

# Morphosyntactic Features of Facebook Communication

Jaroslava Maňáková

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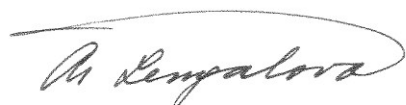
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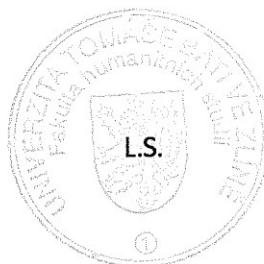
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*děkanka*



PhDr. Katarína Nemčoková, Ph.D.  
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## **ABSTRAKT**

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá morfosyntaktickými kritérii komunikace na sociální síti zvané Facebook. Hlavním cílem této bakalářské práce je specifikovat kritéria anglického jazyka v komunikaci na internetu prostřednictvím počítače a určit, zda se spíše přibližuje k charakteristikám mluveného či psaného jazyka nebo se jedná o úplně novou a rozdílnou formu komunikace. K tomu, abych zjistila, zda je tato teorie správná, jsem nejprve v teoretické části práce určila rozdíly mezi psanou a mluvenou angličtinou obecně za použití příkladů, dále jsem zahrнула typické znaky komunikace na internetu a v praktické části jsem tyto poznatky aplikovala na komentáře získané ze stránky na Facebooku a analyzovala specifické rysy této komunikace.

Klíčová slova: psaný projev, mluvený projev, morfologie, syntax, počítačem podporovaná komunikace

## **ABSTRACT**

This bachelor thesis deals with the morphosyntactic features of communication on the social site called Facebook. The main aim of this bachelor thesis is to specify the criteria of English language in computer-mediated communication and state, whether this type of communication has characteristics of the written or spoken English, or it is a completely new and different type of the communication. To find out and prove whether the theory is correct, in theoretical part, there are differences between written and spoken English with the examples, further in the thesis there are covered typical features of internet communication and in the practical part, the theoretical knowledge is applied to the comments accessed on the Facebook page and finally, the specific features of communication on Facebook has been analysed.

Keywords: written language, spoken language, morphology, syntax, computer-mediated communication

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's/Master's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to describe the morphological features of the Facebook communication which is, thanks to spread of the internet, highly used form of the communication these days. Internet communication is a type of the communication among internet users. It is something between spoken and written language – a hybrid form of a language. To make a statement about its typical features, the part of the thesis is dedicated to the characteristics of written, spoken and computer-mediated communication.

The theoretical part deals with the differences between spoken and written English according to particular linguistic disciplines such as phonetics and phonology, lexicology and primarily morphology and syntax – grammatical features.

Moreover, in the thesis, there are chapters covering the terms connected with the main aim of the thesis, such as “computer-mediated communication”, “internet slang – netspeak”. In this part, there are specified other typical features of the netspeak, such as abbreviations, emoticons, capitalization, etc. And furthermore, the specific features of the computer-mediated communication (CMC) are compared with the face-to-face communication and written language.

Next part of the thesis contains the information about the social sites which are the main media for the computer-mediated communication. And since the corpus is based on the Facebook members comments, one part is dedicated to this type of social site and its communicating possibilities for users.

The practical part starts with the description of the methodology. Then the theoretical knowledge is applied in the analysis of the Facebook comments which creates the corpus for the practical analysis.

## **I. THEORY**

## 1 SPOKEN AND WRITTEN ENGLISH

There are many differences between spoken and written language. Principal differences are characterized by Vachek (1959, 10) who describes spoken language as a dynamic communication which is signed by its readiness and immediateness and static communication which stand for written language (1959, 10). Written language is distinguished by its surveyability and preservability (Vachek 1959, 10-11).

The surveyability of the **written texts** means that in comparison with the spoken language, readers of the written texts are able to read the text multiple times emancipated from the chains of time. Thus, readers can go through the text for any amount of time. Vachek also claims that the reading person, unlike the listening person, is fairly independent of the dimension of time, as he may quicken or slow down the rate of obtaining information according to the particular purpose he has in mind when obtaining it (Vachek 1959, 10).

The second feature of the **written text** meant by Vachek is the preservability. He claimed these written utterances' characters as a documentary and preservable in contrary to ephemeral, easy-to-be-forgotten characters of their spoken counterparts (Vachek 1959, 11).

Both forms – spoken and written – have its own merits based on the purpose of the user. None of them is more superior to the other or more important than the other form (Urbanová 2002, 10).

Differences between spoken and written forms of the language could be classified by the plenty of levels of the linguistics, such as phonetics and phonology, functional, lexical, morphological and syntactical levels. In this chapter, I will discuss the first three levels of linguistics. The latter two – morphological and syntactical levels will be discussed further since they are the major subjects of the whole bachelor thesis.

### 1.1 Paralanguage and the spoken utterance

Spoken language mainly uses sound and paralinguistic means of communication. These are important for expressing the thoughts. Communication means of the sound level include not only the suprasegmental phenomenon in narrow agenda, e.g. stress, rhythm and intonation, but also in a broader agenda – voice timbre, voice intensity, vocal range, pauses and voice pace in general, and non-articulated sounds, etc. (Urbanová 2002, 10-11).

All the following questions in (1) have the same meaning but the information focus changes in each one depending on how the sentence is expressed according to volume, pitch, rhythm, and timbre (The Total Communicator 2004).

- (1) a. **I** think she should finish the school.  
*I personally think that - not someone else.*
- b. I **think** she should finish the school.  
*That is what I really mean.*
- c. I think **she** should finish the school.  
*Not somebody else but he.*
- d. I think she **should** finish the school.  
*In my point, it is advisable for him to finish the school.*
- e. I think she should **finish** the school.  
*He should absolutely finish the school.*
- f. I think she should finish **the** school.  
*She should finish this school, not another one.*
- g. I think she should finish the **school**.  
*She should finish the school and not something else.*

Spoken language is often more emotionally motivated. Voice intensity in cooperation with the intonation makes possible to express the emotional emphasis. Vocal range and voice timbre contribute to emphasizing or balancing the emotional tension during the conversational behaviour.

Body language, in terms of linguistics known as paralinguistic phenomena, involves gestures, mimics, laughing, crying, and other non-verbal signals. These factors are complementary since they supply and complete the content of the communicated message

in a language. Sometimes, non-verbal communication predominates when the communication is full of the strong emotions and feelings (Urbanová 2002, 11).

## 1.2 Graphetics and the written texts

As in the spoken language, there is a significant role of the sounds, in the written language there is a very important graphical form of the text. The structure of the text and the highlights in the text are the key features which contribute to expressing specific purpose in the written text (Urbanová 2002, 32).

The type of the font, size and layout play a significant role in means of eye-catching effects. The same effects on readers are achieved through maps, graphs, colours and visual divisions. These features are important for the surveyability and preservability of the text (Urbanová 2002, 32-33).

## 1.3 Lexical level of the spoken language

In spoken English, there are tendencies to use the expressions which are vague (2) (Urbanová 2002, 24). For example:

- (2) a. *something like that*
- b. *three out of four days*
- c. *that kind of thing*
- d. *that sort of thing*
- e. *some stuff*

Behind this opacity of meaning during the choice of the vocabulary in the spoken language are several reasons: In the spontaneous speech, the speaker has no time to choose the right term. Then the listener expects that he will understand the meaning of the utterance and will participate in the interpretation of the meaning itself. A person who is someone talking to is not able to catch and understand all information – and this is the reason why there is a semantic assimilation. Moreover, one of the reasons can be too many meanings which are parts of the utterance and are indicated not only by words but also para-linguistically and extra-linguistically. And lastly, there are meanings which are bound to the context (Urbanová 2002, 24)

Short and simple words are used in spoken English. Most often those are words such as *get*, *go*, *take*, *early*, *give*, etc. The reason for this is the "speech economy". In short, a speaker uses these words because of the fact that they are easily and quickly perceived by a listener. Among those are most often the words of the Germanic origin. In contrary, long words are of the foreign origins, e.g. Latin, Greek, and Romance. For example, *ambiguous*, *abandon*, *disease*, *inconsiderable*, etc.

The preference to use the one-syllable words because of the reasons mentioned above leads to the shortening the original words (3) (Urbanová 2002, 24-25).

- (3) a. *photography* → *photo*  
b. *examination* → *examination*  
c. *laboratory* → *lab*  
d. *Mathematics* → *Math*  
e. *public house* → *pub*  
f. *zoological garden* → *zoo*

Another characteristic of the spoken language is the use of the **idioms** and **phraseology** which enrich the vocabulary with the **colloquial expressions** (4).

- (4) a. *up to your armpits* – deeply involved in a particularly unpleasant situation (Ayto 2009, 11)  
b. *a fish out of the water* – a person who is in a completely unsuitable environment or situation (Ayto 2009, 129)  
c. *in the pipeline* – being planned; about to happen (Ayto 2009, 265)

The presence of the interjections and non-articulated sounds in the spoken language such as *wow*, *yep*, *aah*, *gosh*, etc. (Urbanová 2002, 25).

#### 1.4 Lexical level of the written language

The written language tries to express the most cogent meaning. A reader needs to be introduced in a situation and thus the situational context; circumstances, time and place are described to the reader (5) (Urbanová 2002, 36).

- (5) *Monday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 1986. Victor Wilcox lies awake, in the dark bedroom, waiting for his quartz alarm clock to bleep. It is set to do this at 6.45.*

(David Lodge, *Nice Work*, Penguin Books 1988, 13)

Also, the behaviour of the participants during the conversation or the utterance is described in the written texts (6) (Urbanová 2002, 36).

- (6) *“Well, you know, a young temporary lecturer...” Bob Busby looks slightly embarrassed. “No one would blame you if you wanted to keep a low profile. Robyn snorts indignantly. “It’s a matter of principle!”*  
*“Right then- I’ll put you down.” He resumes work on the drawing-pin.*

(David Lodge, *Nice Work*, Penguin Books 1988, 13)



## 2 MORPHOSYNTACTIC FEATURES

Following what was written before; morphology and syntax are the major subjects of the whole bachelor theses. And in this chapter, will be provided information about them. Those two subjects are both equal in terms of grammar. And altogether, morphology and syntax are the cores of a grammar (Quirk et al. 1985, 12).

In this thesis, morphosyntactic features are classified according to circumstances of the written and spoken language. Because of the fact that the spoken language is interactive and participants of the conversation speak in real-time, the most used pronouns are first-person pronoun I and we and also second-person pronoun you to address the hearer. On the other hand, writing is not interactive – usually, the reader is not individual and often the writer is not stated. The written texts' functions are to deliver the general information of common, common knowledge or interest. This is the reason why the written language does not usually contain personal pronouns. In writing, the author refers to places, people, and things directly.

	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Speaking</b>
<b>Interactive, real-time</b>	No	Yes
<b>Shared context</b>	No	Yes
<b>Purpose</b>	Information	Personal communication
<b>Audience</b>	Wide-public	Individual

Writing vs. Speaking 1

Interactivity and shared context of the spoken language enable participants of the conversation to use various morphosyntactic features which differ from the writing characteristics. For example, omitting subjects and operators in sentences is very common. Also, the question tags occur rather in spoken than in written language. The fact, that the conversation flows in the real-time, speakers have less time to think about the message they want to convey and this often lead to dysfluency, repetitions, reformulations, etc.

On the other hand, reading the written texts is not context-bound and the reader reads the text later after the period of time. Thus the written text is not interactive, the context is unknown for the reader and omission of the subject or operator should not be used here.

### 3 MORPHOSYNTACTIC FEATURES OF THE SPOKEN LANGUAGE

Since the spoken language is used in the face-to-face conversation, participants of the conversation typically share the same context with the institutional, cultural, and social knowledge. Thus the shared context is the reason for the very high use of the pronouns and on the other hand the very low use of nouns in the conversation. Among hugely used pronouns are *I* and *you*, which serves for the participants of the conversation and also other personal pronouns, such as *he*, *she*, *it*, etc. A person who uses these pronouns assumes that the hearer would understand the speaker's intended meaning (Biber et al. 2002, 430).

Among other context-bound factors belong substitute pro-forms, deictic words, ellipsis, non-clausal units, such as inserts and syntactic non-clausal units.

#### 3.1.1 Substitute pro-forms

Due to the shared context, the conversation often contains substitute pro-forms, ellipsis, and deictic words. Ellipsis will be discussed later.

(7) *I wouldn't say she can see any others.*

(8) *I don't want to do it.*

In (7) the word *others* substitutes for a noun phrase and in (8) *do it* substitutes for a verb phrase.

#### 3.1.2 Deictic words

Words such as *this*, *these*, *those*, *that*, *then*, *there*, etc. are the deictic words (9). These words are dependent on the conversation context. This is the reason why it is commonly used in spoken language.

(9) *this sweatshirt*

*Whose bag is that?*

*these shoes there*

#### 3.1.3 Ellipsis

According to Biber et al. "ellipsis stands for the omission of elements which are precisely recoverable from the linguistic or situational context." (1999, 156)

There are several types of the ellipsis according to the omitted position in the sentence. They are distinguished into **the initial**, **medial** and **final** ellipsis. Moreover, the ellipsis is divided into **the situational** and **textual** ellipsis.

**Situational** ellipsis is the type of the ellipsis used in the spoken person-to-person communication. Since it is based on the situation, which is obvious due to the name of the ellipsis, the participants of the communication are in the same situation and they are able to understand the context of the speaker's utterance even though the certain sentence member is omitted. In the declarative clause, the subject is often omitted. Ellipsis of operator occurs in yes-no questions. An ellipsis of both – subject and operator appears at the beginning of interrogative and declarative clauses (Biber et al. 1999, 1127).

**Textual** ellipsis appears in comparative and coordinated clauses, and also in question-answer sequences (Biber et al. 1999, 156).

Generally, the initial ellipsis means that the subject (10), operator (11) or both (12) are omitted. According to the standard word order (Subject-Verb-Object), the subject cannot be omitted because English is a non-pro drop language.

(10) *What do you want to do after graduation?*

< > *Don't know, maybe run a business. < I >*

*Are you going home after finishing the presentation?*

< > *Depends when the lecture ends. < It >*

(11) *Really? < > You joking? < Are >*

< > *Your sister get the ticket? < Did >*

(12) *Know what it means? < Do you >*

*A: Do you want to go to the cinema tomorrow?*

*B: Yeah < > be great! < It would >*

Nevertheless, there are specific cases in which the omission is possible (13).

(13) *Spoken language*                      *Came home, got a shower and sat on the couch...*

*Imperatives*                                      *Open the window!*

*Fixed phrases*                                      *Thank you.*

Medial ellipsis is the omission of the operator (14), for example:

- (14) *I gotta go* – instead of *I've gotta go*;  
*You better* – instead of *You'd better*.

Usually, this ellipsis occurs in semi-modals, such as *have got to – gotta; be going to – gonna* (Biber et al. 1999, 1107).

Final ellipsis is done through the omission of words which follow the operator – finite auxiliary or copula (15) (Biber et al. 1999, 1106). Omitted words are in brackets <>.

- (15) *A: I think she is very nice and empathetic person.*  
*B: Yeah, she is < >. <very nice and empathetic person>*  
*A: Do you want to go to the cinema tonight?*  
*B: Mmm, no I don't < >. < want to go to the cinema tonight>*

Usually, the final ellipsis appears in replies to questions, after an infinitive *to* and after a *wh-word* (Biber et al. 1999, 1107).

### 3.1.4 Non-clausal units

These non-clausal units include two forms: **inserts** (single words) and **syntactic non-clausal units** - they are able to form bigger clausal units in connection with others by entering into syntactic relations.

**Inserts** are stand-alone words and they are not able to enter syntactic relations. Biber et al. explain the difference between non-clausal units and inserts via inserts criteria:

- “a) Inserts may appear on their own, not as part of a larger grammatical structure.
- b) On the other hand, they may appear attached (prosodically, or, in the transcription, by the absence of punctuation) to a larger structure, which may be a clausal unit or a non-clausal unit.
- c) They rarely occur medially in a syntactic structure.
- d) They are morphologically simple.
- e) They are not homonyms of words in other word classes.
- f) Semantically, they have no denotative meaning their use is defined rather by their pragmatic function.” (1999, 1082)

Inserts may stand for various functions in a sentence, e.g. *interjections*, *conjunctions*, *discourse markers*, or *expletives*, etc.

**Interjections** express the author's emotions (16). They have an exclamatory function (Biber et al. 1999, 1082).

(16) *A: Daniel got that from me.*

*B: Oh, did he?*

*Ah that baby is so cute!*

*Oh wow, she is fabulous!*

*Ooops, I dropped it.*

Inserts in form of **discourse markers** (17) usually appear at the beginning of the sentence. They help to signal the process of the communication and also signal an interaction between two or more participants of the conversation (Biber et al. 1999, 1086).

(17) *Well, I really don't know why it is like that.*

*Now, what are you talking about, Bill?*

*Right, I'll take a look.*

*A: Do you like this book?*

*B: Well, I thought it will be better.*

**Expletives**, in this case, can be diversified into taboo words (18) and moderated expletives (19). Those are often used to express a negative reaction to a certain circumstance or information. Moderated expletives are subtle forms of the taboo words. They are for example *God*, *Jesus*, *damn*, *fu\*k*, *sh\*t*, *gosh*, *goodness*, *heavens*, *Good Lord*, etc. (Biber et al. 1999, 1094-1095).

(18) *I thought my God she only has one week.*

*Oh Jesus, I didn't know that!*

(19) *Good Lord! I got it!*

*My gosh, this is a really good idea!*

As Biber et al. claim **syntactic non-clausal units** "differ from inserts in that they can be given a syntactic description in terms of the structures and categories of sentence grammar"

(1999, 199). They include phrases (adjective, adverb, prepositional or noun phrases) and single words. Since they are fragmentary, they are dependent on the context. They may express numerous speech functions, such as exclamation, commands, questions, statements, etc. (Biber et al. 1999, 225). The most important functional category is the elliptic reply.

To communicate a certain message, conversation requires two participants at least. They exchange certain thoughts, ideas, or attitudes. This feature is reflected in the following characteristics of the spoken language.

### 3.1.5 Negatives

According to Biber et al. “conversation has twice as many negatives as the written registers” (2002, 431). The reason is the interaction between two or more participants who exchange their own attitude or thoughts about the particular situation or the idea. In spoken English, negatives mostly occur in contracted form (20), such as *don't*, *won't*, *aren't*, etc. In conversation, it is quite frequent, that the sentence includes more than one negation. Multiple negations may be the feature of the different dialects (21) or when the speaker reformulates the utterance (22) (Biber et al. 1999, 247).

(20) *I **don't** like it.*

(21) *I've never seen nothing like this.*

***Ain't nobody** got time for that!*

(22) ***No, not** in May, he said.*

*There is **no** one to blame **not** really.*

### 3.1.6 Elliptic reply

In a conversation, it is common to answer the statement or utterance communicated by someone else by an elliptic reply (23). That means, that in a conversation, where there are two or more people and they are familiar with the communicated issue in the certain context, there is no need to reply with the unnecessary repeated information. This phenomenon is called anaphoric ellipsis, in which is possible to recover the missing content from the preceding utterance (Biber et al. 1999, 1099).

(23) A: Whose bag is that?

*B: **Mine.***

Eliciting response may also include greetings and farewells (24) (Biber et al. 2002, 432).

(24) *A: Goodbye, Lucy.*

*B: See you later, Robert. Thank you for the gift.*

### 3.1.7 Question tags

Question tags are constructed by an operator and pronoun subject (25). Their function in the spoken language is to find out whether the communicated message which has been uttered is understood by a hearer and whether the hearer agrees with the uttered statement (Biber et al. 2002, 251).

(25) *She's so beautiful, isn't she?*

*He's doesn't like coffee, does he?*

*They didn't win yesterdays, did they?*

As is visible in the examples, a positive statement contains negative question tag and vice versa. On the contrary, question tags can agree with the previous statement to seek a hearer's confirmation of the uttered message (26) (Biber et al. 2002, 251-252).

(26) *A: He likes your grandma, does he?*

*B: Yes.*

*A: It's my book.*

*B: It's your book, is it?*

Because of the spontaneity of the conversation, it is natural for the participants to include filled pauses, hesitations, and repetition, reformulations in the conversation. It is due to the fact that the conversation flows in the real-time and there is no time to plan the communicated message. The conversation has a looser structure and due to the economy of effort, participants use reduced forms to communicate the message more rapidly and more efficiently in order to save time and energy (Biber et al. 1999, 1048).

### 3.1.8 Dysfluency: hesitations, repetitions, reformulations

Conversation can be often perceived as dysfluent. To gain more time to reproduce a message and plan an utterance, speaker interrupts the utterance by a hesitation pause. There are filled and unfilled hesitation pauses. Filled pauses contain for example sounds (hesitations) such as

er, erm, um, and uh (27). Hesitators occur in the beginning or in the middle of the clausal unit or the non-clausal unit. Unfilled hesitation pauses do not include any sounds at all (28).

(27) That's a very interesting – **erm** very interesting idea, yes.

(28) So, - you are a student of Tomas Bata University, aren't you?

According to filled hesitation pauses, repetitions (29) also help to gain more time to plan the utterance. Repetition is often called false starts. False starts appear when the speaker repeats a piece of utterance at the beginning of the sentence which has just been said. Moreover, in speech, there often also occur reformulations (30) which are according to Biber et al. explained as retrace-and-repair sequences (1999, 1062). In this case, speaker erases the sentence which has been already said and starts again with different words.

(29) *I hope, she'll, um, she'll see what the best is for her.*

(30) *Mom, I don't think it sh-, [I think it should] be other way round.*

### 3.1.9 Incomplete utterance

Incomplete utterances may have various reasons. Speaker tends to fail to finish the grammatical unit when he wants to repair the communicated message (similarly as with reformulations) but he abandons the uttered message unrepaired and starts a whole new sentence (Biber et al. 1999, 1063) (31).

(31) *I did, I did try to – well, as I mentioned before, we just thought it isn't worth our while to kind of mess around and try to do any more.*

Other incomplete structures may arise when the speaker interrupts the utterance of the second speaker (32). In this case, is the incompleteness caused externally and not by the speaker's own fault (Biber et al. 1999, 1063).

(32) *A: It's Sunday, what about going to*

*B: It's Saturday.*



In conversation may arise a situation when the speaker's utterance is completed by a hearer who finishes the sentence (33).

(33) *A: They played, they played against um  
B: Manchester.*

*A: I was at the party yesterday and met that girl you were talking about – erm  
her name is um*

*B: Jessica?*

*A: Yes, that's right, Jessica.*

### 3.1.10 Contractions

Among other features of spoken English are contractions, they are also the effort-saving qualities which speed up the communication and save time and energy. Contractions (short forms) are the shortened auxiliaries (34) and negations (35). Generally, they appear in informally written texts but even more often in spoken language. In this case, contractions support the economy of effort.

(34) <i>I'm</i>	<i>I am</i>
<i>he's</i>	<i>he is</i>
<i>they're</i>	<i>they are</i>
<i>John's</i>	<i>possessive form</i>
<i>you'd better</i>	<i>you had better</i>
<i>she'll</i>	<i>she will</i>

(35) <i>isn't</i>	<i>is not</i>
<i>haven't</i>	<i>have not</i>
<i>don't</i>	<i>do not</i>
<i>doesn't</i>	<i>does not</i>
<i>can't</i>	<i>cannot</i>
<i>couldn't</i>	<i>could not</i>

### 3.1.11 Active voice

Clauses with active voice have the agent as the subject of the clause. Passive voice is used to order or to omit the information. As Biber et al. describe "conversation is generally much

more concerned with the experiences and actions of people. It therefore usually express the agent as subject, and rarely uses passive voice" (2002, 168). In spoken English, an active voice occurs more frequently than the passive voice because participants are in real-time conversation and they use personal pronouns which stand in the position of the agent. On the other hand, conversations may contain passive voice with *get*. Passives with *get* are more dynamic and describe the process of getting into the certain state (36).

- (36) *They got married when she was twenty.*  
*His head got stuck up there.*  
*And then she starts to get involved in local society.*

### 3.1.12 Existential there

Existential there is a function word. Although the primary use of there is the adverb of place, it has not a meaning of a place in this case. Its function is a subject than an adverbial (37). Existential there is mostly used in conversation because participants of the dialog share the physical setting.

- (37) *There used to be a house.*  
*There seem to have been a lot of work done.*

It is the grammatical construction marker which fills the position of the subject and the element being a subject in the basic version is put to post-verbal position (Huddleston 2002, 1391).

### 3.1.13 Complex sentences

The grammatical structure of the spoken language is complex because the speech is not fluent and is not expressed clearly in a syntactic way. During speaking arises very difficult and structured chain of the speech which is called clause complex (38) (Urbanová 2002, 15).

- (38) *Speaker A: but I think London is one of the few places where you have to create your own relaxation the place itself doesn't encourage you*  
*Speaker B: not at all not oh*  
*Speaker A: yes I think it's I think it's very bad for you know your general tone living in London and not only because of the hurry but because of the sheer*

*waste of time you know when I stand for ten minutes or five to cross a road I  
follow the other people I get run over or nearly*

(A corpus of English Conversation, 621 - 639)

## 4 MORPHOSYNTACTIC FEATURES OF THE WRITTEN LANGUAGE

Written language has an important social and educational prestige. Written utterance fulfills a different function than the spoken language. Its main function is the referential function. Texts have to be factual, objective and they are usually more abstract. From the stylistic point of view, the written text is more dense and compact. Compactness means the high degree of the complex condensation which is caused by the frequent occurrence of infinitives, gerunds, present participle, and past participle (39). They contribute to the text austerity, preciseness, and conciseness.

- (39) *Figures published by the OECD have appeared to show Britain lagging behind other European countries in the number of young people enrolled in full-time education, despite recent expansion.*

(Urbanová 2002, 31)

Following on what was stated about the spoken language which is context-bound, in written language, everything should be included in the text in order to provide important information about the situation, event, etc. In comparison with spoken English, written English has a clear structure. A linear modification is enhanced by punctuation marks, using the large-scale fonts at the beginning of the sentences and also by dividing into paragraphs and bigger units, and the whole layout of the text. Written English is characterized by linearity, sequencing, and coherence (40) (Urbanová 2002, 34).

- (40) *Present-day London continues to grow, though decentralisation policies and the development of "new towns" well outside the London area have tried to curb expansion within greater London itself. The building of the new road and motorway schemes and the increasing number of office blocks give parts of London a concrete jungle look known in so many cities.*

(The Automobile Association 1987, The Book of London)

In written language occur compound sentences and even more often occur complex sentences. Complex sentences describe the reciprocal relationships among time, spatial, and causal phenomena. Simple sentences are less frequent in written texts (Urbanová 2002, 34). Alongside with the well-worked sentence structure, another distinct feature of the written text is the length of the sentences. Sentences are often long, although, unlike the spoken form, in written texts there are precise boundaries, the beginning and the ending are clearly outlined by punctuation and also coordination and subordination which help to connect and divide the utterance in order to be intelligible and to simplify the orientation in the text (Urbanová 2002, 35).

#### 4.1.1 Coordination

Coordination is used for linking clauses, phrases, or words. The main three coordinators are and, but, and or. Coordination connects two equal clauses (41).

(41) *He is ill but he has to go there.*

#### 4.1.2 Subordination

Subordination is used to embed one clause as part of another clause (42).

(42) *Although he is ill, he has to go there.*

Moreover, due to the length of the sentences, the written language may vary towards the different word order. The standard word order of English is subject-verb-object ().

(43) *Daisy<sup>[S]</sup> makes<sup>[V]</sup> the best spaghetti<sup>[O]</sup>.*

Nevertheless, the English makes us able to order the elements of the clause to different positions. There are devices which makes possible to rearrange the word order, such as fronting, inversion, there-clauses, etc. They are helpful for the better understanding and fitting into the context (Biber et al. 2002, 398).

#### 4.1.3 Fronting

Fronting means that a clause element is put in the initial position (43). In standard word order, the clause element is put after the verb (Biber et al. 2002, 399).

(43) *This he does not understand.*

*Why she was upset he will probably never know.*

Fronting is used for emphasizing and contrasting the elements of the sentences. As Biber et al. suggest, those elements which can be fronted are; objects, nominals other than objects, predicatives, non-finite constructions, and some elements in dependent clauses (2002, 412). Biber et al. claims “fronting is relatively rare in all registers, although this device is used more in fiction and academic prose than conversation or news” (2002, 405).

#### 4.1.4 Inversion

According to Biber et al. “inversion is more common in the written registers because the writer of the text has more time to plan and therefore to achieve variety of word order required for inversion” (411, 2002). In English, there are two types of inversion; subject-verb inversion and subject-operator inversion. In the subject-verb inversion, the entire verb phrase precedes the subject (44).

(44) *Best of all would be to pass the exams and get a job in Zlin.*

This type of inversion appears with adverbial fronting in combination with *go, come, be* (), and optionally in direct speech ().

(45) *Down came the rain.*

(46) *“I like sunny beaches,” said John.*

In the subject-operator inversion, only the operator precedes the subject (47).

(47) *Not before in our history have so many strong influences united to produce so large a disaster.* (Biber et al. 2002, 405)

Subject-operator inversion also appears in questions (48), in fronting clausal negation (49), and in conditional clauses (50) (Machová and Charvátová 2017, 47).

(48) *Did she study abroad?*

(49) *Never have I been in such a beautiful place.*

(50) *Should you need more information, contact our department.*

Inversion helps to flow the information and cohesion, intensifications the meaning, changes the focus and puts the heavier subject at the end of the clause (end-weight principle).

#### 4.1.5 Passive voice

In spoken language, passivization is used in order to rhematize the agent (given-before-new principle) or to completely delete the agent. It is more common in written language. Passive reduces agent's importance of an action and agent changes semantic role to the experiencer. There are either short or long passives. In short passive voice the agent is deleted and they are formed by an auxiliary *be* and *en*-principle (51) (Biber et al. 2002, 166). Long passives contain a *by-phrase* (52). More frequently, passive voice is visible in the written texts. For example, in academic writing, the human actor is not so important and therefore the passive voice is used.

(51) *The burglar was arrested in San Francisco.*

(52) *The document was approved by the director of the department.*

To conclude, there are no strict boundaries between spoken and written language. They tend to be related to each another. Although there are features which are typical for the written language and features typical for the spoken language, there are also features which are hybrid and can be used in both of the types of communication.

## 4.2 Differences in the written and spoken language

As was mentioned before, there are several differences between written and spoken language, such as preservability and surveyability of the written texts which make the writer or a reader able to re-read the message and to analyse the text closely. The use of punctuation, capitalization and the clear structure is the key positives thanks which the sentences and paragraphs can be organized in such a manner to be easy to follow. On the contrary, the speech is spontaneous and rapid and this is the reason for looser constructions of the utterances, repetition, rephrasing, and vague expressions. Utterances are mostly divided by pauses into chunks (Crystal 2007, 149). In addition, because of the fact that people in written communication do not see one another, they cannot rely on the context as compared to the spoken communication (Crystal 2007, 150).

Despite all the differences which were mentioned before, these two mediums - spoken and written language – are in sort of way interconnected, they influence each other. Whenever children or adults read (obviously they read the written texts) they learn the new vocabulary at the same time (Crystal 2007, 151).

When it comes to the choice of the way to communicate a message, it depends on the situation. A person who wants to tell something to the other person who is nearby, he or she is more likely to apply spoken communication instead of writing. But on the other hand, in case there is a distance between them, they probably use written communication or telephone to communicate the message more effectively and more quickly (Crystal 2007, 152).

These days, there are other types of communication which cannot be clearly determined whether they are written or spoken language (Crystal 2007, 152). Those are the electronic media. And because of the aim of this thesis is to clarify morphosyntactic features in Facebook communication, computer-mediated communication via electronic media will be discussed in the following chapter.



## 5 COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) is a communication between people via computers or other electronic media. This type of communication is driven by the kind of the written language between two or more participants – a text written by the writer on the one side with the readers on the other side through their computer screens (Herring 1996, 1). As Amant stated, it is a “human-to-human interaction through machines” (Amant 2007, 16). At the beginnings, this type of communication was provided only for academic research institutions in the United States and elite government. Nowadays, CMC is used by the millions of people around the world and it is a part of everyday life as well as social sites itself. In these days, the internet is available almost for everybody through commercial internet providers (Herring 1996, 1).

There two kinds of CMCs – **asynchronous** and **synchronous**. **Asynchronous** CMC is a type of the message which can be read at a later point in time. On the other hand, **synchronous** CMC is read by readers immediately in a real-time after typing by the writer (Herring 1996, 1).

Another distinction can be done through the number of the audience - whether the message is supposed to be read only by one person (one-to-one communication) or by a bigger group of people (one-to-many) (Baron 2008, 14).

Among synchronous and yet one-to-one communication belongs instant messaging (IM) which includes, for example, Facebook chat. On the other hand, synchronous one-to-many communication includes MUDs (Multiple User Dungeons) which are the text-based multiplayer game in real time, chats, and Second Life (Baron 2008, 14).

On the contrary, asynchronous and yet one-to-one communication comprises for example e-mails and mobile phone texting. Furthermore, asynchronous one-to-many communication is used in newsgroups, blogs, MySpace, Facebook, or YouTube (Baron 2008, 14).

### 5.1 Computer-Mediated Communication versus spoken language

Computer-mediated communication is a type of communication by the electronic media which neither bear all the features of spoken language nor the written one.

CMC is not like speech because of several reasons. One of them is the fact, that people are not able to get the immediate reaction (Crystal 2007, 153-154). In the ordinary communication between two people, while speaker tells information to the listener, listener usually does

not stay without movements and probably comments on the communicated message, nods, or even smile. The answer can be accompanied by vocalizations, for example, *whee, uggh, uh-huh, whew, whoa, yeah*, etc. (Crystal 2007, 153). As Facebook comments analysis shows (see the practical part of the thesis), CMC also makes possible to use interjections mentioned above and users of this type communication use this to provide more precise feedback on the discussed issue.

Another feature which distinguishes CMC from the speech is that speech is happening simultaneously and unlike in electronic communication, the speaker is able to get the feedback immediately. In chatrooms or e-mail conversation, the message is not ready to be read before it is sent. Participants of the chatroom discussion cannot read the message during it is being typed. And this could be a sticking point, the sender actually does not know what effect the message he wrote made if the punchline was preserved and the meaning understood clearly (Crystal 2007, 154).

Moreover, in chatrooms, the reader is able to read and react to numerous themes being discussed there. In real time face-to-face conversation people are not capable of answering and participating in several discussions at one time (Crystal 2007, 154).

## **5.2 Computer-Mediated Communication versus written language**

As well as the computer-mediated communication does not possess all the features of the spoken language, also it does not possess all the features of the written one. In ordinary writing, the text and other properties of the written texts stay unchanged because the text written on the paper is space-bound. On the internet, the text on the certain website usually does not remain unchanged as well as the graphic design of the web page. Pages are being updated by authors due to several reasons: they may have found some mistakes in the text, there are new regulations or information, a graphic designer has changed the outlook of the website, or they have changed the sponsors and thus also the commercial visible on the web. On the other hand, although e-mail and Facebook communication are in a way space-bound, they still may be deleted or altered so that nobody noticed it (Crystal 2007, 156).

Another difference is the missing the clear structure and planning the writing itself in the CMC. Whole messages are often unplanned and the writer types words as they come to their minds. The reason is the rapid communication by which is the writer motivated in his writing. Hence, this is the cause of the poor grammar, typing errors, incorrect punctuation, inscrutable capitalization and so on (Crystal 2007, 157).

To conclude the differences between common types of communication and computer-mediated communication, here is the table comparing Facebook communication with the written and spoken language.

	<b>Written language</b>	<b>Facebook communication</b>
<b>1</b>	Space-bound	Yes, but with restrictions
<b>2</b>	Contrived	Yes
<b>3</b>	Visually decontextualized	Yes
<b>4</b>	Elaborately structured	No
<b>5</b>	Factually communicative	Yes
<b>6</b>	Repeatedly revisable	Yes, but with some restrictions
<b>7</b>	Graphically rich	No

Writing vs. Facebook communication 1

	<b>Spoken language</b>	<b>Facebook communication</b>
<b>1</b>	Time-bound	Yes, but with some restrictions
<b>2</b>	Spontaneous	Yes, but with some restrictions
<b>3</b>	Face-to-face	No
<b>4</b>	Loosely structured	Yes
<b>5</b>	Socially interactive	Yes
<b>6</b>	Immediately revisable	Yes, but with restrictions
<b>7</b>	Prosodically rich	No

Speaking vs. Facebook communication 1

Overall, although the CMC is comparable neither to spoken nor written language, it has features of both of them. CMC also shows features which spoken and written communication does not. Therefore, it should be treated as a new kind of communication because CMC is fluid and simultaneous (Crystal 2007, 158).

## 6 MORPHOSYNTACTIC FEATURES OF NETSPEAK

Slang on the internet is very rich. With the boom of the internet and the communication via computers also flowered the new vocabulary connected used there. Internet slang includes acronyms, using initialisms, neologisms, and also vulgarisms.

The electronic media provide us with the possibility to communicate with other people in the different ways which are quite distinct from the other ways of communication which are known from the typical routine situations.

As was mentioned in the previous chapter about the Computer-mediated communication, internet communication shows features of both spoken and written communication. Netspeak should be treated as a new kind of communication due to the several reasons. Netspeak is time-bound and context-bound, and participants of the communication are able to read the message right after it has been typed by the writer. It may be repeatedly revisable and also immediately revisable thanks to the possibility to edit the text. Following what was written before according to features of the spoken and written language, here are the features which are innate to the netspeak.

Firstly, netspeak is context-bound; it means that there occur substitute pro-forms, deictic words, ellipsis and non-clausal units. Secondary, the netspeak is interactive; this is the core of the whole communication on the internet. Due to this feature, the netspeak is full of negatives, and also elliptic replies. Although the internet communication takes place in real time and there is a possibility to edit the comment, there sometimes occur hesitators (erm, um) but the reason of this use is to exhibit the deliberation and doubts, not the dysfluency. But on the other hand, the speed of the communication is often a reason for grammar errors, incorrect punctuation, and capitalization etc. Also, the contractions are commonly used because the user wants to convey the message as soon as possible and contractions and reduced forms help to speed up the communication as well as in the spoken language. Moreover, in netspeak, the use of passive voice is restricted rather to passives with get. What the most frequently predominates is the use of active voice and the simple and loosely constructed sentences.

Moreover, netspeak possesses features which are characteristic only for this type of the communication. They are either not used in neither spoken nor written language or only in a minimal sense.

## 6.1 Abbreviations

One of the typical features of the internet slang is the use of acronyms. They are being made in virtue of speeding up the communication and diminishing the number of words written. Some of them spread beyond the pale of the Internet and they are used in the common situations in real life, e.g. LOL (Laughing Out Loud) (Crystal 2004, 81). According to the website [www.internetslang.com](http://www.internetslang.com) where you can find slang terms applied on websites such as Twitter, chat rooms, blogs, forums, etc., in 2018, there are 9127 acronyms. The most commonly used Internet abbreviations are in (53).

- (53)
- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| 1. LOL  | <i>Laughing Out Loud</i>               |
| 2. LMAO | <i>Laughing My Ass Off</i>             |
| 3. BRB  | <i>Be Right Back</i>                   |
| 4. ROFL | <i>Rolling On (the) Floor Laughing</i> |
| 5. WTF  | <i>What The Fuck?</i>                  |
| 6. FTW  | <i>For The Win</i>                     |
| 7. IMHO | <i>In My (Humble) Opinion</i>          |
| 8. FFS  | <i>For Fuck's Sake</i>                 |
| 9. CYA  | <i>See Ya (See You Later)</i>          |
| 10. OMG | <i>Oh My God!</i>                      |

(AjSlovicka n.d.)

As Crystal suggests, the acronyms can be long as sentences (54). Not only limited to short phrases or words (2004, 86).

- (54)
- |        |                             |
|--------|-----------------------------|
| FYI    | <i>For your information</i> |
| DAM    | <i>Don't Ask Me.</i>        |
| WAGWAN | <i>What's Going On?</i>     |
| DUNNO  | <i>Don't Know.</i>          |

(Internetslang n.d.)

## 6.2 Capitalization, exaggerated spelling and punctuation

In English, the capitalization is very widely used. For example in personal names, geographical names, holidays, days of the week, public building and institutions, nationalities, language, religions and their followers (Biber et al. 1999, 245-246). In English, the pronoun “I” should be capitalized, however, the CMC users often do not comply with this rule. The internet users often do not use the capitalization in the way they should use it. Crystal speaks about the “save a keystroke” principle (2004, 87) which is widely used in an internet communication. Since the keystroke is actually the action of pressing the button, this principle is based on the economy of pressing the keys - but on the other hand with the aim to not change the meaning of the message. Also, there are other errors in the use of capital letters which are caused by the rapidity of the writing. On the contrary, the exaggerated use of capital letters is the way to express the emotions, such as surprise, anger, delight, or to emphasize the utterance etc. As Crystal claims “messages wholly in capital are considered to be ‘shouting’” (2004, 87)

Further features are connected with the missing tone of voice in CMC. Internet users and participants of computer-mediated communication tried to replace properties of the written language in order they could “write as they talk”. English is known for its important features of paralanguage and prosody which make the same sentence sound differently thanks to the speed, pauses, intonation, stress, etc. This is other reason why internet users use capital letters (55) which is perceived as shouting, spacing (56) to be clear and also exaggerating the punctuation (57) and spelling (58). Those are the familiar features to achieve the tone of voice of spoken communication (Crystal 2007, 155).

(55) *OOOOH GOSH!*

(56) *O H M Y G O D !!!*

(57) *what???*

(58) *heeeeeeeeeeeeeeyyyyyyy!!!*

These features mentioned above may signify the excitement, amazement, or confusion. They should compensate the lack of the social expressions in electronic communication.

As well as the capitalization, incorrect use of punctuation is also very common in the communication via computers. Sentences do not contain apostrophes in positions in which they are required (59). In internet communication, contractions (short forms) are often without apostrophes. They merge verbs with pronouns and nouns or verbs with negative forms.

- (59) *I am – I'm*  
*They are – they're*  
*She will – she'll*  
*Is not – isn't*  
*Have not – haven't*  
*Will not – won't*

### 6.3 Emoticons

Some emotions cannot be precisely expressed by the features concerned above and this is the reason why they are represented by emoticons (60) or short videos today known as gifs in written communication on the internet. Dresner and Hering claim, that emoticons are not generally perceived as emotion indicators. They are signs of the illocutionary force of the textual utterances that they accompany (Dresner and Herring 2010, 255). They help the author to forward the message in the way it should be understood and to express the positive or negative attitude. In syntactical point of view, the use of emoticons may substitute the whole sentence or it may subsidize the ideas preceding the emoticon.

The most commonly used emoticons on the internet:

- (60) :- )      *happiness*  
:- (      *sadness*  
:-D      *laughter*  
:-\*      *kiss, love*  
:-P      *flirtatious, coquettish emoticon*  
;-)      *joke, sarcasm, irony*

Crystal also says that emoticons may be used inappropriately in some cases and thus this can lead to a misunderstanding instead of boosting the meaning of the message. For example, when an author put a smiling emoticon to a message which is written in an enraged state of mind, it might add fuel to the flames (Crystal 2004, 36).

#### 6.4 Inserts

In internet writing, there are visible some features of the spoken language. Due to the speed and the immediateness of the internet communication, an internet user writes spontaneously, without planning and pauses during the writing. As well as in the spoken language, some people do not think before they say something and this is also the feature which the written communication on the internet displays. Interjections and discourse markers which represent the reaction signals are one of the other features of netspeak (Crystal 2001, 40). Those are for example *mmm, oh, haha*, etc.

#### 6.5 Neologisms

New words and compounds on the Internet are usually created by a combination of two words. Crystal mentions most common words connected with the words *mouse* (61), *web* (62), *net* (63). And also using the prefixes *cyber-* (63) and *hyper-* (64) and the suffix *-bot* (65).

(61) <i>Mouseclick</i>	(63) <i>cyberspace</i>
<i>Mousepad</i>	<i>cyberculture</i>
(62) <i>Webcam</i>	(64) <i>hypertext</i>
(63) <i>Netspeak</i>	<i>hyperlink</i>
<i>Netlag</i>	(65) <i>mailbot</i>

(Crystal 2004, 82-83)

Since the social site Facebook is the source for the practical part of this thesis, it is vital to provide some information about this type of medium by means of computer-mediated communication. This type of social site will be discussed in the following chapter.

Mentioning the Facebook, there are many new terms directly connected to this social website. Although those are the words which people are familiar with, Facebook has changed



their meaning. A person not knowing this terminology and the website itself may not know the exact definition of these (66).

- (66) *Wall* a user's personal or group page where are posts being updated  
*Profile* user's personal page with identifying information  
*Friend* member who is following the other member  
*Update* text, video, hyperlink, or picture placed on the user's wall  
*Comment* reply to an update  
*Like* response via clicking the button under the post which indicates the agreement with the content

(Tannen and Trester 2013, 138)

## 7 SOCIAL WEBSITES

In this part of the bachelor thesis will be introduced the social website which is the source website for obtaining the comments for further analysis of their morphosyntactic features – Facebook. To start with, some theoretical research should be made on what does the social site really mean. Social sites have started to spread in the first half of the 90's in the USA. Those networks were largely used by students. Already in those days, pages with the profiles and groups of people have shown there for the first time. These pioneers of the social sites pave the way for the ones which we are associated today, for example, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, and of course Facebook (Kulhánková and Čápek 2010, 9). These web pages are made for people to interact with one another in an online community. Social sites have arisen alongside with the internet boom and the accessibility of the internet almost for everyone. The social interactions have spread into the new ways of forming new social relations. The perfect example is an already mentioned social site called Facebook.

### 7.1 Facebook

Generally, although there are many different social sites to choose from on the internet, Facebook is unambiguously the most used one. In 2017, Facebook had 2.2 billion monthly active users (Statista n.d.). People using this site are from all over the world of all ages. Inasmuch, with over than 100 languages, Facebook is available not only for native English speakers but also for users from anywhere in the world.

Facebook enables users to communicate through various kinds of ways. It is possible to send messages either privately through the private messaging or share them with the public in a form of the public post on The Wall.

#### 7.1.1 Messaging

Messaging is the option for the users who want to communicate privately with one another. Notwithstanding, with the provided feature of Facebook messaging – group chats - it is possible to make messaging an asynchronous way of communication – to make communicated messages available to users to read later in time so they are able to catch up with the others in the discussed theme (Crystal 2008, 11).

As was mentioned before in the thesis, since the rapidity of this type of communication allows participants of the discussion to write as quickly as the person is able to and in a way they would say it in a real face-to-face conversation, there are frequent grammatical mistakes, such as poor word order, misspelling, incorrect punctuation, etc.

### 7.1.2 The Wall

The Wall allows users to communicate with the others connected to Facebook in a different way than the Messaging provides. There are two types of the Walls on Facebook. One of them serves as the personal profiles and the other one for group profiles. Users are able to post on these Walls status updates which are then visible on the news feed in the users' network (Friginal and Hardy 2014, 204). Those updates, both personal and group posts, may include personal feelings, thoughts, emotional state, or even web pages, pictures, and videos which the user found interesting or funny. Followers in the user's network are able to comment or "like" the post (Friginal and Hardy 2014, 204).

And The Wall itself is a place on the Facebook from which the comments for the further morphosyntactic feature analysis will be obtained. Particularly, from the group profile wall named "*Student's problems*".

## **II. ANALYSIS**

## 8 METHODOLOGY

To analyse morphosyntactic features of Facebook communication, the main source of the data, in this case, comments, were accessed via Facebook page named "*Student Problems*". The aim of this thesis is to find out the morphosyntactic features of the so-called netspeak and whether this type of internet communication is similar to the either spoken language or the written one. Facebook communication via the Facebook "wall" is a kind of an asynchronous one-to-many communication. The corpus used in this thesis is based on the comments written by members of the previously mentioned Facebook page. Members are native and also non-native speakers from all around the world with the access to the internet. After the accessing, the comments were left in unchanged genuine form. The corpus consists of comments which were furtherly analysed towards the particular features mentioned in the David Crystal's book *Language and the Internet* (2001) and also based on the Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (1999).

Corpus was created with the aid of the computer programme AntConc which is the software for collecting the data from the chosen web. Since the data for analysis are taken from the Facebook page, the first thing was to find out the Facebook page ID number, then put the ID number to the AntConc and choose the desired data to be extracted. The AntConc is able to extract as many posts and comments as the users of the software want. Then I saved the data to the Microsoft Excel and to make them easier to be analysed, they were entered into the Microsoft Word. The corpus contains more than 7000 comments from which some of them are by Spaniards, Italians, Russians, etc. The most difficult part was to choose the comments suitable for the analysis. Thus the final number of comments was reduced to 83.

Due to the reason of the protection of personal data, the names of the members were deleted as well as the date and time of publishing.

## 9 MORPHOSYNTACTIC ANALYSIS OF FACEBOOK COMMUNICATION

As was mentioned before, the data for analysis are extracted from the Facebook page "*Student problems*". The particular features defined in this analysis are based on the previous theoretical research of the spoken and written language features. Since this type of communication is a hybrid form, there are only some features which can be applied here. Further, in the analysis, there are also non-morphosyntactic features which are restricted only to netspeak and they are very characteristic for this type of communication.

### 9.1 Substitute pro-forms

In the communication on the Facebook, there are many cases in which substitute pro-forms occurs. They are substitutes for the noun or verb phrases. In corpus there frequently occur substitutes for the verb phrases.

- [1.] *if it was still mandatory I would drop that class as she was presenting this. But I still won't **do it** for extra credit*
- [2.] *when Jonathan Vázquez tags you on some meme and I wanted to **do it** as well but I always see that Jonathan was first :( :( :( :D :D*
- [3.] *10/10 me this morning, but didn't **do it** intentionally*
- [4.] *maybe this is why I don't **do it** more often*
- [5.] *eh I'll **do it** tomorrow*

*(Accessed March 24, 2018)*

As in the spoken language, participants of the communication on the Facebook use substitute pro-forms because of shared context. Everybody knows what other participants are writing about because the comments are displayed below the photo, video, or status of the Facebook page.

### 9.2 Deictic words

Shared context is signified also by deictic words. People refer to the posts and write about them. Similarly to the spoken language, deictic words help to point at something. In this case, members are commenting about a picture posted on the page. Thus deictic words may be used in order to not rewrite the information which is visible in the picture or just to emphasize the meaning.

- [6.] *These look so good 🍷*
- [7.] *I will tag you in **these** for the rest of our miserable lives 😊*
- [8.] *Shreya Naraparaju stressed from this person tagging you in all **these** different memes faster than the speed of light*
- [9.] *all **these** memes 😊😊😊 can relate all of them.*
- [10.] *Meaghan Allen, you totally need one of **those**!*

(Accessed March 24, 2018)

Deictic words appear very frequently in Facebook communication. One of the reasons is that people are able to tag another member in the comments to show him/her the post so the tagged member is able to understand the meaning.

### 9.3 Ellipsis

Ellipsis is also very common in this type of communication. A person wants to save a keystroke and due to the shared context is not necessary to put the subject, operator or both into the utterance. In netspeak occurs ellipsis, in which the subject or/and operator is omitted. The omitted member of the sentence is signed by < >.

- [11.] < > *Wish they make their minds up - one minute it's a glass of wine a day is good for you now e shouldn't drink at all*
- [12.] *this < > the saddest thing I've read tonight*
- [13.] < > *love how she's like "next question" n then she runs off 😊 bro us tryna avoid next week's assignment*
- [14.] < > *me, catching my breath, trying to hide from everyone I just ran away from, seeking freedom and a life of my own... waiting for dark so I can keep running*
- [15.] < > *this you?? Cause you've done nothing but drink and get everyone to say "I'm from the whitewell" hahaha*
- [16.] *another reason to leave it last minute, bet you'd feel pretty silly if you finished the assignment hours early and you come back to find it wrote itself better 🤖 I know I would < >*

(Accessed April 24, 2018)

This is only an extract from the whole corpus, the ellipsis is frequently used.

## 9.4 Interjections

Interjections express the author's emotions. Similarly, as in the spoken language, they possess an exclamatory function (Biber et al. 1999, 1082). Their occurrence is very frequent in computer-mediated communication as it can be visible in the examples below.

- [17.] *oh but exams aren't until May, so revision can wait til May* 🙄🙄🙄
- [18.] *Ha...I come home everyday (commuter)! I don't always feel this way. I have to go on a trip away to somewhere else to get that feeling...lol*
- [19.] *Oooh where do I enrol??* 😏😏😏
- [20.] *"Oh nah its fine, we'll worry about that in tech -week"*
- [21.] *oh wow too accurate Nađa*

(Accessed April 24, 2018)

Interjections are very common features which stand for the expressing the emotions, attitudes, etc. Since the participants of the conversation cannot see each other, they use the interjections to indicate their emotional state.

## 9.5 Discourse markers

Role of the discourse markers in communication on the internet is not to signal the process of communication as in the spoken language but to demonstrate the writer's flow of thoughts. They occur in spoken and also in written English. In

- [22.] 😂😂 *it's me on the afternoons after we have a test..well...let's be honest every afternoon* 😂😂 *I need my naps*
- [23.] *Well I failed*
- [24.] *remember you told me not to start studying the day before exam? Well it's gonna be me tomorrow lmao*
- [25.] *Well if this wasn't me during tech school lollll*
- [26.] *well if this ain't me I don't know what is*

(Accessed April 24, 2018)



The extracted comments from the Facebook include mostly the discourse marker well. Discourse markers such as however, although, since, nevertheless, etc. are mostly used in written texts to help the reader to read and understand the written text.

## 9.6 Expletives

Expletives are common in this case, as was mentioned before, they can be diversified into taboo words and moderated expletives. People often use them to express a negative reaction to a certain circumstance or information. In Facebook corpus, they are quite frequent because of the informality of the communication.

- [27.] *no **shit** this will be me when I get home tonight. Uni is going to destroy me later*
- [28.] ***God** from where they got all that energy in the early morning. My dad 🤔🤔🤔. I always ask mom to rescue me from him 😊*
- [29.] ***goodness** we dont have someone like this in our office. Lol*
- [30.] *me !!! **Fuck** I forgot quiz I is tomorrow fml I thought it was due thur*
- [31.] *“**holy fuck** I’m thirsty” 🤔🤔🤔*
- [32.] ***Goshhhhh!** I'm 4'11 and everyone at my work thinks I'm in my early 20s And help me out cuz they think I'm that I'm young and short 😊😊 😊 I love being short! And love the people around me for it! 🤔*

(Accessed April 24, 2018)

In Facebook comments, taboo words occurred more often than the moderated expletives. Overall, this feature is quite similar to the informal spoken language in which taboo words often very frequently.

## 9.7 Elliptic reply

Elliptic replies appeared below the comments with the reply. As well as in spoken real-time conversation, it is common to answer the statement or utterance communicated by someone else by an elliptic reply. Participants of the communication are familiar with the discussed topic, so there is no need to include unnecessary repeated information. The context may be recovered from the previous statement.

- [33.] *A: this definitely is not the case with you 😂😂*  
*B: Sometimes 😂😂 then I just force myself to sleep*

- [34.] *A: you have the opposite problem*  
*B: Truer words have never been spoken*
- [35.] *A: me tryna be better and sleep early last night 😞*  
*B: I believe in you. You will get there 😊*

(Accessed April 13, 2018)

## 9.8 Voice

Although the users of the Internet communication mostly write their comments in the active voice, there are several cases in which there is a passive voice. The passives in analysed material occur with *get*. Passives with *get* are more dynamic and describe the process of getting into the certain state.

- [36.] *Mason Walthall all i can think of is when you and your mom watched me drink the Louisville water and I **got spooked** because it didn't have the kinda rocky taste*
- [37.] *Lachlan when u didn't finish physics assignment bc u **got pissed** 🤔🤔 fkin legend omg*
- [38.] *Yep I like my water **produced by** Guinness*
- [39.] ***baffled by** European Business*

(Accessed April 23, 2018)

## 9.9 Existential there

It is a device to talk about the occurrence of something. As Biber et al. claim "they are used to introduce new information, which is presented in an indefinite noun phrase, the notional subject" (2002, 412).

- [40.] *we are fucked **there is** no two ways about this oh my god*
- [41.] *I realized **there's** about 3 weeks left in The semester*
- [42.] ***there is** method to my madness*
- [43.] ***there's** nothing else that's gonna describe me even better*
- [44.] ***there's** hope for you*

(Accessed April 23, 2018)

The existential there is very common in spoken language. In written registers, it is very rarely used because of the lack of the physical setting. In Facebook communication, the context is shared by participants.

## 9.10 Non-standard spelling

### 9.10.1 Spelling errors

As was mentioned previously in the theoretical part of the thesis, computer-mediated communication allows participants of the discussion to write quickly. The only thing which can limit the participants' speed of communication is the user's ability to write quickly. Participants are made able to write the thoughts as quickly as they can. And this may be a reason for the spelling errors.

[45.] *This has to be one **on** the stupidest memes of the year so far*

[46.] ***exaclty** my life right now ! trying to **realx** include sleeping right 😞😞*

[47.] *me every day except I don't have time to sleep and I can only do this from midnight **til** I wake up at 5:30*

(Accessed April 23, 2018)

Although, in traditional writing, non-standard spelling is heavily penalized, in online conversation it is assumed to be clearly a feature of inaccurate writing on the computer keyboard or due to the size of the mobile phone keyboards (Crystal 2004, 88).

### 9.10.2 Exaggerated pronunciation

Exaggerated pronunciation is also a feature of the communication on the internet. As well as the capitalization which will be discussed later in the thesis, the exaggerated pronunciation conveys emotions or the feeling about the certain facts and circumstances.

[48.] *"thats not due until **thursdayyyy**" now its friday and i missed it LOL*

[49.] *April is the month when everything from the Spring semester is due! **Ahhhhh!***

[50.] *yeah true..except I'm just like **nooooooppee** when Kayla gets up 📱*

[51.] *this is **soooo** me!!! 😊😊😊😊*

[52.] *I'm a country **boiiii***

(Accessed April 23, 2018)

### 9.10.3 Contractions

Contractions (short forms) are the shortened auxiliaries () and negations (). Contractions are used in order to write more quickly. Generally, they appear in informally written texts but even more often in spoken language. In this case, contractions support the economy of effort.

- [53.] *I **didn't** care Scott the message, just saw a cute puppy that I know **you'd** appreciate seeing 😊*
- [54.] ***You're** probably posting this while you sit by the pool!  
**You've** got a lot of working to do this summer!*
- [55.] *Judging by the use of "to" and "too" in the caption... **you're** gonna need a little more than luck my friend*
- [56.] ***don't** care about the caption but look*
- [57.] *I **haven't** even touched an assignment in two weeks*

(Accessed April 22, 2018)

In Facebook corpus, contractions are very common. Sometimes they occur with incorrect punctuation which will be discussed later.

### 9.10.4 Abbreviations

As well as the contraction forms, acronyms stand for the shortening of the words to write a comment or reply more quickly.

- [58.] *or when some says "you look tired" I be like you could kept that comment to yourself  
**smh** 🙄🙄*
- [59.] *Is this you and Charlie when I'm not home and he's trying to play fighting with you?  
**lol***
- [60.] ***THIS IS SO ME LMAO***
- [61.] ***dunno** why this reminded me of u*
- [62.] ***LOOOOOOOOOOOOOOL***

(Accessed April 23, 2018)

Sometimes abbreviations occur capitalized to convey the emotions more precisely. Generally, abbreviations are one of the most typical features in the communication on the internet.

### 9.10.5 Orthographic reduction

Orthographic reduction occurs simply the medial ellipsis. Reduced forms omit the operator. *Have got to – gotta; be going to – gonna* (Biber et al. 1999, 1107).

- [63.] *literally me, sorry if you think this is just another of my shit memes but **ima** tag you anyway*
- [64.] *this magical papayas **gonna** help you pass and murder all your exams*
- [65.] *This **gonna** be us for years to come.*
- [66.] *you **gotta** chill x3*
- [67.] *brooo me w this essay for history 🙄🙄 everyday i say **ima** finish it & i still haven't done it 😊*

(Accessed April 23, 2018)

### 9.11 Capitalization

Exaggerated capitalization is also the frequent feature of the Facebook communication. It serves for the emphasizing the emotions or the particular sentence member to highlight the idea. Capitalization is also connected with the other non-standard spelling phenomena.

- [68.] **HAHAHAHAHAHAHAH THISSSSS**
- [69.] **LOL UR ESSAY THAT WAS DUE FRIDAY NIGHT**
- [70.] *we used to be like this during **ANY** break 😂😂 all u needed was 5 mins lmfao talking bout u studying 🤖*
- [71.] *literally that is Milo. I legit don't know where he gets his excitement from when it's **7 IN THE MORNING!!***

(Accessed April 24, 2018)

### 9.12 Punctuation

As was discussed before, incorrect punctuation goes hand in hand with the contractions.

- [72.] ***im** crying this is how i picture you when you **havent** even looked at your essay question until the day before*
- [73.] *why **wont** my notes write themselves 😞:( so fucking sad that i spend like 20ish hours on them never to use them again*

(Accessed April 24, 2018)

On the contrary, participants of the online communication use an exaggerated amount of exclamation marks, question marks and dots (ellipsis).

[74.] *now that you have called out my morning-ness....*

[75.] *YESSSS!!! I was in the shower and April 18th kept showing up...sure enough!!!!  
What do I do...pour a glass of vodka and forget about it...*

[76.] *AND THEY WERE ROOMATES???????*

[77.] *??? U wanna go to coachella ???*

[78.] *he did it!!!*

*(Accessed April 24, 2018)*

### 9.13 Emoticons

The use of emoticons was described in the theoretical part. In syntactical point of view, the use of emoticons may substitute the whole sentence or it may subsidize the ideas preceding the emoticon.

[79.] *Ahahah 😂😂 I'm literally procrastinating rn. I gotta do this cv this for career trackers and than the anatomy quiz Jed sent out*

[80.] *this reminds me of certain Spanish trip 🤔🤔🤔*

[81.] *it's the worst feeling 😞*

[82.] *Nastja dis kid is going places 😄😄😄*

[83.] *omgg 😄😄*

*(Accessed April 24, 2018)*

Generally speaking, emoticons are the main difference between the spoken and written language. They help to convey the message, they are usually put after the clause to complete the whole meaning of the utterance. Sometimes the emoticons take the stand-alone position instead of the text or supplement the abbreviations.

## CONCLUSION

The main aim of this bachelor thesis was to specify the morphosyntactic features of the communication on the social site called Facebook and whether this type of communication has characteristics of the written or spoken English, or it is a completely new and different type of the communication.

This communication on the internet is a kind of the quick and efficient way how to communicate a message. Nevertheless, this communication also influences the way people speak in everyday communication in society. In the theoretical part, there are differences between written and spoken English with the examples, further in the thesis; there are covered typical features of internet communication – called netspeak. Features of the netspeak also spread into spoken and written communication. And on the other hand, the netspeak bears the characteristics of both – spoken and written English in informal form. But due to the lack of speaking face-to-face, netspeak has specific characteristics above the spoken and written level in order to achieve more natural conversation on the internet, for example abbreviations, interjections (*ha ha, mmm*), exaggerated spelling and punctuation, capitalization and emoticons, which help the author to forward the more accurate message and then help the receiver to understand author's emotions, mood and attitude towards the particular topic. In addition, the theoretical part includes the study about the possibilities of the social networks, particularly of Facebook. Facebook users are able to communicate in various ways, for example by chat, messaging, posts which may contain user's mood, thoughts, and opinions, videos, pictures, or hyperlinks.

In the practical part, the theoretical knowledge is applied to the comments by Facebook users accessed on the Facebook page. This part was included in order to state characteristics of this communication and whether the computer-mediated communication carries the characteristics of spoken or written English. The communication via comments is informal and cannot be stated whether it is more writing or speaking. It has features of both spoken and written language. Another characteristic typical for the netspeak of the Facebook is the fact that it encompasses qualities specific for the communication of the internet, such as emoticons, exaggerated punctuation, misspellings, capitalization, abbreviations which help to convey the message in terms of the emotional state and attitude.

To conclude, the netspeak is a new way how to communicate. Although it is similar to the spoken and written English, it also bears the features which are visible neither in spoken nor

in written language. Nevertheless, due to the big success of the social sites which are used by people all around the world with different backgrounds, education, and nationality, it can be stated that the language of the netspeak may go through many changes.



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## APPENDICES

- [1.] *if it was still mandatory I would drop that class as she was presenting this. But I still won't **do it** for extra credit*
- [2.] *when Jonathan Vázquez tags you on some meme and I wanted to **do it** as well but I always see that Jonathan was first :( :( :D :D*
- [3.] *10/10 me this morning, but didn't **do it** intentionally*
- [4.] *maybe this is why I don't **do it** more often*
- [5.] *eh I'll **do it** tomorrow*
- [6.] ***These** look so good 🤩*
- [7.] *I will tag you in **these** for the rest of our miserable lives 😊*
- [8.] *Shreya Naraparaju stressed from this person tagging you in all **these** different memes faster than the speed of light*
- [9.] *all **these** memes 😊😊😊 can relate all of them.*
- [10.] *Meaghan Allen, you totally need one of **those**!*
- [11.] *< > Wish they make their minds up - one minute it's a glass of wine a day is good for you now e shouldn't drink at all*
- [12.] *this < > the saddest thing I've read tonight*
- [13.] *< > love how she's like "next question" n then she runs off 😊 bro us tryna avoid next week's assignment*
- [14.] *< > me, catching my breath, trying to hide from everyone I just ran away from, seeking freedom and a life of my own... waiting for dark so I can keep running*
- [15.] *< > this you?? Cause you've done nothing but drink and get everyone to say "I'm from the whitewell" hahaha*
- [16.] *another reason to leave it last minute, bet you'd feel pretty silly if you finished the assignment hours early and you come back to find it wrote itself better 🤖 I know I would < >*
- [17.] *oh but exams aren't until May, so revision can wait til May 😞😞😞*
- [18.] *Ha...I come home everyday (commuter)! I don't always feel this way. I have to go on a trip away to somewhere else to get that feeling...lol*
- [19.] ***Oooh** where do I enrol?? 😊😊😊*
- [20.] *"Oh nah its fine, we'll worry about that in tech -week"*
- [21.] *oh wow too accurate Nada*

- [22.] 😂😂 *it's me on the afternoons after we have a test..well...let's be honest every afternoon 😂😂 I need my naps*
- [23.] **Well** *I failed*
- [24.] *remember you told me not to start studying the day before exam? **Well** it's gonna be me tomorrow lmao*
- [25.] **Well** *if this wasn't me during tech school lollll*
- [26.] *well if this ain't me I don't know what is*
- [27.] *no **shit** this will be me when I get home tonight. Uni is going to destroy me later*
- [28.] **God** *from where they got all that energy in the early morning. My dad 🤔🤔🤔. I always ask mom to rescue me from him 😊*
- [29.] *goodness we dont have someone like this in our office. Lol*
- [30.] *me !!! **Fuck** I forgot quiz I is tomorrow fml I thought it was due thur*
- [31.] *"**holy fuck** I'm thirsty" 🤔🤔🤔*
- [32.] **Goshhhhh!** *I'm 4'11 and everyone at my work thinks I'm in my early 20s And help me out cuz they think I'm that I'm young and short 😊😊 😊 I love being short! And love the people around me for it! 🤞*
- [33.] *A: this definitely is not the case with you 😂😂*  
**B: Sometimes** 😂😂 *then I just force myself to sleep*
- [34.] *A: you have the opposite problem*  
**B: Truer words have never been spoken**
- [35.] *A: me tryna be better and sleep early last night 😞*  
**B: I believe in you. You will get there 😊**
- [36.] *Mason Walthall all i can think of is when you and your mom watched me drink the Louisville water and I **got spooked** because it didn't have the kinda rocky taste*
- [37.] *Lachlan when u didn't finish physics assignment bc u **got pissed** 😊😊 fkin legend omg*
- [38.] *Yep I like my water **produced by** Guinness*
- [39.] **baffled by** *European Business*
- [40.] *we are fucked **there is** no two ways about this oh my god*
- [41.] *I realized **there's** about 3 weeks left in The semester*
- [42.] **there is** *method to my madness*
- [43.] **there's** *nothing else that's gonna describe me even better*
- [44.] **there's** *hope for you*

- [45.] *This has to be one **on** the stupidest memes of the year so far*
- [46.] ***exactly** my life right now ! trying to **realx** include sleeping right 😞😞*
- [47.] *me every day except I don't have time to sleep and I can only do this from midnight  
til I wake up at 5:30*
- [48.] *thats not due until **thursdayyyy**" now its friday and i missed it LOL*
- [49.] *April is the month when everything from the Spring semester is due! **Ahhhhh!***
- [50.] *yeah true..except I'm just like **nooooooppee** when Kayla gets up 🗑️*
- [51.] *this is **soooo** me!!! 😊😊😊😊*
- [52.] *I'm a country **boiiii***
- [53.] *I **didn't** care Scott the message, just saw a cute puppy that I know **you'd** appreciate  
seeing 😊*
- [54.] ***You're** probably posting this while you sit by the pool!  
**You've** got a lot of working to do this summer!*
- [55.] *Judging by the use of "to" and "too" in the caption... **you're** gonna need a little more  
than luck my friend*
- [56.] *don't care about the caption but look*
- [57.] *I haven't even touched an assignment in two weeks*
- [58.] *or when some says "you look tired" I be like you could kept that comment to yourself  
**smh** 🙄🙄*
- [59.] *Is this you and Charlie when I'm not home and he's trying to play fighting with you?  
**lol***
- [60.] ***THIS IS SO ME LMAO***
- [61.] ***dunno** why this reminded me of u*
- [62.] ***LOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOL***
- [63.] *literally me, sorry if you think this is just another of my shit memes but ima tag you  
anyway*
- [64.] *this magical papayas gonna help you pass and murder all your exams*
- [65.] *This gonna be us for years to come.*
- [66.] *you gotta chill x3*
- [67.] *brooo me w this essay for history 😞😞 everyday i say ima finish it & i still haven't  
done it 😞*
- [68.] ***HAHAHAHAHAHAHAH THISSSSS***
- [69.] ***LOL UR ESSAY THAT WAS DUE FRIDAY NIGHT***

- [70.] *we used to be like this during ANY break 😂😂 all u needed was 5 mins lmfao talking bout u studying 🤖*
- [71.] *literally that is Milo. I legit don't know where he gets his excitement from when it's 7 IN THE MORNING!!*
- [72.] *im crying this is how i picture you when you **havent** even looked at your essay question until the day before*
- [73.] *why **wont** my notes write themselves 😞:( so fucking sad that i spend like 20ish hours on them never to use them again*
- [74.] *now that you have called out my morning-ness....*
- [75.] *YESSSS!!! I was in the shower and April 18th kept showing up...sure enough!!! What do I do...pour a glass of vodka and forget about it...*
- [76.] *AND THEY WERE ROOMATES???????*
- [77.] *??? U wanna go to coachella ???*
- [78.] *he did it!!!*
- [79.] *Ahahah 😂😂 I'm literally procrastinating rn. I gotta do this cv this for career trackers and than the anatomy quiz Jed sent out*
- [80.] *this reminds me of certain Spanish trip 🤔🤔🤔*
- [81.] *it's the worst feeling 😞*
- [82.] *Nastja dis kid is going places 😊😊😊*
- [83.] *omgg 😊😊*