ภาษาอังกฤษในห้องสนทนาทางอินเตอร์เน็ต
English Language in the Internet Chat Room

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Abstract

This research aims to investigate and describe the characteristics of the English language used in the Internet chat room or the so-called "electronic language", focusing on language features (phonological, lexical, syntactic, discourse, non-verbal and certain unique aspects). The investigation can provide an understanding of a hybrid of spoken and written languages. The data was collected from chat transcripts of teen chat rooms on the Yahoo web site during 1998-1999.

The result reveals that in the electronic language, linguistic features of spoken and written languages are blended. The characteristics of spoken language include : (1) phonological features : pitch, duration of vowel sounds and loudness ; (2) lexical features: sociolinguistic features, onomatopoeia, clipping, vague expression, vocative, expletive and interjection ; (3) syntactic features : run-on sentence, multiple negation, unembedded dependent clause and repetition of syntactic form ; (4) discourse features : exchange, adjacency pair and turn-taking ; and (5) non-verbal features : eye contact, facial expression and gesture. The occurrence of these features is related to the time constraint, informality of communication and chat-room interaction. Certain specialized features are also invented by making use of characters available on the computer keyboard to compensate for those normally found in face-to-face communication. They can attract the chat participant's attention and create an interpersonal communicative atmosphere. At the same time, since the chat room electronic communication is performed by typing, some features of written language, especially the use of shortened form and typing mistake, are perceived.