time communicating with each other online" (Byrne).

This means that not only is the internet helping various communities come together, it is even helping them form a more stable language capable of better conveying ideas, and thoughts, but it is also creating opportunities for different people to communicate more with each other. This reinforces the idea that the internet can be a melting pot for language and create new methods of communication between different people.

Of all the criticisms of language however, the most pervasive has to be the belief that spell-check is degenerating the minds of youth, degenerating the mind not in the intellectual sense, but rather in the sense of written word. Spell check has been added in the effort to make checking for incorrectly spelled words more convenient for the user. There have been arguments however, that the introductions of spell check has reduced the value of proper spelling and has been counterproductive and has made people dumber.

Although it is true that there is less emphasis on spelling in today's culture, this is due to the fact that papers are scarcely being written down on paper anymore. They are instead now being submitted electronically in an effort to

phase out paper. Although this may not seem good for spelling, the uses of paper in classrooms have assured that spelling is still a necessary if one is to properly express themselves as well as their ideas. Not only that, but spell check itself is a very limited technology in terms of functionality.

It cannot perceive denotations, and it does not have slang programmed into it. As such, it is meant to be only a device that checks spelling and helps the user correct them. It was never intended to phase out proper spelling and although it may lower a person's spelling ability, it is also the responsibility of the individual to know basic spelling as it is still essential in today's world. There is the idea that the internet diminishes the value of books. The pacing of the internet is so fast, that it instills in readers a sense of impatience and decreases their chances of reading books.

It has been suggested that " our screen-intensive habits pose three challenges to traditional eating: distraction, consumerism, and attention-seeking behavior" (Sharing; 205). Although this is somewhat true, it is false to think that the internet is the death of traditional reading. Many books are promoted online and available online via e- books. Although these books are digital and may prose some problems to certain individuals, they are indeed popular and a sign that literacy is still prospering.

Websites have even allowed users to post these books up and have discussions about them. One particular user named Howe started a book club online. Although initially small, " Hose's book club has morphed from a one-off summer reading aerogram to an ongoing, more " traditional" book club that sees readers coming together to discuss one book every month"

(Gourd). This shows that people are still interested with literature as well as reading and discussing books.

There is another argument however that " the image-driven world of the screen dominates our attention at the same time that it contributes to a kind of experience pollution that is challenging our ability to engage with the printed word" (Sharing; 205). In other words, the constant advertisement opus that occur during a reading session make it impossible to be immersed in a book. While this is partially true, there are also several methods of blocking ads and messages that interfere with a person's reading.