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Impact of Technology on English in Academia

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Abstract

There is no denying of the fact that man is a social animal. From the early ages till date, it has been man's pursuit to express himself to his fellow beings. This manifestation needed a vocal expression in the form of gestures, grimace, tone etc. and thus a speech was introduced by mankind to exchange ideas, expression, communicate emotions and the like to understand and to be understood. Since the advent in technology a lot has been changing in human life. With rapid industrialization, scientific and technological advancements man has started to live a presumably comfortable life. With technology invading our personal lives in the form of Facebook, Twitter, Social Media and in many other forms. Internet being the career for all these platforms, it's too early to even predict as to how far and what permanent effect the internet will have in the years to come.

Introduction

There is no denying of the fact that man is a social animal. From the early ages till date, it has been man's pursuit to express himself to his fellow beings. This expression undoubtedly went through a million changes until it reached in the form it is today. This manifestation needed a vocal expression in the form of gestures, grimace, tone etc. and thus a speech was introduced by mankind to exchange ideas, expression, communicate emotions and the like to understand and to be understood.

As Aristotle defines "Man is by nature a social animal; an individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally is either beneath our notice or more than human. Society is something that precedes the individual. Anyone who either cannot lead the common life or is so self-sufficient as not to need to, and therefore does not partake of society, is either a beast or a god."

And with definition of Aristotle making it very clear that man cannot live without a society surrounding him and partaking in all his purposes in life whether high or low, socialization makes man a social animal and far a superior being of the creation of the world. It's not that animals don't communicate but the best ever man had was the speech with which he could communicate and it being more powerful a tool as compared to that of the animals. This differentiated man as an abled being gifted with intellectual abilities.

As it has been discussed of man being a social animal, it was a fundamental characteristic of man's behaviour to express, convey and communicate. As early inventions of a wheel by a man, so were the assumptions of language used by man. It is an understanding between two human beings which necessitated the urge to understand others language through gestures, tone and the like. The need facilitated to assimilate words and sounds from other languages too thus enriching both the languages simultaneously. Language thus fostered cultural, economic, social, political and further more a technological exchange among societies. So with the confab above, it can very well be surmised that language isn't one man's or one society's creation. It is an all-encompassing and all-pervading tool of communication.

Since the advent in technology a lot has been changing in human life. The day - to day life has now become more dependent on the technology based gadgets. With rapid industrialization, scientific and technological advancements man has started to live a presumably comfortable life. With technology invading our personal lives in the form of

Facebook, Twitter, Social Media and in many other forms. Internet being the career for all these platforms, it's too early to even predict as to how far and what permanent effect the internet will have in the years to come. But as of today the world is overly dependent on this platform. The Electronic mediated communication has been in routine in from the past two and a half decades for now.

Till now it has been assumed that Electronic mediated Communication may take a lot of time – for a change to emerge, for individuals to get used its novelty and in everyday speech. But as it is visible no institutions are lagging behind in the use of technology to get its work conveniently done, thus saving time, energy and resources.

To exemplify and further deliberate the emphasis of the advantages and the disadvantages of the impact of technology on language in academia, a few real life examples are given down to contemplate on. It would too harsh to comment if one becomes judgemental on the issue of use of Technology. As such the young and the old are almost alike when it is the addiction or dependability on technology. Internet's emergence and the rise of social networking have transformed communication. Social media has a far reaching capacity to global citizens world over in the nick of time in terms of frequency and variation. Consequently English being a Lingua Franca and a business communicative language, the impact on English is widely visible. A variety of changes are perceptible in the way people write and speak English.

Impact of Social Media changing the English Language

The exponential increase in the use of written language in the form of blogs, tweets, LinkedIn Profile, Facebook Posts, and Twitter no doubt has drastically wedged the standard use of language. This frequency and connectivity to a myriad of different personalities, perspectives and approaches is unsurmountable. Other than the professionals on media platforms and academic journalists, whatever a common man posts, everything goes unedited, unsupervised and unchecked most of the times to ensure the use of English Language. With this liberty to use language on public platforms there is a possibility of some kind of novelty brewing up which we connote it as a trend.

Different ways of using Vocabulary

The words which have been used since ages with an appropriate meaning have now been given a meaning in the technological context of its usage. A word 'wall' meant a rising obstruction to protect and which is made of bricks and sand mixture. But the new connotation of the word 'wall' has a new meaning all together, here i.e. in the online world a 'wall' refers to the homepage of one's social media profile, a platform where one can share life, work or personal on a social media platform. We can come across more such re – invented words which are used and are the outcomes of the dire need of technological communication. A tablet is intended to be a portable screen, Troll is term used to seek attention or to make outrageous whether personal or public or policy related and many alike. Tablet, which is used to refer to portable screens. Streaming is word used for the transmission of data as steady and continuous flow. Catfish is term used or someone who uses the internet in a disguise.

Getting acquainted with new Vocabulary

A plethora of new words and phrases that nobody of yesteryears have ever heard or read are now in trend. Words like unfriend, selfie, emoji have trickled down from social media into our everyday conversations. Some have made into Oxford Dictionaries like YOLO (You live only once), CRAPTUCULAR, a compound word.

There are a vast array of social media specific acronyms, ranging from the almost universally known "LOL" (Laughing Out Loud), "DM", (Direct Message) and "FOMO" (Fear of Missing Out) and "TBT" (Throwback Thursday). The rapidity at which new vocabulary is introduced online, used, quickly over-used and then discarded is phenomenal

and has never been so speedy. An example of terms that would now be considered 'antique' text speak on social media are: OMG, TXT, GR8, M8 and L8R.

Language use and Generation Gap

Youngsters use and speak an entirely different language on social media. The rise in the use of 'emoji' readily available on the keypad makes an easy pick for users to convey and express their emotions as fast as lightening. This seems to be the most trending form of communication in this generation. Not only youngsters, even in schools smart board and use of ICT have been recommended. The very nursery rhyme 'Twinkle Twinkle little star' is now in a video format. The real time teacher who used her voice as audio, gestures and expressions are now bygone things. The humane touch to the tender hearts through expressions now finds a visual aid more enchanting. One thing is for sure Technology has blocked the expressions and broadened the gap between human interactions.

Social media is an arena for experimenting, creating new words and repurposing old ones, providing a platform for those who care not about all the rules of grammar and syntax and freedom to use and flout all the rules of conventional English. Language no doubt can be termed as a living organism, ever -evolving.

Grammar and Syntax

With technology being handy , it appears that people are less concerned about their spellings and correct usage of grammar as the new age gifted them with spell check options and auto correct software and suggesting vocabulary and sentences to be framed.

With the rules of language thrown out of the window, as an educator it really concerns me sometimes as if our next generation is doomed to witness a future where spell bee competitions and writing competitions are a thing of past. It is indeed a debateable issue for where twitter restricts the usage to 140 characters to express themselves, it leaves with no stone unturned but to invent a shorthand of their own, full of hashtags, abbreviations which would put the many teachers of English and Grammar enthusiasts out of gear. For social platforms like Twitter what matters most is that you say what you want in as few words as possible. If it can be deciphered, grammatical errors are encouraged. As a result, spelling and grammar on twitter suffers terribly. This usage of typing short abbreviated words and errors in English becomes an everyday habit. It has not only affected the youngsters but adults too. Adults are using shorthand in their emails and students are using it in their writing assignments. These shortcuts save time and effort, and yes, they are convenient, but they can be inappropriate for certain settings.

As human beings, we tend to appreciate hard work, and overlook things that are made to be too easy. Grammar and spelling are losing their value because technology and social media are making things too convenient for us. What can be positively stated is that social media and technology are here to stay, but we do not have to allow ourselves to be dumbed down by its convenience. For the future, try to make the effort to spell, speak, and write correctly; without the help of technology. Spelling and grammar are important for coherent expression and it is up to us to keep it alive.

Conclusion

The negative impact on the use English language is the improper use of grammar, informal speech used in wrong contexts, and misspellings. On a positive note, social media seems to create a more sense of awareness of English language mistakes because some readers spot the errors and point them out through comments.

Social media has both positive and negative impacts on how people write and speak English. The demands for faster and convenient communication has increased the propensity to make spelling mistakes, use abbreviations, and improper use of informal language. New vocabulary coined in social media has also trickled down to daily verbal conversations. Some words that were slang have even been integrated into mainstream English making it simpler

to understand. Most importantly, social media has also increased awareness to proper language use.

The entire scenario discussed above validates one thing for sure that Key boards are not the solution to everything. Eventually it is the one created by human for our convenience and this key shouldn't one day become a Frankenstein to the downfall of all human race. The observations scripted above are the author's personal observations as an educator. The research in this area is vast and full time. The aspects and variations are dynamic in nature. With limited time and resources at the researcher's disposal it was a humble presentation in the form of a paper.

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