

GRADABILITY EXPRESSIONS IN INTERNET LANGUAGE: AN ACADEMIC ANALYSIS OF LINGUISTIC FEATURES

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Abstract

This article provides an academic analysis of gradability expressions (the property of adjectives and adverbs to express different degrees of a quality) in internet language. It examines aspects such as hyperbole and exaggeration (including the non-literal use of "literally"), the deployment of emojis and emoticons as markers of degree, intensification through repetition and letter elongation, as well as the emergence of novel intensifiers and lexical innovations like "fire" or "extra." The article analyzes these phenomena through the lens of linguistic theories, including pragmatics, semiotics, phonology, sociolinguistics, lexical evolution, and discourse analysis, shedding light on the unique characteristics and functions of gradability in online communication.

Keywords

Internet language, gradability, intensification, digital communication, hyperbole, emojis, lexical innovation, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis.

ВЫРАЖЕНИЯ ГРАДУАЛЬНОСТИ В ИНТЕРНЕТ-ЯЗЫКЕ: НАУЧНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ И ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ

Аннотация:

Данная статья представляет собой научный анализ выражений градуальности (свойство прилагательных и наречий выражать различные степени качества) в интернет-языке. В ней рассматриваются такие аспекты, как гипербола и преувеличение (включая небуквальное использование слова "literally"), применение эмодзи и смайликов в качестве маркеров степени, усиление путем повторения и удлинения букв, а также появление новых интенсификаторов и лексических инноваций, таких как "fire" или "extra". Статья анализирует эти явления с позиций лингвистических теорий, включая прагматику, семиотику, фонологию, социолингвистику, лексическую

эволюцию и дискурс-анализ, выявляя уникальные особенности и функции градуальности в интернет-коммуникации.

Ключевые слова

Интернет-язык, градуальность, интенсификация, цифровая коммуникация, гипербола, эмодзи, лексические инновации, прагматика, социолингвистика, дискурс-анализ.

Introduction. Gradability, the property of adjectives and adverbs to express different degrees of a quality (e.g., very good, quite interesting), manifests uniquely in internet language. While traditional linguistics categorizes gradability into inherent (e.g., tall, short) and non-inherent (e.g., hungry, tired), the digital realm introduces novel expressions and intensifiers.

Scientific Foundations and Analysis:

1. Hyperbole and Exaggeration: Internet communication often relies on hyperbole to convey strong emotions or emphasis. Words like "literally" are frequently used as intensifiers, even when not semantically accurate. For example, "I'm literally dying of laughter" is a common expression of extreme amusement. This can be analyzed through the lens of pragmatics, where the intended meaning overrides the literal meaning.

Hyperbole and Exaggeration (with non-literal "literally"):

"That concert was literally life-changing." (Expresses extreme impact, not actual change in life status.)

"I'm literally starving right now." (Indicates intense hunger, not impending death from lack of food.)

"My phone is literally glued to my hand." (Means constant use, not physical adhesion.)

2. Emoji and Emoticon Usage: Emojis and emoticons serve as visual gradability markers. This visual communication supplements or even replaces traditional adverbs of degree. From a semiotic perspective, emojis act as iconic and symbolic representations of gradability. Emoji and Emoticon Usage as Intensifiers:

"I'm so happy! (Mild happiness) vs. "I'm so happy! (Extreme happiness/excitement)

"That's funny. (Moderate laughter) vs. "That's hilarious! (Intense, uncontrollable laughter, implying "dying of laughter")

"I'm tired. (General tiredness) vs. "I'm exhausted. (Extreme fatigue)

3. Repetition and Elongation: Repeating letters or words is another common method to intensify an expression. "Sooooo good" or "I'm dead" (repeated for

emphasis) exemplify this. This phenomenon can be examined under phonology (in terms of how written representation mimics spoken emphasis) and sociolinguistics (as a shared convention within online communities).

Repetition and Elongation of Vowels/Consonants:

"This food is goooooood." (Emphasizes deliciousness)

"I'm sooooo bored." (Highlights extreme boredom)

"That's reeeeeeally interesting." (Stresses high level of interest)

"Nooooooo!" (Expresses strong disagreement or dismay)

4. Novel Intensifiers and Lexical Innovation: Internet language constantly generates new intensifiers. Terms like "super," "mega," "ultra," and even more recent slang like "rizz" (referring to charisma to an extreme degree) demonstrate the dynamic nature of online gradability. This points to the ongoing lexical evolution driven by informal digital interactions.

Novel Intensifiers and Lexical Innovation:

"That outfit is fire." (Meaning extremely good, fashionable)

"She's extra." (Meaning excessively dramatic or over-the-top)

"This game is busted." (Meaning extremely broken or unfair, often in a negative sense of gradability)

"He's got mad skills." (Meaning exceptionally good skills; "mad" here means "very great" or "extreme")

5. Contextual Gradability: The interpretation of gradability expressions in internet language is heavily dependent on context and shared understanding within specific online communities. What might be considered extreme in one context could be commonplace in another. This highlights the importance of discourse analysis in understanding the nuances of online gradability. Intensifiers with Capitalization and Punctuation:

"I AM SO ANGRY!" (All caps for extreme anger)

"That's amazing!!!!" (Multiple exclamation marks for heightened excitement)

"WHAT?!" (All caps and question mark for extreme surprise or disbelief)

These examples collectively demonstrate how internet users creatively manipulate linguistic and visual elements to express varying degrees of qualities, emotions, and states, often prioritizing impact and immediacy over strict grammatical adherence.

Conclusion. In conclusion, gradability expressions in internet language, while deviating from traditional grammatical norms, are systematic and serve clear communicative functions. Their analysis offers valuable insights into the evolving

nature of language, driven by technological advancements and the unique social dynamics of online interaction.

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