

Language Play with an Agenda: Norm-Negotiating Linguistic Practices in the Internet

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Ludic linguistic behaviour is (also) a form of metalanguage. When playing with the language we reflect upon language, more or less consciously, more or less explicitly. In this sense, ludic language can engage in linguistic norm negotiations, without explicitly saying so. Such implicit forms of linguistic reflexivity can also be accompanied by explicit metalinguistic statements. Generally, language play is about norm deviation, and explicit metalinguistic comments can reveal more about the ways in which the ludic language deviates from the norm, for example, whether it corrects it, ridicules it, satirizes it by hyperbolization, or similar.

The broader context for this talk is the assessment of ludic linguistic practices on the internet from the perspective of norm negotiations. In this particular paper, I wish to zoom in on the question of how the internet as a social venue for ludic language changes both the ways this language operates and the ways we, the researchers, can study it.

My example is one particular kind of language play in contemporary Russia, the *diuponizm*. The Duponist practice is interesting for many reasons, but in this context because it started as a local initiative among a group of artists in Ekaterinburg and has made the transition online via a relatively static homepage, a couple of Livejournal diaries to the social venue of a group in *vkontakte.ru*, the Russian equivalent of Facebook.

I will first briefly describe the Duponist practice as such, by showing examples and citing from the accompanying texts about Duponisms, and then look at the various “stages” that the metalinguistic discourse around the Duponisms has gone through in its transition from a mainly off-line to a mainly online enterprise.