

4. Современные информационные технологии и их применение

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Интернет-мем как лингвокультурный феномен

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Аннотация. В данной статье рассматривается современное явление, называемое интернет-мемом. В последние годы мемы стали широко распространенным средством коммуникации и активно используются в Интернете и за его пределами. Мемы считаются лингвокультурной единицей, т.к. принадлежат как к языку, так и к культуре, а не только к одному из этих явлений. Все это стало причиной того, что ученые, психологи и даже лингвисты, и переводчики начали исследовать явление интернет-мема и искать способы его перевода и объяснения.

Ключевые слова: интернет-мем, интернет-коммуникация, лингвокультурализм, перевод.

The Internet Meme as a Linguacultural Phenomenon

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Abstract. This article reflects on the modern phenomenon called the Internet meme. In recent years, memes have become a widespread means of communication, and are widely used both inside and outside the Internet. Memes are considered a

linguacultural unit because it belongs to both language and culture, not just to one of these phenomena. All this became a reason why scientists, psychologists, and even linguists and translators started to research it and look for the ways to translate and explain it.

Key words: Internet meme, Internet communication, linguaculturalism, translation.

The Internet meme is a complex but popular and fleeting phenomenon of Internet communication. Internet memes, although they have appeared recently, are now widely used by most Internet users. The popularity of Internet memes, as well as the hype around them, have generated a huge number of scientific papers in recent years.

A meme is a unit of cultural information that is rapidly spreading in society in various forms. The most familiar form of an Internet meme is an image or an image with text. However, a meme can be anything, for example, a gesture, an idea, a symbol, a sound sequence, a video sequence, etc. The main function of an Internet meme is to achieve a comic effect. The term was first used by biologist Richard Dawkins in 1976 in the book "The Selfish Gene" and had nothing to do with humor. The scientist believed that all information significant for culture consists of memes-basic units. Dawkins compared memes to genes, because like genes, memes are subject to natural selection, mutation and artificial selection [9].

At the same time, S. B. Lackmore believes that if R. Dawkins is right, the whole human life turns out to be "riddled" with memes. In this case, memes are understood as vocabulary, habits, knowledge, skills, rules, stories, etc. Each meme develops in its own unique way, but spreads with the help of human behavior.

To some extent, Internet memes can be considered as one of the manifestation of linguoculturisms. According to V.V. Vorobyov, linguoculturema implies a set of linguistic meaning and extra-linguistic cultural meaning presented in the form of a certain sign. "Linguoculturema as a complex inter-level unit is a dialectical unity of linguistic and extralinguistic (conceptual and subject) content. This unit is more "deep"

in its essence than the word"[2, p. 26]. All this produces the need to study memes from the point of view of linguistics.

An Internet meme can be viewed from different angles. This phenomenon is often considered a cultural or linguistic phenomenon. However, it is most correct to say that a meme is a linguacultural phenomenon. Most often, memes are understandable to most Internet users, but there are exceptions, because in different cultures, memes include various phenomena and linguistic phenomena. Such memes are already difficult for non-natives of the language and culture to understand and require some explanations.

Let's look at some examples.

Example 1.



Figure 1. Sleeping Donald Duck meme

In this meme, most people recognize themselves. Surely, everyone has faced a similar situation when you are motivated to start a new life from tomorrow, start playing sports and just be productive. However, most often, due to human nature, we do not succeed. This is what is being ridiculed in this meme. In order to understand this meme, you do not need to have a lot of additional knowledge about any particular country. With the translation, too, most likely there will be no difficulties. In this case, what is a linguacultural phenomenon? Let's look at a couple more examples.

Example 2.

The original image was in Russian



Figure 2. Drake meme

There is already a linguistic and cultural background to this meme. All Asian languages are visually different from each other, however, for the average Russian who has never dealt with oriental languages, they are all similar and most often identified as Chinese. At the same time, native speakers of Asian languages can easily distinguish one language from another, if it is not possible to accurately identify the language, it will be obvious to them that it is not Chinese. This Internet meme requires clarification for some users, because most likely, native speakers of other European languages, such as English, French or Spanish, may face the same problems as native speakers of Russian. Translation does not cause any particular difficulties.

Example 3.



Figure 3. A Cat Meme (Russian version)

The original meme was presented in Russian and reflected Russian realities. The fact is that the names of classes in Russian schools consist of numbers and letters. For example, 1A, 4B, 11B, etc. For the comic effect, the features of the alphabet and the

phonetic structure of the Russian language were used. The original meme uses juggling with words consisting of a single letter (pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, etc.) Thus, whole sentences consisting of a set of letters separated by spaces are obtained. To convey this Internet meme in English and at the same time preserve all the features, as well as not to waste the humorous component is an extremely difficult task. In this case, you will have to resort to explication. The meaning will be conveyed, but the comic effect is lost.

The approximate translation is as follows:



Figure 4. A Cat Meme (English version)

Example 4.

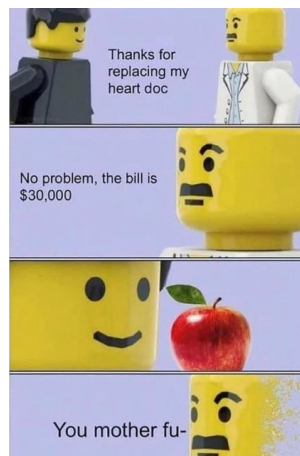


Figure 5. An Apple a Day Meme

This Internet meme reflects realities of native English speakers. The meme is caused by the common phrase “an apple a day keeps the doctor away”. If you take this phrase literally and not figuratively, the doctor literally dissolves/disappears at the sight of one apple.

Thus, many Internet memes will be incomprehensible to non-native speakers. Suppose they can be explained. But how to translate them? Do we need a special approach to translating memes?

A number of linguists tend to believe that the Internet meme has nothing to do with being linguacultural. For example, this point of view was expressed by K. G. Petrosyan in his article Internet communication and the specifics of its English-Russian translation (based on Internet memes). This opinion is justified, especially due to the fact that most memes are simple and understandable for users. According to Petrosyan, "a popular Internet meme easily overcomes the language barrier, generating new series in each language culture, i.e. it has an international character" [6, p. 75]. Also, some other linguists call the meme a universal unit of communication on the Internet. This version is followed by E. Y. Pishkova and S. R. Abidova. Describing memes as universal and clear they say, "as a result of which they are easy to translate from one language or cultural environment to another" [8]. However, the authors notice that memes are not always "possible to decipher and interpret from the first time" and it become a kind of "intellectual game" in the Internet space and players are users.

S.A. Marinina describes Internet memes as a modern type of paroemiological units. Paroemia is "a small genre type of folklore is a riddle, a sign, a joke, a wish, a tongue twister" [5, p. 295]. According to it, the methods of translation of paremiological units can be used to translate memes.

A.G. Koloshits offers the following ways of translating paroemias [3, p. 8-9]:

- 1) phraseological (full) equivalent.
- 2) phraseological analogue (partial equivalent).
- 3) descriptive translation and explication.
- 4) calculus.
- 5) the "pseudo-pedigree" correspondence is applied "in the case when there is neither a full nor partial correspondence of the parremia in the translation language, but it is possible to "invent" a proverb in another language."
- 6) overtone translation, or contextual substitution, is an equivalent used for an Internet meme only in this context.

7) literalism.

Thus, it can be concluded that the opinion of linguists regarding Internet memes is radically different. Some researchers do not consider memes to be a linguacultural phenomenon whereas some of them still do. In this regard, as well as the fact that the phenomenon of memes appeared relatively recently, there is no general consensus in relation to their translation so far. We can divide Internet memes into linguacultural and non-linguacultural. Sometimes linguacultural memes can only be explained but not translated, since it is not possible to convey the realities, especially those related to the phonetics of the source language. Most often, translators are completely unnecessary for the translation of Internet memes, the users themselves do an excellent job with this task on their own.

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