Zhang Tong
St. Petersburg University
St. Petersburg, Russian Federation
Acezhangtong@mail.ru

On semantic cohesion in Internet memes

Abstract

This paper considers Internet memes as a universal linguistic phenomenon. The aim is to perform (i) a brief overview of an Internet meme as an object of linguistic study, (ii) a thorough examination of the interaction between its structural components. Literature analysis enabled to define Internet meme as a creative genre of polycode text that oftentimes includes humor and is capable of overwhelming the Internet like a highly contagious virus that evolves by replication, imitation, mutation and selection. The analysis of verbal and nonverbal components correlation patterns within Internet memes suggested in the previous studies revealed a possibility for a novel perspective to view the interaction of their components, particularly, a semantic fusion of text and picture as a distinctive feature of meme. As a result, four types of semantic fusion of Internet memes were identified based on causality types: mutual, direct, reverse and zero.