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"lol, wanna pm, bby ;-) ?" "omg, no, thx & gd n8!": Language features in english speaking chat rooms

Florence Chazarenc

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Seminar paper from the year 2007 in the subject English - Pedagogy, Didactics, Literature Studies, grade: 1,8, University of Basel, 12 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: Abstract: Chat rooms are very popular passé-temps today, since the internet has been available in most parts of the world. Due to this development in communication technology, a new linguistic field emerged and through the new circumstances, linguistic innovations occur. This paper will focus on the language features in chat rooms. Important linguistic terms will first be introduced and later applied on the retrieved data. A relevant point is the dichotomy of written and spoken language and the position of chat language in this frame. In the analysis, the core elements of style are components from orthography (colloquial language, punctuation and majuscules), morphology (shortenings) and finally pragmatics (interjections, iterations and emoticons) and how the chat users handle with the technological restrictions. Finally, nicknames represent the chatters' identity; their function and usage are discussed. In 2007 we are in the centre of a very exciting development, where multimedia becomes more and more important in all parts of our lives. According to the marketing research institute Gartner, the increase of sold computers on the world market is still growing; in the second quarter of 2007 it rose from 11.7 percent to a level of 61.1 million sold pc's. (Gartner: Online) The progress of communication technologies, which also called the "communication revolution" (Schramm, 1988: 345) is enormously quick, compared to other processes in human's history.

As the foundation of script systems one can take the pictographic writing of the Ancient Egypt (around 3500 b. C.), later on syllabic languages grew (such as Phoenician, Hebraic and Aramaic) and finally phonetic alphabetic scripts (one phoneme correspond to a sign) have been used until today (Thaler, 2003: 5). The improvement of nonverbal communication facilitated the transmission of a message independent from time and distance. As an important step, the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg has to be mentioned, which had as a consequence that the written medium was then available in large amounts. It had an immense impact on the written culture, such as new message intentions, new circles of addressees and an economic dimension with the huge commercialisation of printed media (Thaler, 2003: 6).

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