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تأثير التقنيات الحديثة على الكتابة في اللغة الانكليزية

" كلمات مفتاحية "

(الكتابة الانكليزية ، التكنولوجيا الحديثة ، التواصل)

: بحث مقدم من

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ماجستير لغة انكليزية وعلم اللغة

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The Impact of Modern Technology
on Writing in English

**key words : (spoken English , written English,
communication , technology)**

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Abstract

This paper investigates the impact of technology on writing in English. The early influence of technology on writing in modern English was in the 19th century. It tackles the main differences between Spoken English and written English that have been mentioned in the relevant literature. The modern technology (on-line and mobile text-messaging) seems not only to have reduced the differences between both media, but has also produced a hybrid medium which shares some speech-specific features besides written-specific features, that is developing into an independent new medium with its own

special jargon, and style. The paper suggests naming the new medium which incorporates computer mediated communication *net- write*.

ملخص البحث

يتناول هذا البحث تأثير التكنولوجيا الحديثة على الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية المعاصرة، ممثلة بالشبكة العنكبوتية وأجهزة الهاتف النقال الحديثة وكذلك التأثير الكبير لتكنولوجيا القرن التاسع عشر على الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية. ويتناول هذا البحث الفروق الأساسية بين خصائص الكلام وخصائص الكتابة في اللغة الإنجليزية والتي سبق أن تناولها العديد من الدارسين ومنها أن الكلام يمثل نمطا من التواصل التفاعلي السمعى /البصري المباشر بين المتحدثين، بينما كانت الكتابة نمطا من التواصل البصري غير المباشر بينهم. كما أن الحدود التي تفصل بين جمل الكلام غير واضحة إذ تعتمد على التوقف عن الكلام والنبرة الصوتية، بينما تتضح حدود الجمل في لغة الكتابة من خلال علامات الترقيم. وتتم لغة الكلام بسرعة الأداء والتركيز الذهني الشديد نسبيا خشية الخطأ، بينما يختلف الأمر في لغة الكتابة حيث بوسع الكاتب مراجعة النص وتحريه قبل إرساله الى المتلقي. كما يذكر البحث عددا من الفروق النحوية والأسلوبية بين الكلام والكتابة (كاستخدام الكلام لعدد أكبر من الجمل المركبة واتسام الكتابة بالأسلوب الرسمي مقارنة بالكلام. ويبين البحث أن تقنيات التواصل الحديثة قد عملت على تقليل أوجه التباين بين الكلام والكتابة في اللغة الإنجليزية، مما أدى الى بلورة وتكوين نمط لغوي جديد في اللغة الإنجليزية يجمع بين العديد من خصائص الكلام والكتابة في آن واحد ، حيث أصبحت الكتابة المستخدمة في التواصل الإلكتروني عبر الأنترنت والهاتف النقال الحديث، كتابة تفاعلية، سريعة، وشبه مباشرة رغم بعد المسافات بين المتخاطبين. كما اقترب الأسلوب الكتابي من اسلوب الكلام حيث تناقصت السمة الرسمية للكتابة . ولقد اكتسب النمط الكتابي الإلكتروني العديد من المصطلحات والأدوات السيميائية الخاصة به، كالرموز والمختصرات لكي تختصر الوقت وتسهل التواصل. ويقترح البحث تسمية هذا النمط اللغوي الجديد من التواصل الإلكتروني كتابة الأنترنت.

Most scholars believe that human language is speech which historically precedes writing, as many languages in the world have no writing medium. Man learnt writing at later stages of life, and the oldest known writing system is the Sumerian cuneiform that appeared around 3000 BC (Palmer, p.28). Children acquire their mother tongue speech spontaneously at home, but learn writing at school. Millions of speakers of languages that have a writing medium even in the most advanced communities do know how to write. This is why spoken medium is associated with people's everyday ordinary life, and is mostly associated with informal style in various social situations.

As for writing, man has endeavoured to benefit from technological means to help him achieve better written communication. The Sumerians had developed cuneiform writing on wet clay tablets; and the earliest specimen of writing was found in Uruk, Mesopotamia, 3500 B.C. The Chinese invented paper in 105 A.D. that revolutionized the process of writing, then paper manufacture was learnt by Koreans. It reached Spain and Africa through Arabs. It was then taken to America in the 16th century, and to Australia in the 19th century. The 19th century industrial revolution in England was the era of important inventions in printing technology. In 1831 the first electric telegraph was invented by Joseph Henry, and in 1835 Samuel Morse formulated Morse Code, and then produced the first long distance electric telegraph line in 1843 that achieved rapid long-distance communication.

The telegraph affected the style of writing as a result of the mechanical and financial constraints on the number of words used in a telegram which naturally led to summarizing meanings in fewer words so as to reduce the cost of sending. This had an impact on the style of news stories, sent through telegraph in terms of reduced sentence length and increased simplicity of diction, which in turn affected the people's writing style (Baron, p.235).

There are many varieties of English within the spoken medium, and the written medium. Speech varieties included the ones related to geography

(British, American, Canadian, Australian English); social class (lower, middle, and upper classes); gender (women versus men); age (children, youth, and adult speakers) etc. The written medium too includes many varieties related to register (scientific, literary, legal, journalistic, economic, business, and political English, etc); genre (narrative, drama, court, editorial, contracts, diplomatic English, etc).

The differences between the spoken and the written:

Many differences between speech and writing have been drawn in the literature (Chafe, 1982; Beattie, 1983; Wilkins, 1985; Maybin & Mercer, 2002; Goodman, & Graddol, 2003; Bloor & Bloor, 2004; Carter, 2004; Halliday, 2005; Graddol, Cheshire, & Swann, 2005; Holmes, 2008; among others). In what follows, the main different features between the spoken medium and the written medium will be listed.

The main features assigned to spoken English are:

1. Speech is interactive (dialogue) communication between real speakers and hearers in real situations or contexts, but writing is one-direction (monologue) communication between writers and readers, in detached contexts.
2. Speech is generally natural, direct and spontaneous communication. In some cases it is planned (as in political speeches, or religious sermons when a speaker writes down notes before speaking. The speaker gets immediate verbal or non-verbal feedback from the hearer(s); whereas writing is invented, indirect and planned interaction.
3. In the spoken medium, a speaker gets immediate verbal or non-verbal feedback from the hearer which contributes to communication.

In the written medium, because context is detached, a speaker does not get direct feedback from the addressee except in certain genres such as journalism and letters.

4. In the spoken medium, there is visual contact, such as looks, gestures, body movement, facial expression, etc. Non-verbal devices such as gestures, facial expression, nods, movement of eyebrows, sighs, laughter, and silences function as contextual cues that help participants signal and interpret utterances.

In the written medium, there is no visual contact between writer and reader.

5. In spoken English, sentence boundaries are often not quite clear, though intonation and pause divide long discourse into more manageable communicative units. Spoken medium makes use of prosody (stress, intonation, pitch, rhythm, and tempo) to separate and/or foreground meaning units.

In written English, sentence boundaries are clear through punctuation marks, and headings to separate meaning units. Written medium uses layout, underlining, bold type, colours and other graphical effects in their written texts.

6. In spoken English, speakers undergo time pressure, so they use fillers (such as *'er'*, *'oh'*, *'uh huh'*, *'I see'*, *and*, *because*, *but*, *I mean*, *now*, *oh*, *or*, *so*, *then*, *well*, and *y'know*) to reduce the pressure.

In written English, there is no time pressure since writers feel free to choose the time and place for writing, and usually have time to revise the draft before finalizing it.

7. Speech includes false starts and 'self correction' when the speaker stops for a while and either repeats or reformulates his utterance to have more time for thinking about what is said since an error can not be undone once uttered. An exception to this is planned formal speech.

In the written medium there are no false starts except in texts that were originally speech before being transcribed into writing as in drama texts.

8. In speech, a speaker may get interrupted or overlapped.

Writers do not get interrupted or overlapping by readers.

9. Speech could not be preserved before the invention of sound recording instruments, but writing is permanent which may be read after thousands of years.

10. Speech includes incomplete sentences, but written medium uses complete sentences.

11. In spoken English, shared knowledge plays a more important role.

In written English, shared knowledge has a weaker role.

12. Spoken English uses more deictic words (*this, that, here, then, here, there, now*, etc.) that acquire their referential meaning from the immediate context and setting.

Written English uses fewer deictics and more elaboration to make up for the real situational context.

13. Spoken English uses more pronouns especially *I* and *you* referring to the immediate context participants.

Written English makes less use of the pronouns *I* and *you*.

14. In spoken English, more non-standard grammar is used.

In written English, more standard grammar is used.

15. In spoken English, more ellipsis is used.

Written English makes less use of ellipsis in communication.

16. In spoken English, less nominalization is used (Maybin & Mercer, 2002, pp. 42-44)

Written medium uses more nominalization.

17. In spoken English, less passive voice is used.

In written English, there is more use of passive voice.

18. In spoken English, more direct quotes are used.

In written English, there is more use of indirect quotes.

19. Spoken English uses more coordination.

In written English, there is more use of subordination.

20. Spoken language uses fewer attributive adjectives.

In written English, more attributive adjectives are used.

21. Spoken language uses fewer relative clauses, but written English makes more use of relative clauses.

22. In spoken English, there is less lexical density (the proportion of lexical items to the total discourse), and more grammatical intricacy.

In written English, there is more lexical density and less grammar density.

23. Spoken English is fragmented with less information in the text since part of the information is shared within context.

Written English is integrated with more information in the text since part of it is shared within context.

24. Spoken English is less formal, and uses less formal discourse markers:

- to move to a new point or close the conversation : 'actually', 'so', 'Ok', 'right?' and 'anyway'
- to go back to a previous point : 'as I was saying'
- to conclude an argument : 'at the end of the day'
- to order items: first, first of all, second
- to add : also
- to contrast: but
- to give causes or results: cause, because, so, therefore
- to generalize: all in all
- to raise a main point: 'the thing is'
- to restate something: I mean

Written English is generally more formal, and uses more formal discourse markers such as:

- to introduce an example: in the case of
- to raise a new point: in addition to
- to raise an opposing view: on the other hand / from another perspective
- to express a final assessment: in the final analysis / in conclusion / to conclude
- to order points: firstly / secondly / in the first place
- to add: furthermore / in addition to that

- to express cause or result: due to / consequently/ as a result
- to generalize: by and large/ in general
- to raise a main point: the main issue is / the main matter is

Technology is a force that affects socio-cultural aspects of life and brings about major changes in the community. The 19th century industrial age witnessed a change from oral society to a literate one in which mass literacy was encouraged and required in the society, in response to new social and cultural developments. Literary works and popular newspapers became widely available in different forms of print and pictures as “the repository of the finest literary achievements of a society” (Vincent, p.375). Written language became highly valued and associated with literate people and formality. This perhaps explains why school teachers devoted much efforts and energy to decrease the effect of speech on writing (Wilkins, p.5).

On the other hand, the second half of the 20th century witnessed a reverse shift to informality. In modern mass production economies, power relations have given way to solidarity in order to achieve better profit, and power-holders had to make concessions due to the “increase in the relative power of working-class people and other groupings of formerly powerless and disregarded people – women, youth, black people” (Fairclough, p. 60). The other major factor in increasing informality has been related to certain features associated with computer mediated communication such as speed of transmission, time-out disconnection, anonymity, etc (North, p. 213). Some scholars believe that technology is not an external force but an internal one that is intertwined with society, and that it only reinforces an already existing social trend of shifting from formal style to less formality or informality (North, p.214).

The most striking technological development in our times has been the computer which uses many semiotic systems (speech, pictures, music, video, etc) in digital communication (email, online chat, messaging, audio/video conferencing, etc).

Such communication has been called Computer Mediated Communication (Maybin & Swann, p.210), but since the new generations of mobiles are used for similar and additional types of communication using such software programmes as *Viper, Tango, Whatsup* etc.

In Electronic Communication (EC henceforth) some of the features of the writing medium are maintained. The following are some EC features that are similar to the written medium:

- in both written mode and EC, writer and reader are usually in different locations,
- in both written mode and EC, contexts are detached,
- in both written mode and EC, there is no facial or gesture feedback in emailing and messaging, but (to the exception of video conferencing where there is some degree of visual feedback).
- in both written mode and EC, errors can be corrected before sending a message.

But many other features of EC are similar to those of speech:

- both spoken mode and EC are interactive, and make use of the pronouns *I* and *You*,
- both spoken mode and EC are spontaneous
- both spoken mode and EC are speedy and somehow direct,
- both spoken mode and EC are mostly informal,
- both spoken mode and EC use incomplete sentences and often non-standard grammar,
- sentence boundaries are not clear in both cases, since punctuation marks are usually unused in EC, and discourse is divided into short manageable chunks.

EC writing is becoming different from previous styles of writing in English.

People have found ways of adapting to the demands and constraints of modern technology by using various strategies to secure successful communication. Such strategies sometimes reflect tension between the flexibility required in the use of EC and the established writing standards. Indeed, the previous distinctions between speech and writing have been blurred by the affordances and constraints associated with computer technology. The affordances of EC are various and multimodal. It makes use of both media (speech and writing) besides a number of other signifying systems: audio recordings, videos, emoticons, graphs, tables, pictures, and a growing set of abbreviations. EC is in the process of developing its own special jargon:

AFAICS: as far as I can see

AFAICT: as far as I can tell

AFK: away from keyboard

LOL: laughing out loud

NVM: nevermind

Coo: is a stylish way of saying "Cool" or "I definitely approve of this".

gerd: 'gerd' is a short version of the stupidity expression 'ermahgerd!'. As a derogatory way of saying 'oh my god', 'gerd' is used to say 'I'm shocked'

hmu: - hit me up, i.e. "contact me", "text me", "phone me" or "reach me".

wut: what

props: proper respect and acknowledgement

18r: later

sup: what's up. Sup is a common greeting.

idk: I don't know

wbu: what about you?

kk: OK

Idc: I don't care

5x5: loud and clear

The following is an extract from a teen chatroom conversation:

- Al commands: MORN, MY NAME IS SUPERMAN.....
- PinkBabyAngel542: I'm telling ya....u don't wanna get T.H.O. in those
- MORN&SUN: *superman..*
- Rollerbabe904590: :)
- Al commands: CHECK MY PROFILE IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME
- MORN&SUN: *ok*
- Al commands: THANKS.....
- MORN&SUN: lol.....

- MizRose 76: More DONT DO IT.....
- MORN&SUN: *why?*
- MORN&SUN: *what will happen to me?*
- MizRose 76: BECUZ HES A FREAK.....

EC writing is characterized with multimodality, as it can be used in combination with a number of other signifying systems. It has also developed a special style with loose capitalization and punctuation.

EC is in the process of developing as a new medium or genre, a hybrid of writing and speech. It is increasingly acquiring its own special jargon, and loose grammar. David Crystal calls it: “netspeak” (2001, p. 239); yet calling it ‘netspeak’ might be misleading as it gives the impression that EC is mainly speech, which is not the case. It is mainly writing that resembles speech in many of its features. One may therefore suggest calling it: *net-writing*.

Conclusion:

It is clear that the distinction and previously established differences between speech and writing have been blurred; partly by the increasing tendency to shift formality into informality as a result of both the impact of modern communication technologies (computer and mobile) and socio-cultural changes.

It would be better to view EC as a new developing genre in its own right that has hybrid features from both speech and writing. One may call the new genre *net-writing* to imply the special writing features associated with modern technology writings.

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