Language individuality in the age of digital technology

La individualidad lingüística en la era de la tecnología digital

Larysa Kravets
Ferenc Rakoczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education
Berehove
Email:

Nataliia Venzhynovych
Uzhhorod National University
Uzhhorod

Ivan Shynkar
Open International University of Human Development "Ukraine"
Kyiv

Mariia Medved

Uzhhorod National University
Uzhhorod

Hanna Snozyk
Uzhhorod National University
Uzhhorod

Abstract

The article offers a detailed analysis of how the digital age has changed the linguistic personality, mainly altering the conditions, strategies, and tools of communication in modern society. Its importance comes from the rapid and widespread adoption of digital technology in almost every aspect of human activity, along with the growing influence of online communication on language use and identity formation. The main goal is to identify the consistent features of the virtual linguistic personality by comparing it with the offline, real-world linguistic personality. To do this, the article uses both theoretical and empirical research in linguistics, examines how methods for studying language and personality have developed, and compares real and virtual linguistic identities. Special focus is placed on the language resources used for self-expression in digital spaces and how individuals present themselves on social media. The findings show that the virtual linguistic personality is highly adaptable, creative, and expressive, developing new communication skills specific to online interactions. At the same time, the real-world linguistic personality also adjusts to the digital environment, forming new models of behavior and interaction. Ultimately, digital communication helps shape a new cultural type that influences and spreads innovative cultural practices.

Keywords: linguistic personality, virtual linguistic personality, language norm, modern literary language, online communication.

Resumen

El artículo presenta un examen exhaustivo de las transformaciones de la personalidad lingüística bajo la influencia de las tecnologías digitales, que han alterado radicalmente

las condiciones, estrategias y medios de comunicación en la sociedad contemporánea. La relevancia de este estudio surge de la rápida y ubicua penetración de la digitalización en casi todos los ámbitos de la actividad humana, junto con la creciente influencia de la comunicación en línea en el comportamiento lingüístico y la formación de la identidad. El objetivo principal es identificar los rasgos invariantes de la personalidad lingüística virtual mediante su comparación con la personalidad lingüística real, fuera de línea. Para lograrlo, el artículo recurre a investigaciones teóricas y empíricas en lingüística, analiza la evolución de los enfoques en el estudio del lenguaje y la personalidad, y realiza una exploración comparativa entre identidades lingüísticas reales y virtuales. Se presta especial atención a los recursos lingüísticos empleados para la autoexpresión en entornos digitales y a los mecanismos de autopresentación en las redes sociales. Los hallazgos demuestran que la personalidad lingüística virtual es altamente dinámica, flexible y creativa, y adquiere nuevas competencias comunicativas propias del espacio en línea. Al mismo tiempo, la personalidad lingüística real se adapta al cronotopo virtual, dando lugar a nuevos modelos de comportamiento e interacción. En última instancia, la comunicación digital fomenta un nuevo tipo cultural que tanto configura como difunde prácticas culturales innovadoras.

Palabras clave: personalidad lingüística, personalidad lingüística virtual, norma lingüística, lengua literaria moderna, comunicación en línea.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rise and expansion of digital technologies have significantly transformed how people connect and communicate. In the digital realm, individuals now have extraordinary opportunities for self-expression, mainly through language, which plays a crucial role in online interactions. Many digital platforms, ranging from social media to niche forums, have become unique spaces for showcasing individuality, where words, phrases, texts, and visual elements serve as tools for self-presentation and signaling social status, group identity, ethnicity, or even as ways to manipulate or craft alternative personas. The anonymity often present online allows people to experiment with different linguistic styles and behaviors, revealing personality traits that might stay hidden in traditional settings. As O. I. Horoshko states, "The Internet space itself has become the embodiment of living human thinking expressed in the form of text, which simultaneously synthesizes graphics, sound, and animation. The Internet, as a new communicative space, makes native speakers think more often about the linguistic means they use. The Internet stimulates human speech creativity. Language becomes a tool for creative self-expression for those who communicate in it" (Horoshko, 2009).

These changes in communication emphasize the need for a comprehensive study of human linguistic expression in the digital environment, especially how individuals construct their own linguistic identity, the dynamics of linguistic behavior, and how technological innovations affect language practices. They also encourage a reevaluation of the concept of "linguistic personality" (Boyd & Pennebaker, 2017). Understanding the role of digital space in shaping and presenting personality linguistically, the influence of new technologies on linguistic activity, and methods of linguistic self-presentation online makes this research valuable. The goal of this study is to identify consistent features of a virtual linguistic personality by comparing it with a real-world linguistic personality.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The way personality is expressed through language has been extensively studied in linguistics, particularly within the anthropocentric paradigm that centers on humans as carriers and creators of the mind's view of the world. This research is based on W. von Humboldt's ideas, where language is described as "energy" — the activity of the spirit that shapes a native speaker's worldview. Humboldt noted that language isn't just a tool for communication but also a means of shaping thought and personal perspective. His ideas were expanded by L. Weisgerber, who highlighted the influence of language on shaping both individual and collective worldviews. E. Cassirer also recognized the vital role of language in constructing reality and consciousness, viewing it as one of the symbolic forms of culture. The connection between language and personality has been examined by G. Steinthal, W. Wundt, E. Sapir, B. Whorf, J. Searle, J. Austin, and others.

In Ukrainian linguistics, the study of the relationship between language and personality has been multidimensional, but it often concentrates on the concept of "linguistic personality," integrating ideas from linguistic, cultural, and national identity research. Throughout this research, three main approaches have distinctly emerged: psycholinguistic, idiostylistic—based on studies of fiction language—and linguodidactic, aimed at shaping a student's linguistic personality (Struhanets, 2012: 128). Each approach has its own goals and objectives, but all are rooted in A. A. Potebny's doctrine, which consistently connects language phenomena to the psychological traits of the speaker.

I. Ogienko's work greatly influenced the understanding of the linguistic personality in Ukrainian linguistics (Ohienko, 1991). The scholar's ideas about language as a living system that impacts national spirit and identity are also important for many current Ukrainian studies.

Important for establishing the concept of linguistic personality in Ukrainian linguistics are Ivan Franko's views on linguistic activity, which the scholar connects to personality and the "secret work of his spirit." The scholar's ideas influenced the development of the idiostylistic trend in studying linguistic personality. According to L. Struhanets: "Creating the concept of further development of the Ukrainian language, developing the theory of linguistic behavior and linguistic life of a creative personality and the people, the scientist understood the linguistic activity of prominent writers in terms of their significance and role in these important processes" (Struhanets, 2012: 129). In recent decades, in addition to the aforementioned psycholinguistic, idiostylistic, and linguodidactic approaches to studying linguistic personality, sociolinguistic, linguocognitive, and linguocultural approaches have also emerged in Ukrainian linguistics.

Different perspectives on the study of linguistic personality highlight various interpretations of the phenomenon. For example, F.S. Batsevych emphasizes the communicative and pragmatic qualities of the speaker and supports the idea that "a linguistic personality is an individual who has a set of abilities and characteristics that determine the creation and perception of texts that differ in their level of structural and linguistic complexity and the depth and accuracy of reflecting reality" (Batsevych, 2004: 188). In L. I. Matsko's linguodidactic approach, the linguistic personality is viewed as a collective image: "a generalized image of a carrier of language consciousness, national language worldview, language knowledge, skills, language abilities and talents, language

culture and taste, language traditions and trends" (Matsko, 2009: 27). According to the researcher, the main components of a linguistic personality are:**
- linguistic and communicative social demands, motivational needs, and advanced competencies;
- profound language knowledge and mobility of its use;
- linguistic consciousness and self-awareness of a linguistic Ukrainian personality;
- national cultural relevance of a linguistic personality, knowledge of concepts and language signs of national culture;
- linguistic ability and language ability; linguistic flair, linguistic taste;
- conscious aesthetic linguistic behavior, linguistic stability (Matsko, 2009: 63-65].

Representatives from various fields highlight the communicative and pragmatic aspects of a linguistic personality, including creativity in language use and different competencies (linguistic, speech, communicative, socio-cultural) (Batsevych 2004; Yermolenko, 2007; Zahnitko 2012; Matsko, 2009; Selivanova, 2008; Struhanets, 2012). S.Y. Yermolenko points out that the concept of linguistic personality mainly relates to "language as an active intellectual trait of a person, language as a storehouse of knowledge, the most vital tool for mental and sensory mastery of the world by an individual" (Yermolenko, 2007: 318).

Ukrainian researchers agree that the language tools a person uses reflect their personality, perception, and ways of interpreting the world. These tools reveal their cultural and educational backgrounds, showing that a person's unique language patterns, developed through communication, express their personal traits. Many studies indicate that the development of a linguistic personality is influenced by socio-cultural factors (such as language, traditions, morals, values, religion, education, science, art, and ways of thinking and acting that shape a community's cultural landscape) and political factors (including government types, political institutions, culture, ideologies, political processes, and the state's influence on society) (Batsevych, 2004; Zahnitko, 2012; Yermolenko, 2007; Matsko, 2009; Struhanets, 2012). According to the Dictionary of Linguistic Terms edited by S. Yermolenko, a linguistic personality is described as "a combination of linguistic competence, the desire for creative expression, and the automatic, conscious use of various linguistic activities in the speaker. A linguistic personality is aware of their language practice and bears the influence of socio-social and regional backgrounds, along with educational traditions rooted in national culture. The creative approach and level of linguistic skill motivate the linguistic personality to continually reflect cultural worldviews—social, national, and cultural sources—and seek individual, stylistic ways of linguistic expression" (Yermolenko, 2001: 93). Therefore, a linguistic personality is a complex, multi-level concept that includes (a) linguistic competence, (b) the desire for creative self-expression, and (c) the free practice of diverse speech activities (Yermolenko, 2001: 95; Zahnitko, 2012: 345).

Research on virtual linguistic personality (web personality, communicative virtual identity) that has developed in Ukrainian linguistics over the past decade mainly relies on a general understanding of the concept of "linguistic personality" (Velyka, 2016; Nikiforova, 2018). It has been found that virtual linguistic personality is a new type of linguistic personality formed through language, strategies, and tactics of online linguistic behavior. It has been established that a linguistic personality in the digital space (a) can

create their own self using only linguistic means and build an image of the interlocutor based on their language; (b) maintains equality in communication regardless of age and social differences; (c) can influence the situation in virtual space; (d) shows diversity by appearing under different nicknames; (e) faces fewer restrictions on self-expression, limited to the rules of a group, forum, or chat (Tishchenko, 2011: 36-37).

The virtual linguistic personality differs from the real-world one, so its study should also be separate. The real-world linguistic personality adapts to the digital space by forming unique connections and interactions with the virtual environment, creating its own information field and new image. The digital space fosters the development of a new type of person who nurtures and promotes a new culture and invents new cultural practices. Studying the linguistic personality in the digital space helps us understand who a person is on the Internet, how they use and adapt language tools based on their communication needs, values, and social and cultural experiences.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The unique nature of human activity in the digital space requires updating traditional research methods. There is a need to establish classification criteria for defining and characterizing units of analysis, principles for organizing experimental selection, and ethical considerations in research (Horoshko, 2009; Herring, 2004a). The features of digital space call for the development of new (hybrid and multimodal) research methods that combine multiple levels of data analysis (Bergman, 2007; Herring, 2004b; Morgan, 2007). To meet research goals, the authors used Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA), which allowed them to observe how personality is expressed through language across various online communication genres, such as social networks and forums. This method was used to analyze the structure and content of texts, as well as the language units within them, and to identify strategies and tactics in digital language communication. Although CMDA has analytical strengths, it also has limitations—as noted by Herring (Herring 2004b)—so it was appropriate to supplement it with other methods, particularly ethnographic observation.

The methodological foundation of our study is based on a comprehensive and systematic combination of both general scientific and specialized (linguistic) methods. The general scientific methods used include analysis, synthesis, information retrieval, descriptive approach, induction and deduction, and the method of continuous selection. The analysis method was applied to establish the theoretical basis of the study and to process the collected data; synthesis was used to define key concepts such as "linguistic personality" and "virtual linguistic personality"; information retrieval supported processing materials necessary for further analysis of linguistic personality in digital space; descriptive methods characterized the recorded linguistic phenomena, explained their meanings, features of functioning, and mechanisms of formation; etc. In the context of Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA), the authors employed (1) variable contextual analysis to examine how changes in context influence the meaning of words and their grammatical compatibility, and (2) interpretive analysis to clarify the meanings of linguistic units. Additionally, the study utilized several linguistic methods: conceptual-linguistic to identify established and new language units, lexical and thematic modeling to classify thematic groups of recorded language units, and functional-semantic to analyze the semantics and functions of these units (Dictionary of Modern Linguistics,

2012). The research material consisted of Facebook posts by influencers, mainly Ukrainian public figures and writers, including posts in groups and comments.

4. RESULTS

The study of linguistic personality in the digital age focuses on identifying features that differentiate a person's personality in the physical world from that in the digital environment. Personality is seen as an integrated system of socially meaningful psychological traits that shape an individual's identity and consistent attitude toward the world, themselves, and others, as reflected in social relationships, communication, and personal activities. The Encyclopedia of Modern Ukraine offers this definition: "A personality is an individual as a member of society, formed through socialization, capable of regulating life, performing social roles, and developing their own strategies for achieving goals in life" (Otreshko, 2022). The term "personality" refers to the social essence of a person, molded by biological, psychological, and socio-cultural factors throughout their life. Components of personality include intelligence, responsibility (the ability to manage one's behavior, analyze one's actions, and accept accountability), freedom, and personal dignity. A personality is also characterized by specific physical traits, temperament, character, abilities, needs, motivations (such as values and interests), and emotionality. The unique combination of these traits defines a personality and makes each individual unique.

Based on the analysis of scientific sources, the concept of the linguistic personality was defined. The study used the following definition: A linguistic personality is "a speaker, a type of communicator, a specific individual who knows the language thoroughly, consciously and creatively uses it, perceives language within the context of national mentality and culture as their spiritual core, employs language as an essential element of self-creation, self-knowledge, self-affirmation, and self-expression, as well as development and enhancement of their own intellectual, mental, emotional, role, expressive, and sensory abilities, and as the most vital means of socialization within human society" (Zahnitko, 2012: 345). Therefore, in Ukrainian linguistics, a linguistic personality is understood as a bearer of linguistic consciousness and a national linguistic worldview, possessing a set of skills and qualities that not only determine their ability to create and interpret oral and written texts but also define individuality in speech, ways of expressing thoughts, feelings, judgments, and worldview within the context of national mentality. A linguistic personality is expressed through communication, which mirrors society's shared knowledge and personal linguistic preferences. It exists within a specific time and language space filled with ideas, concepts, and stereotypes. In speech, a linguistic personality embodies both objective, societal knowledge and subjective insights that distinguish their individuality against the backdrop of contemporary language trends, fashions, and also exhibit particular linguistic behaviors. Essentially, a linguistic personality is a person viewed through the lens of language, revealing itself not only in what they say but also in how they say it (Figure 1).
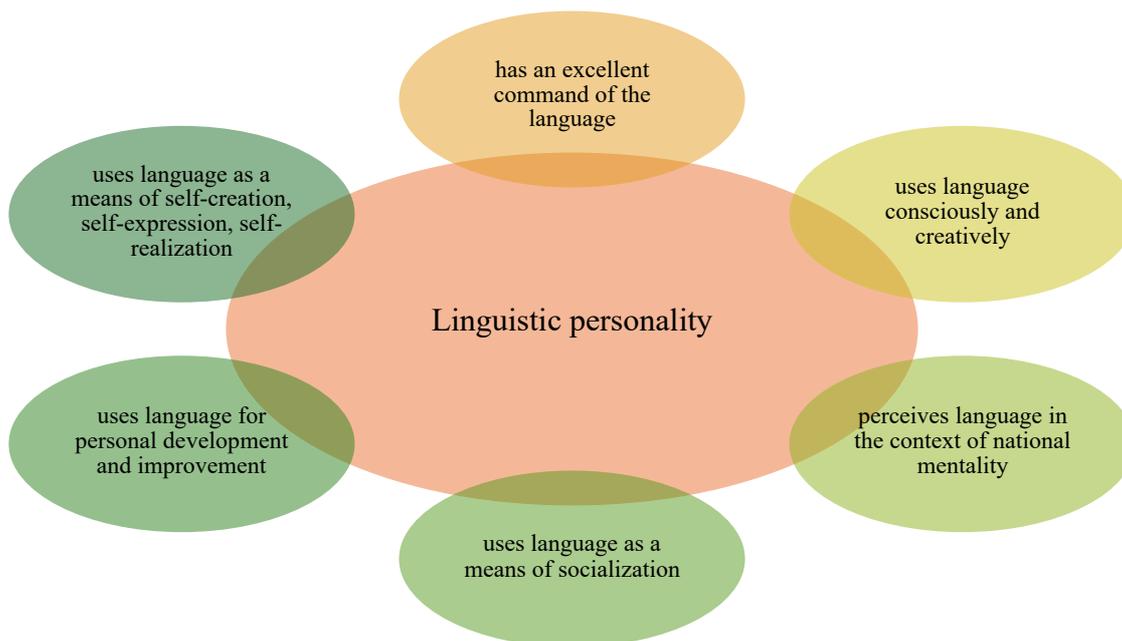
Figure 1. Characteristic features of a linguistic personality
Source: author's own development

The process of creating and developing a linguistic personality is steady and directly linked to the growth of a person's intellectual skills. "The formation of a linguistic personality is a constant and continuous (not fragmentary), synesthetic and synergistic process dominated by cognitive-intellectual and creative-activity factors," emphasizes Matsko (Matsko, 2009). The researcher points out several levels of linguistic personality development.

- level of linguistic correctness;
- level of expressiveness and communicative sufficiency;
- level of language saturation;
- level of communicative perfection;
- level of proficiency in a professional target language;
- level of linguistic image of social roles (Matsko, 2009: 63- 65).

Each of them reflects the degree of language acquisition and the degree of intellectual and spiritual growth of a person (Figure 2).
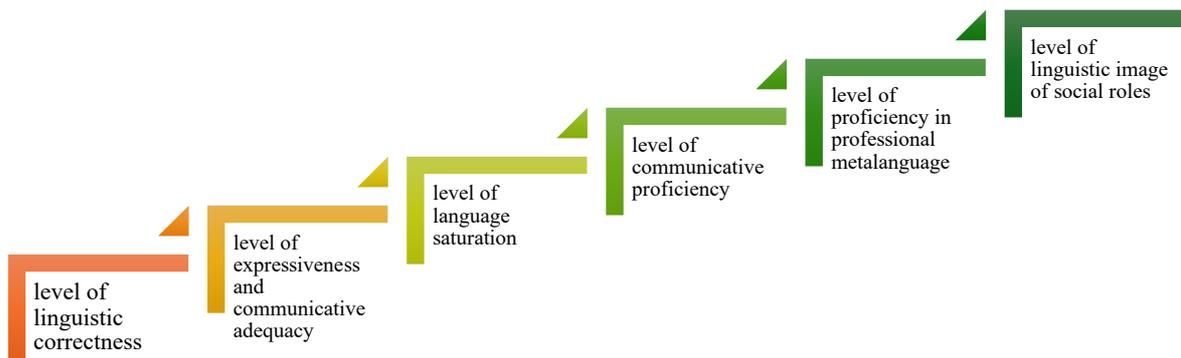

Figure 2. Levels of linguistic personality development
Source: author's own development

A linguistic personality is not an innate trait; it develops over a person's lifetime influenced by factors such as social environment (family, friends, colleagues), education (school, college, university, courses), professional activity, cultural experiences, and personal traits. The level of linguistic and communicative competence forms the basis for classifying types of linguistic personalities, specifically strong, medium, and weak ones. Based on proficiency in the literary language and speech creativity, there are elite, middle literary, literary colloquial, and family colloquial types of linguistic personality (Kosmeda, 2012: 43).

The digital age has significantly changed communication, leading to new language habits and a new kind of linguistic identity—the virtual one. To identify a user and grant access to specific online resources, services, or programs, an account must be created as a digital identifier of a person. In the digital space, individuals develop a digital identity, which is a version of their social identity. Authors see digital identity as a collection of information about a real person, including personal data (name, date of birth, email address, mobile phone number, logins, passwords, etc.) and digital traces left when engaging with websites, social networks, and online services. Digital identity allows for authentication, resource access, and transactions, ultimately shaping a person's reputation in the digital world.

The authors see virtual linguistic identity as the linguistic part of a person's digital identity. It comes from a person's (user's) online activities and reflects their true linguistic personality, though not exactly the same. The best platforms for verbal expression are online spaces where users can share opinions and interact, such as social networks, chats, forums, and messaging apps. A virtual linguistic identity is a specific, often changed version of a real linguistic identity that exists and works within the digital space. While the idea of "linguistic personality" is usually studied through printed texts and linked to writers, journalists, public figures, and scientists, the concept of "virtual linguistic personality" is broader. It includes all active social media users—bloggers, influencers, moderators, and group admins—who create virtual images using written or spoken language combined with visual elements like emojis and memes. With these tools, Internet users have more chances for self-expression than they do in the real world.

A virtual linguistic personality is an abstract concept used to study how people communicate online. It includes various roles such as a moderator, expert, troll (Nikiforova, 2018), social network profile creator, or commenters and followers, which can include both trolls and helpful commenters or online friends. The authors do not consider chatbots, virtual assistants, or artificial intelligence as virtual language personalities.

In the digital space, a virtual language personality can perform several functions, including

- communicative (exchange of information, ideas, emotions with other participants in the digital space);
- self-presentational (image formation, demonstration of one's own position, views, tastes)
- creative (creating interesting posts, artistic texts, new communication formats, etc;)
- manipulative (influence on thoughts, emotions, and behavior of other users through language and other means).

A virtual linguistic personality is characterized by a set of linguistic, stylistic, and communicative traits mainly demonstrated through posts on personal social media accounts, chats, forums, and similar platforms. These traits can be identified in vocabulary, word formation, syntax, stylistic details of language units, post structure, use of etiquette phrases, and more. It is important to understand that each virtual linguistic personality, like a real one, is unique, as shown in the texts they create.

Vocabulary is the most noticeable feature of a virtual linguistic personality. The words a user chooses in online communication not only convey specific information but also define the speaker, signal belonging to a particular community, and reveal their emotions and attitudes toward other participants and the topics being discussed.

The most common groups of words, aside from frequently used ones, found on Ukrainian social media pages include slang, colloquial and dialectal vocabulary, neologisms, and lexical borrowings. The frequency with which certain linguistic units are used influences how they shape a particular image online. At the same time, their widespread use in written computer-mediated communication reflects a liberalization of language norms on the Internet.

Slang, neologisms, and lexical borrowings—though different types of words—are connected by similar functions they serve in Internet users' posts. Using these words sometimes helps the speaker to identify as "one of the people" within a certain group, show membership in a subculture, or demonstrate awareness of current trends. In other cases, especially in influencer language, this vocabulary aims to create a distinctive image, provoke shock, or express humor, irony, or sarcasm. It also helps to establish a casual, informal tone in communication to stay connected with readers and attract a broader audience: "*Svitlyna – tse ukrainske slovo! Nam potribni nashi, ukrainski slova! Yaki peredaiut nash, ukrainskyi vaib! I yaki ye nashym komiuniti!!!" - Tsytata, yakshcho shcho*" (Andriy Kokotuha), "*Tak i ya chekaiu na ekranizatsiiu. Try roky chekaiu. Ale nicho. V nas komedii znimaiut shvydko, yak pronos. Use inshe yde dovshe. Tomu chekaiu razom iz vamy. Ya pyshu tretiu, vy zamovliaite pershi dvi*" (Andriy Kokotuha), "*Vyiavliaietsia, liudy shchyro viriat, shcho orhanizatory can skasuvaty pysmennykovi*

vystup bez yoho zghody (ot tsikavo, yak vy sobi tse v <u>reali uiavliaiete?</u>), i shcho, raz vydavnytstvo pominialo zaholovok – znachyt, <u>vso, raskhodimsia</u>...” (Oksana Zabuzhko), *“Malenkyi <u>laifkhak</u>, vin zhe sposterezhennia: In this case, there are no politicians or personalities, and there are no Ukrainians, but historians: “yim yedynym osvita zabezpechuie zdatnist na perelomakh epokh zberihaty yasne bachennia proportsii i perspektyvy (“znaty vidpovid v kintsi zadachnyka”) – i ne poikhaty pry tomu mizkamy”* (Oksana Zabuzhko).

Dialect vocabulary is unrestricted on social networks, forums, chats, and messengers (Table 1). It is increasingly used for self-presentation and self-identification. In the Ukrainian segment of social media, there are groups that promote using such vocabulary or even communicating in the local language, but most users record it in comments on various social media pages as part of everyday communication: *Anu.... Ko znaie, shto yse za hryb? Fainoho ranishnoho kavilia Vam! Anu... a shto yse tsvite?* (Facebook group “Transcarpathian figs and more. Jokes in all languages of the world”).

Colloquial and vernacular vocabulary on social media functions differently. Mostly, it is used spontaneously, without strict stylistic rules, reflecting spoken language and social status. However, it is also used deliberately to create a sense of informality and ease of communication, build a social image, or express emotions: *Do rechi, vidkryla shche odyn laifkhak (...): “koly nadovho “zavysaiesh” u vannii pid zvukovu symfoniiu “vzhzhzhzhzhzh – BAKh!! BAKh!! BAKh!! – tra-ta-ta-ta” (ostannie – tse v nas kanonada za Dniprom, koly “ba-bakhom” sviatyi PPO ne vtsiliaie), – to duzhe pomichnym chtyvom sluzhat vorozhi pabliky* (Oksana Zabuzhko).

Table 1. Lexical items and their functions

Groups of vocabulary	Examples	Functions
Slangisms	*zashkvar, krinzh, chilyty, roflyty, palyty, zavysaty, bombyty, morozytys, niashnyi, toksyk, myrniak, pidhoraie*	expression of belonging to a certain youth subculture, demonstration of informal communication, humorous effect
Neologisms	*zadonatyty* (make a donation), *zaskrinyty* (take a screenshot), *rozblochyty* (unlock), *khaipolovy-zaholovkoroby*	demonstration of relevance, technical awareness; readiness for linguistic creativity
lexical borrowings	*content, stream, like, repost, trend, lifehack, quadrobists, skvot, performance, consulting, spoiler, hater*	self-presentation as an educated, modern, “trendy” person who is oriented in the international digital space

dialectisms	*niano* (dad), *faino* (good, beautiful), *chichka* (flower), *kulchyky* (earrings), *kuhut* (rooster), *kavil* (coffee), *fihliuvaty* (to joke),	demonstrate that you belong to a certain region, create an authentic image in the virtual space; stylization tool
colloquial vocabulary	*bakhkaty, posudomyika, pralka, esemeska, symka, smailyk, fleshka, chtyvo, sho, vytrishchatysia, zhest,*	reproduction of the spoken element; manifestation of social status; informality and ease of communication; expressive expression of evaluation, emotions (lalohesion), etc.

Source: author's own development

The expression of a virtual linguistic personality at the morphological level is less obvious than at the lexical level, but it is equally important. When social network users employ morphological means, common patterns emerge, such as self-presentation, emotional expression, and facilitation of communication. Self-presentation often involves frequent use of the personal pronoun *"I"* and first-person singular verbs. Demonstrating emotionality and creating an impression of ease at the morphological level are often linked to using emotionally charged adjectives (like *pekelnyi, zháhlivyi, chudovyi, krutyi, nudnyi,* etc.), service parts of speech in an expressive role, interjections (oho! uf! okh!, etc.), and more: *A ot vid choho ya rozchulylas do sliz (Kailin iz poperednoho dopysu, nahadaiu, - vid rannikh dvirnykiv. shcho prybyraiut vulytsi po pekelnii nochi, i vidchynenykh o piv na shostu kaviaren: dlia tykh, khto spav u metro), – o tak tse vid rozpovidi moho vydavtsia (...), shcho po obidi pryikhaly do nykh iz knyharni – zabyraty zi skladu zamovleni knyzhky!*

Bo viina viinoiu, a knyzhka maie buty zavzhdy. (Navit u holod, yak to buv zafiksuvav Leonid Kyselov u virshi "Tato opovidaiut").

Os vse tse, razom uziate, – vid dvirnykiv do knyhariv – i zvetsia – kulturna natsiia. Oboviazkovo – vse razom, ne pereplutaite (Oksana Zabuzhko).

Another characteristic of a virtual linguistic personality is the use of various abbreviations: *diak* (thank you), *norm* (normal), *sps* (thank you), bdlska (please), *komp* (computer), etc.: *Khto bude na premieri – rozkazhit tut pro vrazhennia, bdlska, harazd*? (Oksana Zabuzhko). The presence of these abbreviations in posts indicates that their author belongs to a community that understands these "codes" and also shows the person's creativity and efficiency with language resources.

In the structure of posts and comments, authors can also identify the unique features of a virtual linguistic personality that reflect the intensification of written communication, emotional expression, and informality. These features go beyond the norms of literary language, but the authors do not see them as errors; instead, they view them as deliberate strategies that help them communicate effectively in digital spaces.

The specificity of a virtual linguistic personality is demonstrated through syntax, which mainly consists of simple structures typical of spoken language. Posts and especially comments often feature simple sentences, including common, straightforward one- or two-part sentences. For example, a post with a photo: "*Chorne zoloto*" *Karpat. Odyn den iz zhyttia zbyrachiv yafyn...*; from the comments: *Vazhka pratsia*; *Velykyi biznes po Zakarpatsky* (Made in Uzhhorod); a post with a photo: *Vidbudemo-Perebudemo-Zdobudemo-Budemo-Prebudemo-Ne zabudemo*; from the comments: *Liuto pliusuiu; Odnak zminytysia vazhlyvo...; Vse tilky z Bozhoiu dopomohoiu; Zdobudemo ta Budemo!!!!* (Myroslav Dochynets). Meanwhile, it is important to note that simplifying syntax is more common in written digital conversations (comments, chats, forums, messages) than in personal profile language. Posts on influencers' personal pages show a variety of constructions, mainly aligning with modern Ukrainian literary standards: *Zhyttia - tse hra. Sutsilna i neskinchenna. Z liudmy, z ideiamy, zi slovamy, z pochuttiamy, z hroshyma, zi zbroieiu, z doleiu... When I naively thought that each game had its own rules, I was mistaken. But this is not the case. Sharp players across all areas of "gamming" set the rules so they don't have to follow them. They play... until they win, lose, quit, or get exhausted...* (Myroslav Dochynets).

Another characteristic of syntax in posts and comments is the violation or absence of punctuation rules. Punctuation is often ignored in quick, informal communication, and sometimes it is used intentionally to create a specific effect. Most often, authors omit punctuation marks in comments on posts: *Vy klasna Oksana iz zadovolenniam vas chytaiu ta slukhaiu; Rezultat kokhannia yakym 229 rokiv nasolodzhuietsia liudstvo zavorozhuie* (From the comments under the post by Oksana Zabuzhko). Authors also frequently use excessive punctuation or employ it in unconventional ways. For example, exclamation marks (!!!) are used to express emotions; question marks (???) to emphasize confusion, doubt, or surprise; many dots (...) convey understatement, pauses, or irony: *Tse, shchos nOvE...vid brativ Kapranovykh...*; *Ale zh DYTYNA. Malia!!!!! Tse dykist. I hanba* (From the comments under the post by Braty Kapranovy). Parentheses are used to express either positive (closing parenthesis) or negative (opening parenthesis) emotions: *Tak vin zhe i ne obitsiav) Knyzhka zh ne nazyvaietsia "Idu tudy, de strashno" – ot vin i ne pishov))* (From the comments under Oksana Zabuzhko's post*)*.

In virtual communication, syntactic hybrids frequently occur—a mix of text and visual elements such as emojis, stickers, and gifs. These elements substitute words or even entire expressions (Palchynska, 2022).

5. DISCUSSION

The study results indicate that real-world linguistic personality and virtual linguistic personality are related but not identical. They share some characteristics and also differ, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Properties of real-world and virtual language personality

Criterion	Real linguistic personality	Virtual language personality
Sphere of existence	physical world	virtual world (digital space)
Form of expression	mainly written, recorded on paper	mainly written, exists in a digital environment
Authenticity	more authentic, reflects real personality traits	can be both authentic and constructed (mask)
Language	more inclined to adhere to the norms of the literary language	often deviates from the norms of the literary language
Communication	in written form, more thoughtful, balanced, texts are edited, not subject to correction after publication	written communication is more spontaneous, asynchronous, short-term, texts are subject to correction or even deletion after publication

Source: author's own development

Linguistic personality refers to how individuals present themselves: how they express their character, worldview, and their national, cultural, and social identities through language. However, linguistic expression and behavior in the digital world differ significantly from those in traditional settings. The linguistic personality in the real world is usually more stable in written form because published texts remain unchanged. In contrast, online language personality is adaptable and constantly evolving; it can vary depending on different communication contexts and groups, sometimes appearing completely different across various platforms. Digital communicators develop skills for quick and effective written communication, follow a "digital" etiquette, are often multilingual, and frequently switch codes. A person's online linguistic expression combines elements of both written and spoken language.

At the same time, a person's linguistic behavior and expression in both digital and real-world spaces heavily depend on their cultural background, age, gender, education, social status, the role they assume, the purpose of communication, whether they wear a mask or not, the specifics of the platform, and other factors. A virtual linguistic personality can either reflect their real-life self or be a completely new image created based on their desires, ideas, or strategy. Often, people become more open online, experimenting with language, style, and even their identity.

The digital environment lessens social pressure and enables anonymity, encouraging diverse personality expressions. The ability to create multiple virtual identities under different names (nicknames) and manage them, bypassing social norms and rules of real life, makes it easy to change appearance and social roles and to behave in a festive, carnival-like manner. This promotes creativity, but anonymity can also lead to online permissiveness and provoke hostility toward others. The capacity to hide one's identity, the lack of direct contact with conversation partners, and being in a virtual space that

seems to extend a person's inner world with fantasies and dreams slow down awareness and detach the primary identity, revealing hidden parts of the psyche.

Until recently, the linguistic personality of the real world was seen as the primary one, projecting itself and shaping its functioning in the digital space. However, with the advancement of digital technologies, the virtual and real worlds are increasingly merging, blurring their boundaries, and the importance of a person's electronic profile is growing. Its influence on a real linguistic personality is also gradually increasing. The authors fully agree with researchers who believe that "as an independent subject of a network community, a virtual personality can be a powerful tool of influence on a real person and society as a whole: either through the "search for oneself" and one's own identity (especially in adolescence), or through the desire to be accepted and appreciated in a virtual community, through the search for optimal forms of building social contacts..." (Andrienko, 2017: 4). The virtual linguistic personality is constantly evolving under the influence of new technologies and societal changes. The development of artificial intelligence, chatbots, and virtual assistants is further blurring the line between human language activity and digital algorithms, creating new challenges and research opportunities.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The digital age has introduced a new form of linguistic identity—the virtual one—that serves as a reflection of a person's true language personality. Comparing these two shows their similarities and differences. Both represent the same individual but in different communication environments. The virtual linguistic personality does not replace the real-world version; instead, it enriches it, displaying new, often mixed, traits in the digital space. Unlike the more stable and genuine real-world linguistic identity, the virtual version is flexible and constantly changing, especially seen in shifting roles and sometimes 'masks,' as well as in communication styles across various groups and platforms.

The way a virtual personality is conveyed linguistically often differs from standard literary language norms. This is especially true in vocabulary, syntax, stylistics, and text structure.

Virtual language personalities blur the boundaries between spoken and written language. The spontaneity and emotional aspects of communication lead to simpler syntax, abbreviations, and profanity, including slang, neologisms, dialect words, colloquialisms, and sometimes curse words. A virtual linguistic personality actively uses graphic elements like emojis, stickers, and memes in communication, which not only enhance and embellish the text but also function as complete communicative units.

Just like in the real world, language serves as a powerful tool for social identification in the digital space. Using certain groups of vocabulary helps individuals present themselves as "their own" within a specific online community.

Therefore, a virtual linguistic personality is a creation of the digital age. It mirrors people's desire for quick and effective communication, but at the same time, its presence brings new challenges for the development of the Ukrainian literary language. The virtual

linguistic personality shows the emergence and expansion of a new identity within the global digital space.

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