FRI-2G.509-1- **ESIR-LIPC -03**

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE NICKNAMES CHOICE

IN THE INTERNET

Assoc. Prof. Viktoriya Egorova, Candidate of Science
Department of Foreign Languages
South-West State University, Kursk, Russia
Phone: +7910-318-65-25
E-mail: tinkivinki78@yandex.ru

Abstract: The article discusses the concept of virtual reality as a "crooked mirrors kingdom " of the real world, where everything is like a joke. All of this affects communication. Fictional world, unlimited space give carnival character to virtual communication. In turn, carnival character allows interlocutors to act in different roles, put on masks make up nicknames. The article describes a pilot study to identify factors influencing the choice of nicknames among the Russian youth. On the basis of the experiment the author comes to the conclusion that the choice of nickname depends on 2 factors – gender and profession.
Keywords: virtual space, nickname, carnival communication, experiment, factors, gender.

INTRODUCTION

New information technologies play an important social role. They are increasingly penetrating into everyday life and changing it, forming a new life style of the information society. Our language reacts to new social and technological tendencies, changes in the life style, by developing of different styles, and "vocabulary replenishment " [6].

Virtual space is visited mainly in order to study news, socialize and have fun. People who use the Internet belong to a group of authoritative native speakers who have an impact on it. Most users belong to the "intellectual and creative elite" of the society. Here they seldom use their names, but nicknames, in which the author expresses a certain desire - "putting on the mask of the hero of his nickname"- to fulfill his hidden desires [3; 5].

EXPOSITION

In a virtual space, the use of nickname can be justified by the desire of a person to play a certain role, impress his companion or impose his own system of views on him/her. At the same time, the author chooses for him/herself the image in which he/she presents the intentions, and directs them to the communicant. The recipient of the message interprets this information and sends a response. Introducing the interlocutor, the participant sets the tone and type of communication, outlines the role status in the dialogue, not always following the established rules and restrictions [9].

Nick marks a role and reason why a real name can not be used, it is invented and appropriated by the author him/herself as a special means of expression [7]. When choosing a nickname, the user is guided by his/her wishes, desires, regardless of private reasons (conspiracy, fashion, etc.).

In our work, we understand the nickname as a fictitious unreal name that a communicant chooses or thinks up for communication in a virtual world (community).

Carnival character of electronic communication allows interlocutors to perform in some roles, putting on different masks. The person chooses an image in which she/he wants to present him/herself as a certain type of personality. As a "business card", a participant can choose a profession or a kind of activity, to inform his interlocutors about her/his interests or preferences, "dream" about some beautiful

and sublime things. The choice of a nickname, and therefore of an image, can be motivated by the person's secret desires, his/her emotional state at the moment of communication or hopes for the future.

Originality, brightness of the linguistic form characterizes the user as an interesting interlocutor and an unordinary personality. "Nick hides only the real name, but not the fact of its existence" [1]. The reasons for the concealment of a real name are explained by the conditions of communication in a virtual community: anonymity and the desire to try themselves in the role of another person cause unlimited possibilities in the choice of linguistic means and irresponsibility for the written word. Illusory freedom helps to assert itself in one's own eyes.

Virtual reality allows people, by passing all prohibitions and limitations of real life, to realize their creative potential, embody in a virtual life what is unattainable in reality. It provides unlimited possibilities for expressing oneself. Anonymity and limited emotional contact allow the communicant to choose the image creatively. When tying a contact, a participant introduces him/herself by the nickname. Nick can be bright and unusual, negative and startling with its invention, popular and unfamiliar, but always memorable. Therefore, choosing a name is a part of user's image.

A user in the network does what he/she would never decide to do with his/her own name and face. Everyone in the web can start a "new life", with a new biography and new friends, even with new parents. And a man can build this "new life" in accordance with his/her boldest and most secret wishes. In a virtual space, you generally can be whatever you want, look like you want, be a being of any gender, in short, you have no limitations which are typical of the material world.

Man is completely turned off from the bustle of real life. Entering the Internet, a person leaves most of his social roles behind the screen of the monitor. It means that habitual determinism of actions and behavior disappears. A person does not do what he/she should do, but only what he/she wants, in fact, we are free to realize our desires.

As a rule, participants in virtual communication are not limited with real or fictitious names, customary for traditional forms of communication. Considering the features of the virtual conference, N.G. Asmus concluded that the communicant chooses a role, guided by the following principles: a favorite character, a negative hero or, conversely, an outstanding personality, a popular name [2].

Sometimes the user assigns him/herself a nickname of his/her own composition, which can inform interlocutors about the participant's profession, his/her weaknesses and passions, claims to a certain position in society or professional activity.

The source of the nickname can be any element of a person's life. In order to see what nicknames are chosen by today's users and how they are guided by the choice of nicknames, we conducted our own experiment. Since most of the audience visiting the Internet is young people, we found it expediently to conduct our experiment among students. 234 students of the second, third and fourth courses of economic, law faculties, faculty of technology and design, computer science and computer facilities, faculty of construction and architecture of South-West State University, Kursk, Russia, participated in the experiment. Among 234 students, 130 were men and 104 women (see table 1).

Table 1

Social status	Sex		Age	Number
	Men	Women		
Economists	20	21	17-21	41
Lawyers	29	25	17-21	54
Designers	4	37	17-21	41
Programmers	34	12	17-21	46
Builders	43	9	17-21	52

The experiment was conducted anonymously. Before its beginning, the subjects were asked to write only their gender, age and profession. Then the participants of the experiment were asked to write the nicknames, with which they often communicate in the network. The number of nicks could be unlimited.

As a result, we received 1,324 reactions, 847 were female and 477 were male. Based on these figures, it can be seen that women are more inventive, creative and changeable. We think it happens because of their nature and gender.

In addition to what we wanted to know, which nicknames users choose and why, what they use choosing them, we were also interested in those factors that could influence their choice. In our previous work "Gender Studies of Synonymy" [4], we discussed in details such factors (see fig.1).
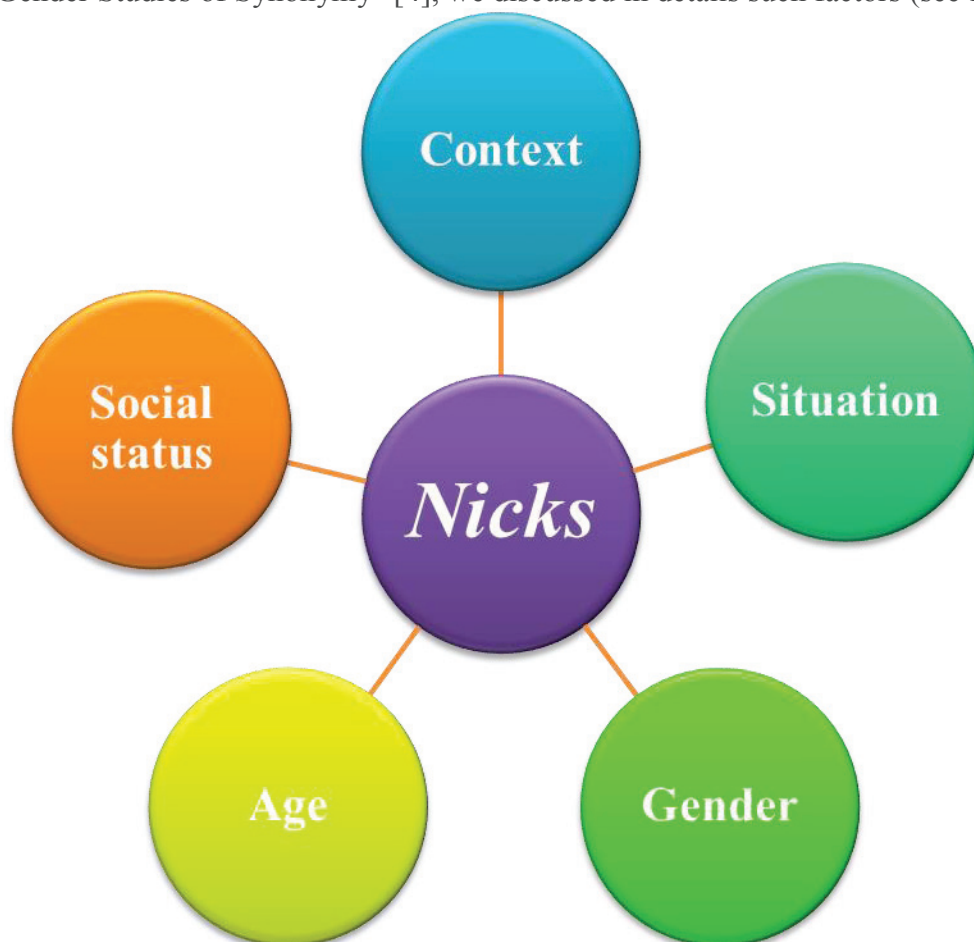

Fig.1

We believed that these factors would influence nicks. So, observing the virtual communication while describing a particular situation (in one or another context) we found out that, along with some stylistic factors, it is necessary to take into account "experience" of particular fragment of reality, for example, "time experience"[4]. As E.S. Yakovleva, this fact allows us to express a whole range of additional semantic nuances associated with the different understanding of time itself by a person (in this case a native speaker) [8]. That's why, it seems to us that the chosen image is a result of personal experience in Internet communication, "his/her virtual picture of the world", "his/her knowledge of this world and the subject of speech."

The majority of users are young people. The young people contribute to the Internet some elements of the game, which are very important for understanding the carnival worldview. Young people, due to their age, on the one hand, are subject to the action of many prohibitions from the outside world. On the other hand, there is mighty creative energy, which requires its exit. Young people find this way in the Internet. Every new thing appearing in a virtual space, contributes to the carnival of communication. In this case, young people should be considered as pioneers of carnival in the netwok.

So, we believe that the choice of nicks, in most cases, will be influenced by these factors. We were interested in how these factors showed themselves and whether they showed or not while choosing nicks.

We received a huge number of reactions, which were then divided into the following groups: proper names, professionalisms, abstract concepts, names of animals (zoonims), color names, graphics, single reactions (table 2).

Table 2

Men	Women
Proper names – 48,1%	Proper names – 57,1%
Professionalism – 20,7%	Names of flowers – 18,3%
Abstract concepts – 15,2%	Abstract concepts – 17,6%
Names of animals – 14,4%	Graphics – 5%
Single reactions – 1,6%	Single reactions – 2%

To the first group of nicknames, we attributed nicknames, which represent a real or invented proper name (*Елена, Helen, Марусечка, Напс, Вован, Вольдемар, Вероника*). Also, some proper names were drawn up according to the scheme: ***proper name + date of birth*** or ***proper name + age*** of the communicant. For example, *Игорь _18, Svetlana18, Victor_1995, 20+Ингрид, Karolina20, Эрика19*. This group was equally manifested in men (48.1%) and women (57.1%) answers, regardless of their age and profession.

The next group manifested in the majority of subjects is abstract concepts (*Благородный, Романтика, Быстроногий, Вафелька, Лапушка*) (15.2% are men and 17.6% are women). The reason why many users communicate using such nicknames is probably in the space where communication occurs. As we mentioned above, the main feature of virtual reality is anonymity. Thanks to these nicknames - it is not clear at all with whom communication occurs.

Let's consider a group of professionalism. Nicknames of this category we found only in men answers (20.7%), only programmers and builders (*Haker, Бригадир, Чайник_из_всех_чайников, Прорабчик*). Based on these examples, it can be seen that the choice of nicks was influenced by the profession and gender.

The most common example of the nickname in men is the use of nouns and adjectives of appropriate semantic, linguistic and cultural connotations. Here we include names of animals: *Гепард, Лев, Тигр, ВЛЮБЛЕННЫЙ_ПИНГВИН, Бобер_в_тапках*. Through these nicknames, users probably wanted to say that they have some qualities, such as: power, wisdom and romanticism. This group was manifested only in men examples too (14.4%).

It seems to us that at the stage of nickname formation, the difference in the separation of male / female social and gender stereotypes is the most significant. Here, communicants take into account the possibility of further communication, that's why it is in the nicknames they show their gender characteristics.

So the next two groups of nicknames (names of flowers (18.3%) and graphics (5%)) appeared only in women speech (*Розочка, Nezabudka, нежная_фиалка, Хризантема_эма_эма, @,,,@, Л@ндush_Serebristiy*). At the same time, the last group showed up only among design students. Most likely, it is related to their profession, it was in their nicknames that we found graphics.

Sometimes nicknames are easy to read, sometimes nickname and its information behind it, seem absolutely meaningless, although it happens not often and they constitute single reactions. They show that the user does not care about his/her image. He/she does not think about the information being conveyed and about the impression made (*Трактор, Тапочек, Xlebushek, Синее-Ведро, Zariyadka*) (1.6% are men and 2% are women)**.**

CONCLUSION

Summarizing all of the above, we came to the conclusion that only 2 factors from the above, gender and profession, influenced the choice of nicknames (fig.2).

Fig.2

REFERENCES

Arutyunova, N.D. (1988) Image (the experience of conceptual analysis) // Reference and problems of text formation. - M.: Nauka, 1988. - S. 117-129 (***Оригинално заглавие***: *Арутюнова, Н.Д. (1988) Образ (опыт концептуального анализа) // Референция и проблемы текстообразования. - М.: Наука, 1988. - С. 117-129*).

Asmus, N.G. (2005) Linguistic features of the virtual communicative space: dis. kand. filol. Sciences. – Chelyabinsk, 2005. – 266 p. (***Оригинално заглавие***: *Асмус, Н.Г. (2005) Лингвистические особенности виртуального коммуникативного пространства: дис. ... канд. филол. наук. – Челябинск, 2005. – 266 с.*).

Voiskunsky, A.E. (2000) Psychological study of users motivation of the Internet // abstracts of the II Russian conference in ecological psychology (Moscow, 12-14 April 2000). M: Akopcicenter ROSS, 2000. S. 245-246. (***Оригинално заглавие***: *Войскунский, А.Е. (2000) Психологическое исследование мотивации пользователей Интернета // Тезисы II Российской конференции по экологической психологии (Москва, 12-14 апреля 2000 г.). М.: Экопсицентр РОСС, 2000. С. 245-246.)*

Grishkova, V.I. (2009) Gender studies of synonymy // Modern problems of science and education. 2009. No. 1. P. 82-83 (***Оригинално заглавие***: *Гришкова, В.И. (2009) Гендерные исследования синонимии // Современные проблемы науки и образования. 2009. № 1. С. 82-83*).

Lutovinova O.V. (2009) Lingvistic and cultural characteristics of virtual discourse. dis. ... doctor. filol. Sciences: 10.02.19. Volgograd: Volgograd state pedagogical University, 2009. 39 p. (***Оригинално заглавие***: *Лутовинова, О.В. (2009) Лингвокультурологические характеристики виртуального дискурса: автореф. дис. ... докт. филол. наук: 10.02.19. Волгоград: Волгоградский государственный педагогический университет, 2009. 39 с.*).

Ozhegov, S.I. (1974) Lexicology. Lexicography. Culture of speech. Manual for high schools. — M.: Higher school, 1974. — 352 p. (***Оригинално заглавие***: *Ожегов, С.И. (1974) Лексикология. Лексикография. Культура речи. Учеб. пособие для вузов. — М.: Высшая школа, 1974. — 352 с.*).

Staltmane, V.E. (1989) Onomastic lexicography. The Institute of linguistics. Resp. edited by A. V. Superanskaya. M.: Nauka, 1989. 116 p. (***Оригинално заглавие***: *Сталтмане, В.Э. (1989) Ономастическая лексикография. Институт языкознания. Отв. ред. А.В. Суперанская. М.: Наука, 1989. 116 с.*).

Yakovleva, E.S. (1994), Fragments of Russian language picture of the world (model of space, time and perception). M, 1994. (***Оригинално заглавие***: *Яковлева, Е.С. (1994) Фрагменты русской языковой картины мира (модели пространства, времени и восприятия). М, 1994.*).

Webster's New World Dictionary of the American language. 2000. 1692 p. URL: http://www.readabout.info/3591