Generation Y: An Analysis of Their Language And Other Characteristics

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Ústav anglistiky a amerikanistiky
akademický rok: 2012/2013

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE
(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Jana BOBEKOVÁ**
Osobní číslo: **H10094**
Studijní program: **B7310 Filologie**
Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro manažerskou praxi**
Forma studia: **prezenční**

Téma práce: **Generace Y: analýza specifik jejich jazyka a jiných vlastností**

Zásady pro vypracování:

Studium odborné literatury
Charakteristika generace Y
Stanovení hypotézy
Rozbor a analýza jazyka generace Y
Potvrzení nebo vyvrácení hypotézy

Rozsah bakalářské práce:

Rozsah příloh:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**

Seznam odborné literatury:

Crystal, David. English as a Global Language. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
Dent, Susie. Larpers and Shroomers: The Language Report. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
Huntley, Rebecca The World According to Y: Inside the New Adult Generation. Maryborough: Allen & Unwin, 2006.
Tapscott, Don. Grown up Digital: How the Net Generation Is Changing Your World. New York: McGraw-Hill Professional, 2008.
Prensky, Marc. Teaching Digital Natives: Partnering for Real Learning. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, 2010.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **Mgr. Jana Lukášová**
                                  Ústav anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Datum zadání bakalářské práce: **30. listopadu 2012**

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: **3. května 2013**

Ve Zlíně dne 28. ledna 2013

L.S.

doc. Ing. Anežka Lengálová, Ph.D.
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PhDr. Katarína Nemčoková, Ph.D.
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ABSTRAKT

Práca sa zaoberá generáciou Y a niektorými ich špecifickými charakteristikami, najmä k ich postoju k politike, vzťahom či práci. Taktiež je rozoberaný ich jazyk a špecifiká, ktoré mladí vytvorili najmä používaním internetu a moderných technológií. Ďalšia časť pojednáva o problematike angličtiny ako globálneho jazyka a jeho vplyve a zvyšujúcim sa používaním vulgarizmov v jazyku. Napokon som uviedla príklady internetového jazyka.

Kľúčové slová: generácia Y, globálny jazyk, vulgarizmy, internetový jazyk.

ABSTRACT

Thesis deals with the Generation Y and some of their specific characteristic, mainly their attitude towards politics, relationships or jobs. Also there is a part about the language and its specificities that youngsters created mostly by using Internet and modern technologies. The next part deals with the issue of English as a global language and its impact and increasing usage of vulgarisms in a language. Finally I stated examples of the Internet language

Keywords: generation Y, global language, vulgarisms, Internet language.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor for her patience and comments and thoughts on my thesis.

I am grateful to anyone who has helped me with this thesis, by support and encouragement.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Each generation is specific in certain way. Young generation of today is called Generation Y, as they follow after the Generation X.

Some members of previous generations dislike Yers because they consider them as careless about the public things, focused on themselves so much that they are called Me Generation and not willing to make a commitment, marry, settle and live a stable life. Yers in the view of the older generations do not like politics; do not care about what is going on in the "serious" matters, all they want is to enjoy life. It seemed interesting how another generation can perceive todays' youngsters so critically. I wanted to find out whether my generation is really so "lost" in the serious parts of life, whether they really just want to have fun and do not care about surrounding things, in politics, relationships, education and employment.

Generation Y members are also called Digital natives, because they have basically grown with the technologies. From what I have observed and experienced, my generation would not survive without the Internet, mobile phones and social networks. But sometimes they do have tendencies to use their mobile phones and checking messages, missed calls or logging into social networks too often, so I was interested whether the over-usage of technology can lead to problems.

Due to the fact that young people are browsing through the Internet on a daily basis, sooner or later they will encounter English as a "language of the Internet." Even majority of the pop culture – from music to movie production – is in English, so I was wondering how did English became major language, what has had an impact on spread of English in the past and what helps it now and whether there is a danger of English being a global language in a global culture with minor languages and cultures evaporating.

With the common usage of the Internet and English as its major language, the young generation has influenced and changed language as well. I know that Yers are creative in finding ways how to express themselves even in the limited space of text messages or in a chat when they want to respond as quickly as possible. Therefore I will focus on some of the ways that youngsters changed in a language. With the Internet language the vulgarity of youngsters have risen, as they often use acronyms such as WTF and in many cases they do not even realise that it contains profane word.

1 GENERATION X, GENERATION Y

There is often an event or events that influence the whole generation of people in some way. For example, baby boomers witnessed the Vietnam War and hippies and Generation X was afraid of the result of the Cold War and spreading of AIDS. However, young generation, also known as Generation Y, or millennial generation, has not experienced any kind of such things, at least not until September 11, 2001.[1]

Oxford Dictionary defines Generation Y as "the generation born in the 1980s and 1990s, comprising primarily of the children of the baby boomers and typically perceived as increasingly familiar with digital and electronic technology."[2] They are therefore called also Google Generation, iGeneration, Digital natives, Millenial Generation or Echo Boomers (due to the fact that their parents are mostly Baby Boomers).[3]

In general, they have perceived world as safe place and do not know the fear of war. They have been raised in a consume society, having almost everything they want at once. Information technology is a common part of life, used on a daily basis. They see their future in a bright light; they believe everything they want is possible. Mostly they want to have fun, enjoy themselves, and are less involved in volunteering. However, they are more tolerant to differences.

Generation Y was preceded by the Generation X. Those are people born between 1960s and 1970s. They are very different than Yers, as they did not imitate them, but rather chose to do things in their own way. Xers could be characterized by one word: pessimism. They knew they would never experience such good economic times as the previous generation of baby boomers. Whatever the Xers do, they will not save the entire world. They might work in an area which is not even close to the one they studied at university. As it has already been mentioned, Generation X has grown in fear of nuclear power, AIDS threat and unemployment.[4]

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[1] Rebecca Huntley, *The World According to Y: Inside the New Adult Generation* (Crows Nest NSW: Allen& Unwin, 2006), 1-2.

[2] *Oxford Dictionaries*, s.v. "generation Y."

[3] Sophia Yan, "Understanding Generation Y," The Oberlin Review, December 8, 2006, http://www.oberlin.edu/stupub/ocreview/2006/12/08/features/Understanding_Generation_Y.html (accessed March 15, 2013).

[4] Huntley, *The World According to Y: Inside the New Adult Generation*, 5-8.

1.1 Yers in relationships

For the Generation X, the friends are important. Not many of them got married and settled down straight after finishing college, instead they lived in the cities and kept in touch with their friends, to whom they were loyal and supportive. If the Xers got married, it probably happened around their 30s. Friends were more important to them than family.

Generation Y values friendship even more than Xers. For them, friends are for support after an argument with parents; when in trouble, they turn to them rather than to family and in most cases, friends are simply chosen family. What might be even more surprising, the Generation Y prefers friends to romantic or sexual relationships. They do not believe that their romance would last forever, therefore it is necessary to have network of friends to whom you can turn when heartbroken.[5]

However, many Yers still want to get married, and they do marry, often at earlier age than generation Xers would have. The reasons for the early marriage may be varied, but mostly they realize that it might be difficult to find a soul mate or start a family in the higher age. They still value family, children and marriage. But some have seen their parents getting divorced, divorce became "common", not something rare and unusual, and it influenced them. They realized that marriage may not necessarily last forever. They are cynical about it, do not believe they themselves will be able to handle lifelong commitment and they fear divorce.[6]

There is also another group that still believes in marriage and they hope their commitment will last forever. They, however, want to get married after they have travelled or experienced something, or generally have had fun. When travelling or gaining experience, they also think of investing in their future: get a career or financial stability before they settle down. Generation Yers do want to get married and settle down. But before they commit themselves to their partner, they want to find themselves, travel, enjoy life and make sure that their partner is the right one. It is good to be careful, but sometimes they are overcautious and take too long decide whether their partner is the right, which may lead to postponing marriage or the lifelong commitment.[7]

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[5] Huntley, *The World According to Y: Inside the New Adult Generation,* 24-29.
[6] Ibid., 76-79.
[7] Ibid., 87.

1.2   Generation Y and the politics

From simple observing many people – especially older - are prejudiced that the young generation does not care about the politics at all. And they are not completely wrong, although generalisation is not appropriate even in this case.

Paul Crewe agrees that unlike him, his peers are not in most cases interested in politics. But he, as a generation Yer, is an exception of the rule. He claims that youngsters do not believe that politics has any impact on their lives whatsoever and Crewe gives clear examples that young people should care. He talks about looking for a job in the future, getting salary and taxpaying, buying houses and starting families, thus they will have to ensure their children go to good schools and get proper healthcare... and all of that is affected by decisions of politics made today. He encourages youngsters to care, because in his view, the things people say are happening really will happen if they do not care and do what they can.[8]

Rebecca Huntley agrees with the fact that Yers are not interested in politics, although she provides different reasons for it. In her opinion young people are disgusted with politics, because they see more scandals of politicians than actual work and think politicians are corrupted. But in her point of view they do not reject politics altogether, they just find another way how to show they concern about society.[9]

Huntley however says that the "Generation Y is just like the generation that preceded it - apathetic and antipolitical."[10] She claims that even her generation of Xers did not care much about politics and Yers are more likely to be concerned about TV shows and latest trends in various aspects of life, but politics. And young people really do not join the political parties in massive numbers. But her reason for that claim is that it is not because the youngsters are uninterested but rather the parties are not appealing. Politicians seem like strangers who do not represent them and no change will be made by whoever runs the country and young people do not believe they can make any significant change by joining or supporting any party. Many young people do not see much democracy in the parties, even when they join them. They are more used to decide about things themselves, be involved in

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[8] Paul Crewe, "Why Generation-Y Should Start Caring About Politics," Elite Daily, http://elitedaily.com/elite/2012/generationy-start-caring-politics/ (accessed March 15, 2013).
[9] Huntley, *The World According to Y: Inside the New Adult Generation,* 104-105.
[10] Ibid., 105.

the decision making very closely, but they see the democratic system as voting for something they do not agree with and that leads to corruption.[11]

However, Huntley sees difference between not being interested in party politics and not being interested in the issues of politics. Even if it is truth that young people do not care about who is in the government and *who* runs the country, they do care about the outcomes, *how* the country is run and eventually how it influences the community they live in. They see they cannot change the whole world from the ground; therefore they concern more on what is in their possibilities to change around them. Although they do not participate in typical political activities like parties membership, they are engaged in activities like campaigning and protesting, often against the government and its policies. They are involved in certain groups – like environmental, sports organizations etc. They care a lot for environment. The Generation X experienced fear of nuclear power and to members of the generation Y it turned to fear of natural disasters. Therefore Yers care for environment and they see much bigger point in joining organizations such as Greenpeace to preserve and protect the environment. Other issues that bother youngsters are human rights, peace keeping, globalisation, labour rights and global economy.[12]

This young generation supports non-governmental organizations rather than major political parties, as they think that they can make some change in those non-governmental organizations. Young people believe they are not so corrupted and genuinely work on their policies that somehow help society. General feeling about major parties is disappointment, contempt and cynicism, thus they turn to alternative organizations. Moreover Yers think the politicians are lying because they see it in the news. They no longer believe media that they provide objective and unbiased information, or that media are not influenced by the politicians.[13]

To conclude, political parties need to recognise the new generation and their expectations of democracy: to be directly included in the decisions that make sense to them, not to mention elimination of corruption. The young generation does want to make change and is interested in what is going on. They are just discouraged by the image of politicians;

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[11] Ibid., 105-108.
[12] Huntley, *The World According to Y: Inside the New Adult Generation*, 109-115.
[13] Ibid., 113-117.

they think that person has to be corrupted in order to gain power and thus they search for different ways of participation in public life.

2 EDUCATING GENERATION Y

Young generation is different from any other generations. They use digital technology naturally from early on, but the educational system in many cases has not adjusted to the changes. Still many teachers use the classic style of teaching, based on teachers' presenting and students' listening and absorbing the content. No wonder that students dislike going to school, learning or even education as such. According to Tapscott, the result is often that some of the students simply give up education, drop out of school and this often leads to their later inability to get a job.[14]

Students and pupils nowadays have different perspectives towards education, and different expectations of what it should look like. They are familiar with the latest technological innovations which are attractive to them, but schools often use the old ways of learning, therefore the students simply lose interest. Mark Prensky, expert on the education and learning, thinks that the youngsters do not want to sit and listen and to be told what to do; instead, they want to cooperate and create things themselves, express their opinions, work on group projects with their peers, learn about what interests *them* and compete with each other.[15] Teachers should focus on putting students into the centre of the learning process, interact with them, and approach individually to each student. Students want the education to be fun, not tedious. They want to decide what they learn and when. And they want to learn things that they will use in the future, in real life.[16]

2.1 Potential of technologies for educating

The approach to the young generation towards education is different from the previous generations. Baby boomers and Xers completed their education, often in the college, and they started a career and if worked in their profession with the knowledge they obtained in the college. But the pace of the new era is so fast that by the time the students acquire a degree, the knowledge they obtained at the beginning of their studies become obsolete. Thus the most valued abilities today are flexibility, creativity and speed in absorbing

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[14] Don Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation is Changing Your World.* (New York: McGraw-Hill Professional, 2009), 122.

[15] Marc Prensky, *Teaching Digital Natives: Partnering for Real Learning*. (Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, 2010), 19.

[16] Don Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation is Changing Your World*, 126.

knowledge.[17] Youngsters do use technologies on a daily basis, therefore they are overwhelmed with the information they find when surfing on the Internet. Prensky sees this as a huge potential for both sides – for students as well as for teachers. Teachers are supposed to teach students the basics, the students can build on this later. They should teach students how to think critically, so that students are able to gather information, assess it and remember the most important details. But besides of the "capital" of the information teachers should also present ethics. If they do not do that, the intelligence and potential of students may be misused and cause damage instead of using it well and enrich themselves and society.[18]

The teacher's role has changed. Instead of just giving lectures and telling students what to do, they should focus on interactivity, creating questions and encouraging students to find out the answers themselves, and try to adapt their learning style to individuals.[19]

Teachers should definitely lead students to think for themselves. With this, students will be able to analyze things they see or read and evaluate the relevance of the information with the critical thinking. Nowadays, everything is full of information, but not all of them are trustworthy. And students with the high level of ability to think critically will be better at selecting what is important. But teacher still should teach some basic facts as well. Students should not decide what *they* want to learn. Having at least the basic knowledge in each subject will help them to look at complex things and they will decide what they want to focus on later on.

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[17] Don Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation is Changing Your World*, 127.
[18] Marc Prensky, *Teaching Digital Natives: Partnering for Real Learning*, 34-35.
[19] Don Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation is Changing Your World,* 130.

3 BABY BOOMERS, GENERATION X AND GENERATION Y IN JOB

Dan Schawbel, managing partner from Millennial Branding, a Gen Y research and consulting firm, says that each of the generations approach job searching differently, although they do have some aspects in common.

He did a survey in 2012 among the three generations – the Baby Boomers, Generation Xers and Generation Yers – and found out that most of them spend between 5 and 20 hours a week job-hunting. They search online more than offline which may be quite surprising to those who thought Xers and Baby Boomers are not familiar with the latest technology. When searching online, both Xers and Yers search primarily on Google or Google+ while Boomers go to LinkedIn.

Generation Yers find a job in the shortest period of time, comparing to other generations, therefore are most optimistic about finding one. However, the longest to find a job takes to Baby Boomers, but the pessimistic generation to believe in finding a job is Generation X. It may be due to the fact that Xers have experienced higher unemployment than the generation of post-war rising economics.

As far as values of potential employers are concerned, the expectations of the three generations differ. While Generation Yers consider the location most important, with meaningful job and security followed, Xers think of job security as most valued, followed by the employee benefits and location. Baby Boomers' highest value is meaningful job, then location and job security. Generation Yers value higher salary more than other two generations.[20]

However, the Generation Yers were told that in order to have a high quality job (and thus higher salary) they have to obtain a university degree. The problem with this claim is that after graduating from college, the jobs they applied for or that are available do not require degree at all.[21]

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[20] Dan Schawbel, "The Multi-Generational Job Search Study," Millenial Branding, http://millennialbranding.com/2012/09/multi-generational-job-search-study/ (accessed March 20, 2013)

[21] Dan Schawbel, "Just How Underemployed Is Gen Y?" *Time.com*, August 29, 2012, http://business.time.com/2012/08/29/just-how-underemployed-is-gen-y/ (accessed March 20, 2013);

While previous generations had secure job positions, and in most cases followed the pattern "good grades at school will automatically ensure you a good career", the Generation Y is taking it in a different way.[22]

Schawbel´s other research has found out that Yers have to work in non-professional positions until they find the career they´ve been studying for. Many of them return to live with their parents after getting their degree. Yers like to work in the companies that provide technological services. Being able to work with the technologies and social networks as customers, they like how some of the companies treat their employees, and like the feeling of working on a meaningful job with social impact, as well as salary. Yers often prefer working in a small company rather than huge one, as they are given more responsibility and smaller companies are flexible.[23]

In her article "What Generation Y Really Wants", Penelope Trunk claims that Yers are more likely to choose a job where their friends are. It is quite logical, as friendship is very important to the young generation. This may be one of the reasons they do not distinguish between work and home environment. Not only are they with their friends, they also want to do something meaningful wherever they are.[24]

Due to the fact that Generation Y is used to work with computer and technology since little age, they are naturally seeking job on the Internet. They save their time – by going from one company to another they would spend a lot of time and they can quickly find the information about the company they want to apply to. And they do care about what they do; money is not the primary reason, at least for most of them. They do not want to be stuck in a workplace they dislike and they are willing to work for less money, provided they have meaningful job. But the danger for them when searching for a job is that in order to find "the job of their dreams" they might be too picky. In some cases, they could give it a try and perhaps they would found out that they enjoy this particular job.

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[22] Huntley, *The World According to Y: Inside the New Adult Generation,* 91.

[23] Dan Schawbel, "Just How Underemployed Is Gen Y?" *Time.com*, August 29, 2012, http://business.time.com/2012/08/29/just-how-underemployed-is-gen-y/ (accessed March 20, 2013).

[24] Penelope Trunk, "What Gen Y Really Wants," *Time.com*, July 05, 2007, http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1640395,00.html (accessed March 20, 2013).

4 INTERNET AND TECHNOLOGY

Members of generation Y have grown up with technologies. Don Tapscott defines this generation as "growing up digital" or the "Net Generation."[25] It is because they are using technologies in a way previous generations would never use it (which does not mean that they are not able use it at all). For young people, even children, it is a natural part of life and they could not imagine life without it. They learn how to use computer at school, have the latest and most fashionable mobile phones and text a lot. Also, this generation likes to share information with their peers and connect with their friends, relatives and people they know via social networks.

Tapscott, however, mentions the other side of it as well. And even though youngsters are generally considered very skilled with the modern technologies, some opinions about them include their lack of social skills, when it comes to face-to-face conversation; their disinterest in sports; spending too much time playing video games; and stealing music and files by illegal downloading.[26]

For the Net Generation the core of all technologies is the Internet. In fact, while the generation of Baby Boomers have spent time watching TV, listening to the radio and reading newspaper, generation Y is mostly "online" generation. They do not use TV for primary entertainment; they use it as a background to their online activities. Previous generations were passive towards the media and entertainment, but Yers usually do not pay much attention to it. If they turn on TV, it is usually for background sound. Youngsters do not want to sit in front of the TV and watch it just for a few interesting parts. Instead, they search the programme online, if possible, and watch whatever parts they want to and without advertisements.[27] And almost everything is searchable online nowadays. Besides, youngsters are not just passive consumers of what they see. They discuss it with their peers in countless forums or chat rooms or write a blog about it. Majority of mobile phones nowadays have connection to the Internet and young people use it as much as possible for staying in touch with mates.[28]

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[25] Don Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation is Changing Your World,* 2.
[26] Ibid., 3-4.
[27] Ibid., 41-42.
[28] Ibid., 40.

However, when people started using the Internet, it was very different from the today's Internet, even in the purpose. It was slow, often to dial-up connection and about viewing the content. Nowadays, it is very fast, people do not have to connect via dial, but through wireless connections, and young people have changed the purpose of it as well. It is no longer used solely for viewing online content or to find information you need. It is mainly used for communication, sharing information and creating things.[29] They communicate via social sites – the major ones including Facebook or Twitter – they express themselves through blogs about various themes, from the entertaining ones including music, movies or fashion to the more serious ones, such as politics or environment. And there are a lot of people among young generation who love to express their opinions. That could be the reason why they do not relate to the politic hierarchy and current system of voting within the party, as mentioned earlier. And while young people have great opportunity and freedom to publicly state their views, they often do not realize the danger of expressing themselves too much. Many young Yers do not see anything wrong with sharing private details or various photos via social sites, but they should not forget that one day they might search for a job and their photo may prevent them from getting that job. As it has already been mentioned, nowadays almost everything is searchable on the Internet,[30] and if they can find something particular, in the same way someone else can search and find much information about them.

4.1   The danger of nomophobia

In 2012, a team from the Chicago University's Booth Business School made a research including 205 people in Germany to analyze their mobile phone addiction. In the research the participants were asked about various desires and they answered whether or not they succumbed to that desire. Also they were supposed to match the desire on a scale from "mild" to "irresistible". The results showed interesting facts. While the basic desires like sleep or sex are the strongest, the desire to log into some social network was the hardest to resist. The real danger of this addiction is that people do not see any potential danger, like for example in cigarettes and alcohol which are proved to damage your health and cost a lot

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[29] Don Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation is Changing Your World,* 17-18.
[30] Ibid., 40-41.

of money. But the truth is that checking your email or logging into social sites is really time-consuming.[31]

A new addiction, called nomophobia, was found with the fact that majority of the young people possess mobile phone. Nomophobia – shortening for "no mobile phobia" is a fear of losing your mobile phone or not having one at all and be out of reach. The symptoms of this addiction are usually inability to turn off the phone, checking missed calls, text messages and emails on a more than regular basis, and general inability to put the mobile phone away.[32]

A survey in the United Kingdom showed that 41% of the interviewed people have at least two mobile phones in order to stay "connected". 53% of people suffered from the nomophobia, with people between 18 – 24 the most, followed by the age group of 25-34.[33]

Typical syndromes of nomophobia are in many cases similar to any other phobias:

- Anxiety or even panic about losing your phone;

- Having more than one phone;

- Avoiding face-to-face conversation and preferring communication on the phone;

- Checking for messages, life of battery;

- Using phone more than necessary, even in unusual or inappropriate places, such as school, workplace, during face-to-face conversation with the person…

As it may be seen, it is phobia with all its symptoms and thus it should be treated likewise. Once the person admits he or she is addicted, further steps to overcome it may be put into use. Tips of how to overcome nomophobia include lowering the frequency of checking your phone. Set times when the person may look at their phone and try to keep busy when he's not allowed to check. Later he can move onto turning mobile phone off on some occasions, such as at night or at work. He can ask other people for help, for example, when he's in the

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[31] Zach Epstein, "Facebook and Twitter are more addictive than cigarettes or alcohol, study finds," Fox News, http://www.foxnews.com/tech/2012/02/06/facebook-and-twitter-are-more-addictive-than-cigarettes-or-alcohol-study-finds/ (accessed April 5, 2013).

[32] Tony Glover, "Addicted to IT? You have nomophobia and could be damaging your health," *Thenational.ae*, March 17, 2013, http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/industry-insights/technology/addicted-to-it-you-have-nomophobia-and-could-be-damaging-your-health (accessed April 5, 2013).

[33] SecurEnvoy, " 66% of the Population Suffer from Nomophobia the Fear of Being without Their Phone," SecurEnvoy.com,http://www.securenvoy.com/blog/2012/02/16/66-of-the-population-suffer-from-nomophobia-the-fear-of-being-without-their-phone/ (accessed April 5, 2013).

urge of checking phone, he can redirect his thoughts or ask the other person to take his phone away for a while.[34]

Nomophobia is a current problem of young people nowadays; it is people in the age group 18-24 who suffer from it the most. It makes sense – generation Y is so used to mobile phones that often they cannot imagine life without them. And although it is natural for everyone that they want to stay in touch, there are certain limitations as well and it is good to know them. Mobile phone certainly does make life and communication easier, especially when you need to solve something quickly. However, replacing real conversation with real people is not the way mobiles should be use. As a paradox, in the end it may lead to losing your real-life friends. And if you do not have anyone to communicate face–to–face, then who are you going to text or call on mobile?

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[34] FOX News Network, "Nomophobia: Is Your Cellphone Addiction Covered?" Fox Business, http://mymoney.m.foxbusiness.com/quickPage.html?page=32711&content=86654053&pageNum=-1 (accessed April 5, 2013).

5 ENGLISH – GLOBAL LANGUAGE?

The use of the English language is increasing. According to the survey of the Internet World Stats, English is the most used language on the Internet, with over 500 million users.[35] And it is not hard to predict that the English is going to spread more and more. People – and especially young generation – often learn English as a second language at schools and the employers often require knowledge of English for the job positions. So the use of English is spreading, but the question is, whether it is going to threaten other languages and become a global language.

5.1 The historical background

People throughout the history were searching for some lingua franca, or common language, to be able to communicate with others. However, David Crystal believes that the language does not become a "global language" simply by the number of speakers, but rather by *who* are the speakers. For instance, Latin was the "global" language since the Roman Empire, and hardly was it due to the number of speakers. It was the language of the Roman Catholic Church, which had the power during the Middle Ages. And that is the reason why, according to Crystal, the use of the language becomes worldwide – the power of its users. Latin was spoken mostly among the educated and powerful people and Church and kings and queens certainly were both educated and powerful.

But during the times of industrial revolution Britain became one of the most powerful countries. Besides of that, they had lots of colonies all over the world, therefore, they brought infrastructure, education and system into colonised countries, but also culture and language, when they wanted to trade with the people. Moreover, they colonised America as well, and this country has become the most influential country in politics and economy. With this, the dominant position of the English language has been established and preserved.[36]

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[35] Miniwatts Marketing Group, "Internet World Users by Language- Top 10 Languages," Internet World Stats.com, http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.htm (accessed April 17, 2013).

[36] David Crystal, *English as a Global Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003),7-10.

5.2 The cultural influence

English is one of the main languages of politics or various organizations, such as the United Nations, the World Health Organization or the World Bank. Nowadays, the politics is connected to media. And the most influential media have their headquarters in English-speaking countries. The Reuters Agency, a source of information for the majority of media worldwide, is situated in London; so is the British Broadcasting Corporation. Similarly, other prestigious papers such as The New York Times, The Washington Post or The Wall Street Journal come from the United States.[37]

Even the music or film industry is undoubtedly dominated by English-speakers. In fact, for most of the non-native English speaking people listening to the songs in English is their first encounter with the English language as such. Many young people who like some English-speaking musicians translate their songs in order to understand them. In spite of the fact that each non-English speaking country has their own artists, musicians and singers performing in their own language, not many of them are recognized abroad.

The same situation is with the movie industry. The biggest movie producer in the world is Hollywood in California; most of the movies distributed worldwide are in English, even the Academy Awards are oriented on English language production.[38] There is a special category for foreign and non-English language movies, but in the main categories it is not very common for a foreign movie to be nominated.

5.3 The danger of global language

The reason why people use global language is mostly to simplify communication. If two people meet, each having a different native language, then the easiest way how to understand each other is by speaking English, provided both of them are able to speak it. Nevertheless, the over-usage of one language has some disadvantages as well.

The major one and perhaps too extreme might be the slow disappearing of other languages, because they will no longer be necessary. If that happens, it would be a huge loss, because it is not only language that would disappear. Each nation has its own culture, literature, traditions, proverbs... and all this is connected to the language and it gives people some sense of identity. Another drawback is that people may not be willing to learn other

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[37] Ibid., 90, 93.

foreign languages, when there is English language taking over the world. And native English speakers sometimes expect everyone to speak English, even when they go on holiday, and are not willing to learn at least basic phrases in the language of the particular country.[39]

If more and more people speak English, the minor cultures and languages might disappear. But despite the fact that the English music or movie production is rising, non-English speaking countries still keep their own languages and traditions. There are still many events or local festivals focused on some part of a folk tradition. And the attendance does not consist of older people only - many young people as well still keep the interest in the traditions and local music and culture.

5.4   Types of English speakers

David Graddol in his book *The Future of English* defines three types of English speakers:

The first group is made of people for whom English is the native language, and often the only language they are able to speak. These are the people of the countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa or Canada. They have slight differences amongst each other, e.g. in accents, but the core is the same for all of them.

The second group consists of people who speak English as an additional language to their own. Those are countries such as India, West Africa, East Africa and their English is mostly required for the administrative job or for the government. These countries have developed "New Englishes" – varieties of the British English mostly, as they are its former colonies.

In the third group there are people for whom the English is not their mother tongue, nor the second, additional, but completely new, foreign language. The level of English of those people varies, as some of the learners might be on a beginner level and other on a nearly-native level.

A language shift between the second and third group is occurring. In the countries such as Norway, Denmark or Sweden, the United Arab Emirates or Argentina, the use of English is increasing so much that they soon might be moved to the second group to the countries

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[38] Ibid., 99, 101, 103.

which use English as a second language. And the number of users of English in the second group is rising, more and more people start using English as a first language, therefore the shift towards the first language group – native speakers – is increasing as well.[40]

5.5 The change of language

Graddol specifies a few indicators how the language and its use will possibly change.

The use of language may change according to government policies or employers needs. If the government in a non-English speaking country decides that English has to be taught at schools as first foreign language, then it is almost certain that English will spread, as in the language learning "the sooner the better" method applies. The earlier is the age that children learn foreign language, the higher is the chance of their later ability to speak it and use it, even in the employment. If the employers require knowledge of English for the job position, those who do not speak English will have a disadvantage comparing to the ones who do speak.

Another change is in the use of language on the social sites. More and more people sign up on one or more social sites and often they communicate with their real-life friends, but also with foreigners who speak a different language. And as it has been mentioned above, when people with different mother languages meet, the easiest way for them is to use English.

Then the possibility of travelling affects the use of language. The world today is "global" in a sense that people travel anywhere anytime, and thus they have more opportunities to speak and practice the language in real-life situations. The more global the society is the better chance of a language change.[41]

All of these changes concern mostly young people. Those learn foreign languages at school; youngsters use social networks and travel more than any generation before. They communicate and use the language, and inevitably they change it in some ways. However, it would take more than one generation to change the whole language.

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[39] Ibid., 15, 17, 20.
[40] David Graddol, *The Future of English?* (London: British Council, 1998), 10-11.
[41] Ibid., 16.

5.6 Technology

English have spread mainly during the industrial revolution. With this, English quickly became the language of science and discovery. Companies needed to communicate with the public (e.g. train schedules), and that required people to have more communicative skills; companies had advertisements to get closer to the people.

So, technology certainly did have an impact on the spread of English. Today, it is the same, technical innovations influence the language. Majority of software products are originally in English, although local language versions are available as well.[42] And social sites and the Internet in general change the way young people communicate.

5.7 Global trade

Globalisation of business is very common for many big companies. Many firms move their production into countries with cheaper workforce or lower taxes, while their headquarters are still in another country, often English speaking one. Even if they do not have headquarters in English speaking country, the English language is still commonly used within the company because they have certain rules and regulations and everyone must understand them. And it is easier to write them in English for every branch in each country than to translate it into local languages. Thus the employees have to learn English and it helps English to be spread. A company settled in more countries will the most probably want to hit the international market, so they need advertisements and promotion which will require marketing experts with English skills.[43]

Globalisation is one of the most significant ways of spreading English. It has dangers, apparently, from the above mentioned global language to global culture, the loss of identity and minor cultures and many more.

English will probably keep in the near future its dominant position worldwide. Nevertheless, it depends on people whether they would succumb to global trends and movements or they would keep and nurture their own values, traditions and show and prove younger generations that it is worth maintaining.

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[42] Ibid., 30.
[43] Ibid., 32.

6 LANGUAGE

With the spread of the Internet also language and communication changed. Although it would seem that young generation communicates less, the opposite is truth. Youngsters are almost constantly online mostly chatting with their friends. Dr Bruce Moore, director of the Australian National Dictionary Centre, says that young people write more than ever, even though they are limited by 160 characters in the text. According to him, teens are often seen walking on the street texting. And due to the limit of characters of the text, they have to create new forms to express themselves. Moore says that "language is constantly evolving and this is part of the evolutionary process." [44]

Language changes depending on the specific situation. Language variety includes basic differences such as writing and speech, various dialects, specific language of the occupation, language of the literature etc. Those varieties are in most cases easily predictable, perhaps except of literary language. People in most cases use different language when speaking to their peers and when speaking to the teacher or other authority. Therefore it is not difficult to differentiate between British and American English, formal or informal language and so forth.

There are five characteristics of the written language:

- *Graphic* – what is seen first; use of colour, size, headline, illustrations...
- *Orthographic* – features of the particular writing system; usage of alphabet, capital letters, spelling and punctuation...
- *Grammatical* – syntax and morphology; word order, sentence structure
- *Lexical* – vocabulary of the language; whether the person uses formal or informal language, phrases and idioms
- *Discourse* – coherence, logical order, structure and the whole context.

The Internet language is in most cases written language. Despite the fact that there are lot of music videos, video blogs or films, the written language still prevails. In the spoken language there are two more characteristics to the five mentioned above:

- *Phonetic* – characteristics that you hear when speaking to someone: vocal modality, vocal register...

- *Phonological* – specific usage of vowels, consonants, different accents, pronunciation...[45]

6.1 Netspeak

Netspeak is the language that is used over the Internet, with characteristic features. It has properties of both written and spoken language.

In the written language a certain amount of time passes between sender and recipient. If a person writes a message, he does not get the immediate and spontaneous response as in the spoken communication. Even if the recipient would start typing immediately after he received the message, the time gap must be considered. Besides, two people who communicate via writing also do not see the visual contact, facial expressions and the non-verbal communication and therefore the meaning might become ambiguous. On the other hand, both the sender and the recipient can take their time to consider their answers and correct spelling errors. This is the drawback of the spoken communication – many misunderstandings may occur due to the fact that someone says something without thinking and the other person may get offended. The consequences of speech last.

In spite of the fact that the Internet language is in most cases written, it is also perceived as speech. Websites are generally considered as a written communication. The creators usually do not know who the potential readers are and thus they have to adapt the website to be appealing to as much readers as possible. And the readers will read it any time, so the time difference is there; neither the website administrators nor the viewers see each others' face, so it definitely has written features.

But emails or chat is a different thing. Even they are not the speech as such; they do have some characteristics though, mainly due to the demand of immediate response, and not very long lastingness, especially of the chat conversation.

However, there is still a great difference between email or chat and face-to-face conversation. The main difference is in the lack of spontaneous or even simultaneous

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[44] Rachel Brown, "It's ok How We Communic8," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, September 27, 2009, http://www.smh.com.au/technology/its-ok-how-we-communic8-20090926-g74p.html (accessed April 5, 2013).

[45] David Crystal, *Language and the Internet* (Cambridge: Camridge University Press, 2004), 6-9.

contact. People still communicate through computer and do not see the non-verbal features of the other person. [46]

6.1.1 Features of Netspeak

Every generation is specific in some way whether in terms of external conditions, political situation and popular music or in the way they use language. And generation Y is not different.

Obviously, no generation has changed the language from the ground, but the vocabulary and use of words are still changing. Young generation is hugely affected by the use of Internet and modern technologies, and that have changed the use of language and vocabulary in a massive way. Youngsters email, text and chat to their peers on a daily basis, and developed utterly unique vocabulary and terminology.[47]

6.1.1.1 Acronyms

Acronym is series of letter put together which create the word. Youngsters use them because it saves space – when they need to write a message or tweet containing lot of information but have only 160 characters in a text, or 140 on Twitter, they have to think of how to put their thoughts into this limited space. Some of the ways to get the abbreviation without the loss of meaning are omitting vowels (e.g. THX – thanks); use of number instead of a letter – that is based on phonetic similarity (l8r – later, b4 – before); acronyms can be used even in the whole sentence, provided the sentence is so well-known or cliché that everyone knows its meaning. Example of such sentence could be HHJK – Ha Ha Just Kidding.[48] There are plenty of Internet acronyms, and many new are still created.

Table 1. Common acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
alrite	alright
AKA	Also Known As
ASAP	As Soon As Possible
AFC	Away From Computer

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[46] Ibid., 26-30.

[47] Sharalyn Hartwell, "Are You Fluent in the Millennial Language?" *Examiner.com*, April 5, 2010, http://www.examiner.com/article/are-you-fluent-the-millennial-language (accessed April 20, 2013).

[48] David Crystal, *Language and the Internet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 229.

BRB	Be Right Back
bcoz, cuz	because
b4	before
BFF	Best Friends Forever
BF/GF	boyfriend/girlfriend
BTW	By The Way
BB4N	Bye Bye For Now
DYI	Do It Yourself
F2F	Face To Face
FYI	For Your Information
4ever	forever
GL	Good Luck or Get Lost
GN, GN8	Good Night
IDK, dunno	I Don't Know
IMHO	In My Humble Opinion
J4F	Just For Fun
JIC	Just In Case
J/K, JK	Just Kidding
LOL, LOLZ	Lots Of Laughs
msg	Message
OFC	of course
OIC	Oh I See
K	OK
PLS, PLZ	Please
ROFL, ROTFL	Rolling On The Floor Laughing
CU; C Ya	See You
CUL8, SYL	See You Later
SRSLY	Seriously
SRY	Sorry
THX, TNX, TX	Thanks
2nite	tonight
W/E	Weekend
huh	What
sup	What's Up?
W/	With
U R	You Are

Sources: David Crystal, *Language and the Internet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 85-86; Netlingo, "The List of Chat Acronyms & Text Message Shorthands," Netlingo.com, http://www.netlingo.com/acronyms.php (accessed April 20, 2013).

6.1.1.2 Compounds

Coumpound is a word that consists of two or more parts that together express a specific thing. They can be created by either combination of at least two words, by adding prefixes or suffixes to the core of the word or by creating word with mixing two different words together.[49]

Compound words are also created in the Internet language, combining two words into one. Some of the words or its parts appear regularly in more than one word: for example word *mouse* can be compounded in the words like mousepad or mouseclick; the word *click* is compound in double-click; the word *web* has lots of options to be used as well. The typical ones are website, webcam, webmail, the neologisms include webliography (compound of Internet + bibliography), or webinar (seminar that takes place on the internet).[50]

Blending, special part of compound words, based on a principle of two words mixing together are becoming increasingly popular, as they are creative, innovative and often define exactly the specific thing. For example, *netiquette* is the etiquette on the Internet that should everyone follow; unwritten code of conduct of do's and don'ts. Some of the rules are: do not spam. Do try to spell and punctuate properly in emails. Do not type words in UPPERCASE, because it looks like you are shouting at the receiver.[51]

As for the shouting, although the written messages lack non-verbal language, intonation and tone of voice, there are specific ways that young people use to emphasise their statement, or part of it. They use for example multiple letters (*oooooooh*, *helloooooooo!*) or lots of punctuation marks (*what??????????????*), and various possibilities of expressing emphasis:

- capital letters - WHAT DID YOU SAY?
- space between letters – w h a t d i d y o u s a y ?
- or asterisks - I would *never* do that.[52]

Asterisks are also used for the action the person "does," e.g. This is a great news! *claps*

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[49] Merriam-Webster, "*How Do You Decide Whether a Compound Should Be Written as One Word, Separate Words, or Hyphenated Words?*" Merriam-Webster online, http://www.merriam-webster.com/help/faq/compound.htm (accessed April 20,2013).

[50] David Crystal, *Language and the Internet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 82.

[51] NetLingo, "*Netiquette,*" Netlingo.com, http://www.netlingo.com/word/netiquette.php (accessed April 20,2013).

In email communication, the symbol "at sign" @ is used to separate person's address from their location on the site. In modern language, the @ sign became so popular that many people use it in common language instead of preposition "at." Person is @ home or @ work.[53]

6.1.1.3 Emoticons

Emoticons, or commonly known as "smileys" are used to show an emotion. It is used so that person can express their amusement, sadness, anger, or basically any emotion due to the lack of non-verbal language, gestures and intonation in text messages, emails or chat. They are read sideways, having "eyes", "nose" and "mouth." Even though they have limited semantic role and their meaning is straightforward, still each of the recipients can perceive it differently.[54] There are many types of smiley faces, and young people are creative enough to invent new and new.

In fact, using emoticons is so popular in Internet communication that when somebody does not add smiley at the end of his sentence in a chat with his friend, the conversation is suddenly considered to be "serious." Smiley faces are one of the most distinctive parts of the Netspeak and their popularity and usage amongst young people is not very likely to decrease. Many people use smiley when they do not know how to respond. They add smiley and the recipient can interpret it whatever way he wants. And new smileys are invented commonly, thus their usage will be continuously high.

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[52] David Crystal, *Language and the Internet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 34-35.
[53] David Crystal, *Language and the Internet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 83.
[54] Ibid., 36.

Table 2. Emoticons

Emoticon	Meaning
:-) :)	Smile
:-(:(	Sadness
O:-)	Angel
;-) ,-)	Winking
:´-(	Crying
8-O :-O	Oh My God!
8>	Penguin
<3	Heart
:-*	Kiss
:-)))	Very happy
:-(((	Very unhappy
:-D	Laughing
B-)	Wearing glasses
8-)	Wearing sunglasses
l-O	Yawning
>:-(	Annoyed
:-@!	Cursing
>:)	Evil
>-)	Evil grin
:-/	Skeptical
:-|	Unfazed

Sources: David Crystal, *Language and the Internet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 37.; Netlingo, "Smileys and Emoticons," Netlingo.com, http://www.netlingo.com/smileys.php (accessed April 20, 2013).

6.1.1.4   Vulgarity in language

Among young people, a new trend has risen - using strong language, whether in real life or in online communication. A survey has shown that 47% of Facebook users have any profanity on their own wall and 80% of those had some profanity on their walls by their friends. Obviously, word that has been used most of the time was the F-word. Nevertheless, this survey showed that the Facebook users do not have complete control over the language

on their walls, but the language used on their wall somehow influences the way others perceive the person, even if it is their friends' language.[55]

Facebook has enabled for the administrators of pages to block posts that contain profane words. It blocks words that majority of people would consider as offensive, even though they do not mention any words specifically. However, page admins still have an option to "unmark" the post as non-offensive when they decide to.[56]

An interesting thing about the profanity is that people tolerate it more and more and often do not consider it as offensive, especially in online conversation. For example, when they would say F word to somebody in the shop, they would be asked to leave the premises immediately. But when they post a status or a tweet with a word that might offend someone, suddenly it is considered to be OK, and perhaps no one would notice that.

Why do people even use swear words? Reasons to use strong language instead of milder expressions may differ. One of the major reasons is to release specific emotions, whether anger, frustration or surprise. Another way how people use swear words is positive – when they want to add more positive emotion to their statement, for example "This movie was fucking great!" The swear word emphasizes the emotion speaker has towards the movie and it persuades more people to watch the movie.[57]

A new expression was made up when someone is using the word "fuck" – drop the F bomb. There are many expressions how to present one's opinion. Many of them contain a swear word.

WFT – What The Fuck? Even though some people mean it in less cursing way: Why The Fuss? Or What The Freaking?

WTH – What The Hell. It depends on a person which one – WTH or WTF – he considers less offensive.

OMFG – Oh My Fucking God; more offensive way of OMG (Oh My God).

SOB – Son Of a Bitch.

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[55] The Reppler Effect, "47% of Facebook Users Have Profanity on Their Wall," The Reppler, http://blog.reppler.com/2011/05/23/47-of-facebook-users-have-profanity-on-their-wall/(accessed April 21, 2013).

[56] Josh Constine, "Facebook Adds Keyword Moderation and Profanity Blocklists to Pages," Inside Facebook, http://www.insidefacebook.com/2011/02/10/keyword-moderation-profanity-blocklist/ (accessed April 21, 2013).

STFU – Shut The Fuck Up. Or STHU – Shut The Hell Up. Again depends on users' point of view but in general, the expressions with the "hell" word are considered to be more acceptable than the F-word.

LMAO – Laughing My Ass Off. This is just an emotionally stronger way of Laughing Out Loud.

NFW – No Fucking Way! User either emphasizes that he does not want to do something or he exclaims a surprise over something.

All of the above expressions are labelled as NSFW – Not Safe For Work.[58]

Young people are creative in finding ways to simplify communication. They are able to put their whole message into limited space of characters, without losing its meaning. They use acronyms, compound words, emoticons or various keyboard buttons to express what they intend to. However, it may have its drawbacks as well. Youngsters often use expressions or acronyms with curse words in texting or chatting. Even the people who do not swear in real life do swear online or in text messages. And while in a real life situation people would get offended or resentful, in an online communication it is alright, especially when using acronyms swear words. Nonetheless, before dropping an F bomb online, people should think twice. Not only is it the real person on the other side of the communication device, it is also a manner thing. They should think whether the situation requires profane words. It may help in some cases, to relieve frustration. But the thing is other people do not need to hear someone else's cursing. So those who are about to use a profane word should think how they would feel when someone else would offend them, either in public, or in a chat.

Another drawback is that as youngsters are able to write a short text message or contact someone via email or on social sites and often get immediate response, it may mean that they are not willing to wait for anything. They post a status or a tweet and their friends on social sites respond immediately, by "liking" or commenting, but the question is, how many of them are their friends in real life. Young generation is used to search for the information on the Internet and they can find almost anything there, and thus they might not

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[57] John M. Grohol, "Why Do We Swear," PsychCentral, http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2009/03/30/why-do-we-swear/ (accessed April 21, 2013).

[58] Alexander Howard, "Top 10 Nsfw Twitter Abbreviations," Pistachio, http://pistachioconsulting.com/nsfw-twitter-abbreviations/ (accessed April 21, 2013).

want to wait for something. And sometimes they imagine life as too easy – they want quick opinions, quick results in everything, often presented in advertisements, such as "try this and you will lose weight in 2 weeks without having to exercise!" They want to form quick opinions, see life as easy and in some cases it is not always the best possible attitude. Youngsters could sometimes understand that nothing is black and white and not everything they want is possible to get at once.

CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of my thesis was to characterize Generation Y as such and in their relations towards politics, relationships, education and job. Members of the older generations often claim that the young generation is not concerned about anything but themselves. However, it is not completely true. As I found out, Yers are interested in public things, politics and the environment. What they dislike is the way how many politicians are presented and corruption. But they do let themselves be heard when it comes to that. They organize protests, and often are engaged in non-governmental organizations. In their relationships they realize that if they postpone marriage or commitment, they might have troubles to find the right partner later. Most of the Yers do believe in lasting relationships. When searching for a job, young generation naturally browses the Internet and search for a job that they would like, money is not the primary purpose of their job hunting, although they realize that money is important for their living.

Digital natives, or Net Generation, as youngsters are sometimes called, have used technology since childhood. They surf the Internet, have their own mobile phone, have accounts on various social networks but they do not watch TV as much as the previous generations. Millenials are "online" generation. Almost everything they want is searchable on the Internet nowadays but they often do not realize the danger of it. In the same way they can find anything online, someone else might search up for things about them. Especially on the social sites there is a danger that if they post a status or upload a photo and make it visible to everyone, their potential employer might see it and decide not to hire the person. As for the mobile phones, almost everyone owns at least one. However, over-usage of it, constant checking the messages or calls or browsing the Internet may result into a fear of losing one's phone, called nomophobia. UK survey proved that the people who suffer the most are aged 18-24.

I have found out that English language became global because of the colonies United Kingdom had and the cultural influence. Its spread in the 20th century was also influenced by the technological progress, new inventions and scientific discoveries. English is de facto considered to be the language of science. Another thing that helped the English language was globalisation. Many huge companies have branches in non-English speaking countries and therefore the language spoken within the company is in most cases English. Companies trade on an international scale and the knowledge of English is inevitable. But this may be

disadvantage to the people whose first language is not English. Sometimes the native English speakers are not willing to learn other languages and understand different cultures. English today still keeps its dominant position and most probably this will continue in the future. However, the other cultures should nourish their traditions and culture, in order to not get overwhelmed by English. Although English is language that is used by the powerful countries, there might be a shift in the power to the Asian countries, especially China.

Young generation has also changed the language, mostly vocabulary and the Internet language, called Netspeak. They have developed lots of acronyms to express their thoughts in a text message or in a tweet. Besides they use a lot of smiley faces and lots of other ways to make online conversation as "speech-like" as possible. Unfortunately, there is a trend of using profane words, especially in the acronyms where the vulgarism is "hidden" and people do not even think about what it means. It has been quite surprising to find out that even people who do not use swear words in common speech often do use it in the chat acronyms or online. It is an interesting paradox, as if people do not realize that whether face-to-face or online, it is still another person they are talking to.

To conclude, generation Y is a very specific generation, quite different from the previous generations. They are creative, changing many things from their approach towards politics to the language they use.

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TABLE LIST