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THE ROLE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS AS MEANS OF MASS COMMUNICATION IN MODERN SOCIETY

Т.А. Ковалева (доцент кафедры германо-романских языков и методики их преподавания,
ГСГУ, канд. филол. наук, доцент)
Коломна, Россия
z-tatiana@yandex.ru

Ю.В. Гусева (студент 1 курса кафедры германо-романских языков и методики их преподавания, ГСГУ)
Коломна, Россия
juliastary@yandex.ru

Аннотация: социальные сети в современном мире можно рассматривать как совершенно новый класс средств массовой коммуникации-виртуальные средства массовой коммуникации. Представляя собой оцифрованные межличностные и массовые коммуникации, они расширяют возможности традиционных медиа и влияют на все сферы жизнедеятельности людей.

Summary: social networks in the modern world can be considered as a completely new class of mass communication media-virtual mass communication media. Representing digitized interpersonal and mass communication, they expand the capabilities of traditional media and influence on all spheres of people's lives.

Ключевые слова: социальные сети, общение, молодежь

Keywords: social networks, communication, teenagers

Today, social networks are an integral part of human life. They are easy to use, accessible and widespread, as well as convenient for work and study activities. With the help of social networks, you can not only communicate with people through correspondence, but also make audio and video calls, transmit various information, and notify a large number of people about upcoming events.

However, social networks cannot be considered an independent means of mass communication for the simple reason that they do not have their own technological base. The means that allowed them to exist is the Internet, so they must work and improve in accordance with its laws and in accordance with its capabilities [2, p.37]. However, in practice, social networks perform all the functions that correspond to the means of mass communication: communicative, informative, regulating and cultural, entertaining and commercial.

Initially, social networks were developed with only one purpose – to provide users with an easy way to communicate with each other, but now social networks provide a unique opportunity for deep search and structuring of information, data processing and storage, etc.

The functions above are performed differently in each social network. This is due to their individual characteristics. Despite the fact that each social network is based on the possibility of communication, it can be built on different

principles and for different purposes. Now, the following social networks are actively developing on the territory of the Russian Federation: Facebook, Instagram, Odnoklassniki, and VKontakte [4, p. 126];

1. VKontakte Social network is a Russian social network. VKontakte is a standard website with a certain set of functions. People can use it to listen to music, view videos, photos, take part in meetings and events, conduct correspondence, find people they are interested in, and play virtual games. This social network contains a huge amount of information that attracts people with different interests.

To date, the number of writing authors is 27.5 million people [5]. The gender distribution in the network is 58.4 % female and 41.6% male. The main age group – 37 % - authors aged 25-34 years. The second largest group is 18-24 years old (25.7 %).

2. Facebook is a popular American social network created by Mark Zuckerberg. The number of writing authors is 1.9 million people. Facebook has a completely different audience: 37% of authors are currently in the prevailing age group (25-34), while the second largest group is 35-44, and 30.6% of authors belong to it. Over 45 years of age – 23.5% of authors.

Facebook's functionality has been translated into the world's major languages, making it the most popular network in the world. Here a person can share your opinions, post photos and videos, and always get first-hand information. Thus, Facebook is a social network of global significance.

3. Odnoklassniki is an analog of the English-language website "Classmates". The main age group of the site is 25-35 years old, which is 35 % of the authors. Mail.RU Group, an international technology company, owns it.

Odnoklassniki's audience is mainly focused on internal communication, viewing profiles, and messaging. People are less interested in the news feed. Users are not very fastidious about the quality of photo content. Moreover, they like graphics and videos more than texts.

4. Instagram is an application that allows a person to share photos and videos with other users. Out of 7.1 million Instagram authors are 76.9 % female [5]. Since the main direction of the service is the exchange of photos, there are no large articles, a large number of filters are popular, and putting hashtags is one of the ways to optimize and promote one's account. We can say that the search for something you need is carried out precisely by images that have high quality, bright and rich colors.

Users of social networks can not only unite online around their common interests and Hobbies, but also jointly solve problems that are relevant to them, aimed at creating social experience. They can also interact with the help of cloud technologies and services in order to get some result. The communication can be considered effective if the level of rationality increases, in particular, the desire to eliminate factors that hinder communication [1, p. 1022].

The disadvantage of using social networks for effective communication is that the main, so-called "traditional" means of the communication process, namely gestures, facial expressions, pantomime, intonation of the voice, looks, are not used during the process. However, modern capabilities of social networks make it possible to overcome these shortcomings through video communication, universal communication symbols, as well as instant exchange of photo and audio files [1, p.1022]. Another disadvantage is anonymity, which gives rise to permissiveness and lack of responsibility for what is said, as well as the predominance of deviant type of communication.

Currently, one of the main forms of leisure activities for many people, especially young people and adolescents, has become a pastime in social networks, and therefore the problem of Internet addiction is important. Scientists focus on the "social diseases" of Internet communication. The problems of Internet addiction, personal identity (it is possible to create several identities, images, or even change gender), changes in the language of communication in social networks, and the emergence of Internet slang are considered [6].

In order to identify the features of communication in social networks, a survey of 50 schoolchildren and students of the Moscow region of the Russian Federation was conducted. According to the survey, the absolute majority of study participants visit social networks every day – 92 % (46 %). It is clear that the Internet is not seen by them as a chronophage - a "time eater" that distracts from more important activities.

The following answers were given to the question "How much time do you spend in social networks per day?": more than 15 hours – 8 people (16 %); from 15 to 10 hours – 7 people (14%); from 10 to 5 hours – 20 people (40%); less than 5 hours – 15 (30%).

Thus, we can conclude that more than half of the respondents spend less than 10 hours a day on social networks, i.e. about 1/3 of the day. Based on this, we can say that most people devote a significant portion of their time to social networks on a daily basis, which indicates a developed social communication among young people, but also their dependence.

Finding out the most popular social network among students and school-leavers gave the following results: more than half of the respondents most often use the V Kontakte network, the second most popular is the Instagram app – 32.7 % (16 people). Facebook and Odnoklassniki were chosen by only 10 % of respondents.

To the next question, "Do your relatives, friends and acquaintances use social networks?", the results were arranged as follows: 66 % (33 people) answered that they use and often, and 30 % that they use and rarely and exclusively 4 % (2 people) answered that their relatives, friends and acquaintances do not use social networks.

To the question "Do you think you can do without using social networks?" 54 % of respondents said that they can, but there will be some

difficulties, and the remaining half of respondents were divided in half: 11 people (22 %) can, 12 people (24 %) – no, they can't.

The next question was: "Do you think that social networks greatly facilitate the life of a modern person?". 62 % (31 people) answered positively, 14 % (7 people) negatively, and 24 % (12 people) chose the answer "I can't answer".

Based on the results of testing, we can conclude that young people who took this survey certainly have a dependence on social networks, because they play a huge role in their lives. It should be noted that the majority of respondents use social networks to carry out their educational activities and exchange information.

Social networks have also become an important condition for socialization, adaptation, and communication in society. The study made it possible to see the characteristics of a different type of communication. It is carried out on a high-tech basis. Unique models of social behavior are formed, creating new values, practices of communication, friendship, and special network etiquette. Firstly, the main feature of communication is its facilitation compared to communicating face-to-face: reduced barriers psychological defense, but lost a sense of authenticity in interpersonal relationships, and sympathy can be situational, language oversimplifies. Secondly, the circle of communication partners is significantly expanded, but at the same time, the instability and surface of these contacts increases. Third, various interesting and useful information exchanges are expanding.

Thus, social networks in the modern world can be considered as a completely new class of mass communication media-virtual mass communication media. Not having their own technological base, they, however, stand apart from all other Internet resources. They have become a very convenient technological and ideological platform for creating full-fledged mass media, as well as a virtual model of a full-fledged mass communication medium. Social networks provide a unique opportunity for deep search and structuring of information, data processing and storage, etc. Largely representing digitized interpersonal and mass communication, they expand the capabilities of traditional media.

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