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## Stylistic Features of Comment in Arabic Blogosphere

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### Abstract

One of the most important issues in the study of the functioning of the Internet language is the definition of the features of each Internet genre presented in online communication, taking into account the linguocultural features of the language in question. This paper studies the genre of the Internet comments of the Arabic-speaking blogosphere and reveals its stylistic features. The most common goal of the comment is gratitude, followed by praise. We created a corpus of comments from blogs of various subjects, and then conducted the tagging, having identified the group to which we attributed a comment, depending on the subject and the communicative goal. With the help of the Lexico 3 software, the most frequent lexical units were identified, the lexical features of the comments were described, the main one being the widespread use of religionyms, and the relationship between the blog subject and the stylistic characteristics of communication was revealed. The article traces the correlation between the literary and colloquial functional style in the comments, and also draws a conclusion that the comments are of a conversational, informal character. The main devices of expressiveness that are characteristic for both network and pre-network communication were revealed, and the tendency of the analysts to observe in the comments a stable three-part composition (greeting, message, final formula). The influence of traditional Arabic rhetoric, as well as the epistolary genre, was preserved. The results of the paper can be used when studying other genres of Internet communication in Arabic and in comparative studies to create the linguistic software.

**Keywords:** Internet linguistics, Arabic, Internet comments.

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## Introduction

The correlation between genre and style is one of the most important questions studied by linguistics. M.M. Bakhtin wrote on their inseparable connection (1996). Functional-stylistic stratification of the Arabic language was created by A.L. Spirkin (2009). However, in modern Arabistics, network genres, that is, the genres created in the course of the Internet communication (Ivanov, 2000), and their stylistic characteristics have not been studied so far. One such genre is the Internet comments. Network communication is the most important source of data for learning the language from the synchronic point of view (Barton, 2013). Moreover, the Internet communication, unlike most traditional written forms of communication, has an open informal character and offers an opportunity for the linguists to learn the substandard colloquial form of the language.

The genre characteristics and the genre-forming features of the Internet comment were identified in the works by L. Y. Shchipsyna (2009). Our work concerns the comments on blogosphere - a special type of comments, since it is both a message of both interpersonal and public communication. Like other forms of informal Internet communication, the comment combines the features of speech and written communication (Crystal, 2001). A feature of communication in the Arabic-language Internet is the combination of the Arabic literary language (ALL) and the Arabic colloquial dialect language (ACDL) (Chuprygina, 2013). The article aims at providing a comprehensive description of the stylistic features of the comments in the Arabic-language blogosphere. To do this, we set out the tasks to designate to the resources of which of the variants of the Arabic language the authors of comments are addressed, what is the comment's vocabulary, whether they possess the stylistic unity, what are the means of expression used. The classification of comments on the communicative purpose and on the topic of discussion is carried out. The dependence of the choice of stylistic devices and means of expression depending on the purpose and theme of the commentary is considered.

This study can be supplemented and extended, as the commentary body is still being broadened. In the future, it is planned to expand the range of the discussed topics of the blogosphere, as well as to reveal the regional peculiarities of the comments.

## Materials and Methods

The material for studying was the comments of the users in Arabic-language blogs. For the study, the methods of corpus linguistics were used. The corpus of 10,000 comments containing about 1 million word usages has been compiled. We included the comments on the blogosphere of various Arab countries: Morocco, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, as well as the blogs of Arab migrants (in Arabic). The blogs have been classified according to the topics: home and family, beauty and fashion, politics and social problems, autobiographical art subjects (diary), engineering. In addition, we also created a classification regarding the communicative goal: praise, wish, gratitude, criticism, question, discussion on the topic of blog, advertising and self-promotion. Markup of comments is made manually. Each comment contains a tag with the information about its subject matter, a communicative goal, and also from which region of the Arab world is its author as may be supposed (Levant, Egypt, North Africa, the Persian Gulf). The comments were retrieved from the blogs by means of both the software "Gromoteur", and manually. Then the program "Lexico 3" was used. With the help of it, there were revealed the most frequent lexical units for each of the comment groups concerning each classification criterion, excluding geographic (since the sample presented does not balance the number of examples from blogs of different subjects for each country), and the specificity of each group under consideration. The quantitative analysis was used to reveal the lexical originality of the comments. This, in turn, helps to detect the discourse of the comment,



religionyms do not have such a hint of elevation, and are much more neutral than their translation into Russian.

The comments-questions differ in that they can be divided according to recipients addressed to all readers of the blog, and directed to the very blogger. For the questions directed to the blogger, the second person's object pronoun انت (or its dialect variations of the type ننتي), or the numbers or the second singular attached object pronoun ك (in the dialects of the Persian Gulf ج ) are characteristic. And the questions addressed to the blogger, as a rule, are distinguished by some kind of introduction, such as عندي أسألك السؤال, اريد ان أسألك, whereas those aimed at all readers begin without introductions, with a characteristic construction of uncertainty هل يعرف حد - «Кто-нибудь знает...». / "Somebody knows...". The question to the author of a blog can often be expressed in the form of a request to write a post on the requested topic.

Criticism comments do not have a particularly marked constructions. There are two types of criticism. The first is flaming criticism, which is distinguished by a reduced and obscene vocabulary. This type of comments is spread in the blogs about social and political issues. The second type of comments is constructive criticism. The reception of Arabic rhetoric "Censure through praise" is utterly characteristic for this type, when the author introduces a eulogistic construction, but ends with criticism or censure. For example, كلشي مزيان لآكن عليك شوي د حركات - «всё хорошо, но тебе нужно больше двигаться»/ "All is well, but you should stir more". Therefore, the main construction in these comments are the adversative expressions.

The discussion on the topic of the post is a lexically rich group, which is not surprising, since the themes of the blogs are different. These comments are the most suitable for illustrating the mixing of ALL and ACDL in the Arabic-language Internet. Here, on the one hand, there is also an emotive component, which is expressed by dialect vocabulary, and a special vocabulary related to the theme of the blog. Thus, we see that regardless of the subject matter, the style of the comments is more deflate (under the influence of dialect vocabulary, which is an exceptionally low factor for the Arabs), than a functional style that is typical for this type of discourse. Another feature of discussion comments is an appeal to the personal experience of the commentator. This is well reflected in lexical statistics: the absolute majority of comments contained the words أنا «я» / "I", and the expressions denoting «Я тоже, у меня тоже» / "Me, too, I have, too". And for the comments in the Arabic-language blogosphere, the desire to approximate, to compare oneself with the author is characteristic on the whole. In most of the comments to the authors, reference by name is used, for example يا أروى «O, Арва!» or such epithets towards the blogger as أختي الحبيبة «Наш щедрый учитель», «Мой дорогой брат», «Моя любимая сестра») / ("Our Generous Teacher", "My Dear Brother", "My Beloved Sister"). Such addresses, being though friendly and informal, are fairly neutral for the Arabic language. Nevertheless, this emphasizes again that the comment, despite the written nature, preserves the conversational style that characterizes personal rather than institutional discourse.

It is natural that from the proposed groups, the most varied in lexical terms were the comments to personal blogs-diaries. This blog is a form of epistolary genre in literature. The tropes of literary style are characteristic for the comments on such blogs: metaphor, comparison (most often the personal experience of a commentator and a blogger is juxtaposed), a row of synonyms. Besides, in this group if comments there are interjections such as أه «Ах!» / "Ah!". The creative component of the post makes the readers approach also creatively to writing a comment, thus enriching them. Such blogs contain less dialectal vocabulary, as the standards of literary style affect the commentators. To a lesser extent than in other groups, the authors are reckless of the rules of punctuation.

Sociopolitical comments are also characterized by a large lexical variety, but here it is due to the fact that in these comments the official vocabulary, being characteristic of the newspaper style, is mixed with the vernaculars. This stimulates the use of devices such as humor, irony, sarcasm. In addition, the vernaculars often have a negative-evaluative meaning.

A comment such as question is the most characteristic for a group of comments to the blogs about modern technologies. These blogs are read for the vocational interest, and these blogs often discuss the ways to solve certain applied problems. Therefore, the comments are formalized in a lexical and stylistic terms. Most of the vocabulary is neutral, or contains specific computer terminology. Redundancy is not inherent in these comments.

The lexically poor proved to be the comments about beauty and fashion, as well as about home and lifestyle. The blogs of similar topics are most often based on a visual component, and the text is rather an explanation. The low lexical richness of the very posts may have a direct effect on the lexical variety of comments. Among the comments there are highly emotional responses, thanks, but to enhance the impact of the commentary, the author also uses a visual component - repeats the letters so that the words take up a lot of space on the screen and the comment is more noticeable, uses emoticons, repeats the amplifying lexical unit, exclamation constructions. Many comments are identical.

A peculiarity of a significant number of the comments in the Arabic-language blogosphere is the structural composition. The comment often begins with an address (يا أخي! Брат мой! / My brother) or with a greeting (السلام عليكم, مرحبا بك) «Салям алейкум, приветствую» / Salute, Hello), or with a congratulation or testimonial construction, that is a formula of courtesy. Further comes a basic message. Such comments end with a certain expression of politeness (دمتم سالمين «Оставайтесь в благополучии» / “Stay in well-being”). These constructions are not unified, however the composition of the comment is traced in all groups and types of the comment.

The comments in the Arabic-language blogosphere is not an independent genre. Its stylistic features depend on the style and subject matter of the blog. The greatest stylistic peculiarity of the comments is found in autobiographical art blogs (diaries). Here the greatest lexical richness of comments, as well as many literary tropes. So the commentator is a participator in the creative process. This conclusion is confirmed by literary scholars, for example T. Pepe (2012), who studies Arabic literary blogs. On the contrary, blog comments about lifestyle, beauty and fashion are monotonous, although they are highly emotional. In these comments extralinguistic methods of expressiveness are used: emoticons, graphic devices.

The vocabulary of the comment depends on the topic of the blog and on the communicative purpose of the comment's author. The combination of these factors and the informal nature of communication increase the lexical variety of comments, since the newspaper and colloquial styles are mixed. This opens up the possibility of giving the communication a “game” character. The revealed dependence correlates with the conclusions about the pragmatic conditionality of the Internet communication language of the researcher of the Internet discourse C. Herring (2004) and Arabist G. Ramsay (2012).

In this paper, we did not rely entirely on the methods of computer linguistics, and the revealed tropes and other devices of expressiveness were defined and described without using the software. Therefore, the work has a more descriptive character than other works on computer linguistics.

The traditional Arabic rhetoric and “pre-network” styles of speech retain their influence in the Internet and are manifested in the paths used in the comments, in striving for a clear composition.

The comments of the Arabic-language blogosphere are part of the personal discourse. This is indicated by the informal nature of statements, the presence of dialect vocabulary, the neglect of linguistic norms, as

well as a bundle of appeals personally to the author. Often the comments are “the letters to the author” in the Arabic-language blogosphere, rather than essays on the topic of the blog. An exception is technology blogs, where communication is concentrated on applied problems. Therefore, the blogosphere does not fully manifest itself as a discussion space. The topics of beauty and fashion are not controversial, the topic of home and family is extremely personal and closed in Arabic society, so that the users are not ready to discuss it with the strangers, and the political sphere is too complicated to discuss or brings about the conflicts.

## **Conclusion**

So, the work discussed the stylistic peculiarities of a number of blogs. We traced the strong influence of Arabic dialects, the reduced unofficial nature of communication, revealed the factors that influenced the stylistic characteristics of blogs.

In the future, it is planned to extend the corpus of the comments from blogs of other topics, as well as to compare Russian and Arabic comments on various topics.

The results of this work can be used in the study of other Internet communication genres in Arabic, in comparative studies, and in the papers on applied linguistics, in creating the software for linguistic studies.

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