

# ԼԵԶՎԱԲԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

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## **ENGLISH REFLEXIVE PRONOUN VARIATIONS ON THE INTERNET GENRE "SOCIAL MEDIA"**

*The paper aims to present a thorough study of English reflexive pronoun invariants in the Internet genre "Social media". Today the development of telecommunication has drastically reshaped our ideas of speech genres. The advent of digital technologies has made social media become an integral and unique platform of everyday communication. Millions of speakers all over the world are actively engaged in virtual communication. The immediacy and freedom of expression on different platforms of social media make a room for users to create new grammatical and lexical deviations of reflexive pronouns which over the time have led the English language to changes.*

**Key words:** *speech genre, social media, linguistic norm, reflexive pronoun deviations, linguistic invariant, online platform, pronominal innovations, function words*

Various genres exist in different domains of human activity. In literature, for example, genre refers to literary writing, which is determined by a specific form of content, structure, literary technique and so forth. The study of genres in literature provides us with a better knowledge of author's intended structure, subject, as well as deepens our sense of the value of any literary text.

Over the time, under the influence of many linguistic and extra-linguistic factors, the number of genres and subgenres has proliferated: comedy, drama, horror, satire, realistic fiction, tragedy, fantasy, tragicomedy, etc. It should be noted, that if in the past, genre studies were bound only in written form of literary texts, in the last century one of the prominent Russian linguists M. Bakhtin was the first to introduce the term "speech genre". In his attempt to define "speech genre" the author pays much attention to the interconnection of human activity and language use. To sound clearer, M. Bakhtin major premise is that language is realized through concrete (oral and written) utterances, which possess their own content, linguistic style and compositional structure /Bakhtin, 1986: 62/. In addition to this, the author notes that these utterances reflect the specific conditions and goals of each such area, not only through their thematic content and linguistic style, that is, the selection of the lexical, phraseological and grammatical resources of the language, but above all through their compositional structure /Bakhtin, 1986: 62/.

Over the time, the forms and means of communication have evolved. This expansion is dependent on many factors, amongst which the continuing progressing of technology is of paramount importance. Today such kind of domain of human interaction has become contemporary English social media which has an enormous effect on the process of the development of new communicative genres. U. McCann described social media as a collaborative environment focused on the exchange of content /Reitz, 2012: 43/. At the same time the author adds that social media are unique platforms that encourage active participation in the creation, development, and dissemination of information /Reitz, 2012: 44/.

Space and character limitations have precluded a comprehensible review over the process of social media communication. The entire paradigm of social media has altered the basic rules of communication. The tools and kinds of interaction in online milieu are too many and their implementations are seemingly boundless. The most essential feature of this new environment is that communication on different online platforms combines both speech and text where speech is realized with letters. As a result, social media enables us with functionality in addition to information. Hence, it extends the notion of online document – consequently the notion of electronic genre.

Contemporary English social media solicits an interaction for anyone who is interested. C. Shirky states that social media are “flexible enough to match our social capabilities” /Shirky, 2009: 20/. It stimulates an exchange of information, creating a simple and quick collaborative platform, where information dissemination is easily distributed. Many communities meet on social media, and many communities bring their experiences with different genres while using various online platforms for various purposes.

In spite of a number of considerable surveys that have been conducted in the field of social media communication, there is no an overall accepted classification of it. It is not surprising because almost every day new communicative and informative sites emerge in electronic environment. The emergence of these new interactive trends of social media has triggered linguists to anew classification and observation of different platforms of social media. M. Haenlein and A. Kaplan, for example, classify social media into the following platforms: a) blogs and microblogs, b) social networking sites-SNS like Facebook, Twitter, c) virtual social worlds: Second life, d) collaborative projects: Wikis, e) content communities: YouTube, Rutube, f) virtual video game like World of Warcrafts and so on /Kaplan, Haenlein, 2010: 64/.

It is of paramount importance to underline the role of social media and its various platforms, because users develop and spread linguistic innovations and variations through immediate online interactions. O. Usacheva mentions that linguistic innovations are fully realized in the above mentioned communicative platforms /Усачева, 2007: 57/. In other words, social media make ground for linguistic deviations.

The communication in social media genre is realized with the help of texts. In different platforms of social media users may express their mood and different emotions about their daily occupations and events, share impressive and wonderful citations, quotes, proverbs, etc, and enhance other users to comment, share and be engaged to the online conversation.

It is not accidental, that linguists put forward the question of understanding what has made “social media” so attractive among users with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, that has made “social media” become a separate Internet genre. Obviously, they come to the conclusion, that one of the central characteristics of wide use is its publicity, i.e. in social sites it is open to wide public and is easily available to online users. In reverse to its availability, it should be mentioned that “social media” also encompasses elements of individuality. Through this Internet genre, online users achieve their goals and desired effects. This genre also helps users to maintain their unique individuality. Another important feature of this genre is its interactive characteristic, i.e. this genre allows at least two-way flow of online communication, which can be either synchronous or asynchronous. It enhances the attention of social site users, who want to react. Interestingly enough, many social sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Myspace provide their subscribers with the opportunity to check or tag people in their microposts. The comment box promotes virtual users make diverse comments. And the last important element which makes online posts even more interactive are “Like” and “Share” tools. The higher number of “Likes” and “Shares” is relevant to the higher involvement of users in online environment. The attractiveness of this genre is because of synchronic and asynchronous coordination of operations of different online users, i.e. users can comment, like, react or post a status simultaneously.

And the last major feature of this genre is that social media encompasses elements of both verbal and non-verbal communication. Generally vocal and non-vocal signals (accent, pitch, volume, speech rate, modulation and fluency, facial expressions, eye movements, hand gestures, and the like) are beyond the basic verbal message or speech. In this respect, it should be mentioned that genre “social media” reach a consensus of both texts and paralinguistic features. For example, random use of Caps Lock or spacing words show anger. A diverse set of emojis and emoticons are used to carry the function of expressing various emotions. To make this genre precisely impressive, web coordinators have provided their users with the opportunity to make use of various audiovisual effects, as well. However, the active use of words still plays an important role on the way of realization of this genre. It is interesting enough to study the word choice and usage in virtual domain, which is a reflection of users’ emotional state.

Due to both content and function words the Internet genre “social media” enjoys considerable popularity. However, it is worth mentioning that function words help users to connect information. Function words can provide powerful

insight into the human psyche /Chung, Pennebaker, 2007: 344/. Function words provide much clearer and accurate evidence of a person's psychological state than content words do, however, much attention has not been paid to this fact yet. The active use of words in social media also prepares efficient ground of different linguistic deviations and variations in syntactical, morphological, lexical and other levels and pronouns are not exceptions of this. In modern English considerable number of grammatical alternations of reflexive pronouns can be noted. Reflexive pronoun invariants inevitably will lead the language to change. The latter is a matter of time. In this regard, D. Crystal states that invariants have the tendency to become linguistic norms /Crystal, 2008: 63/. It is worth mentioning also that these pronominal deviations reflect speakers' real speech.

From this perspective it will be interesting to see the role and distinctive features of reflexive pronoun variations on the way of realization of genre "social media". Reflexive pronouns are of highly active use in this genre. This is determined by the fact that the use of pronouns in a specific space in "social media" genre makes room for people to express themselves in a variety of ways.

In contemporary English social media reflexive pronoun alternations are intensively created and used by many native and non-native speakers of English. One of the examples of these alternations is the change of second stem *self* to *sef*. Interestingly enough, this invariant is applicable to all the forms of reflexive pronouns: **myself-mysef**, **yourself-yoursef**, **himself-himsef**, **herself-hersef**, **ourselves-oursef**, **yourselves-yoursef**, **themselves-themsef**. The regular omission and drop of affixes in plural reflexive pronouns are the result of linguistic economy and speaker's ease of online communication:

tell us abt **urself**? how do u deal with customers? (www.glassdoor.com.in).  
 canot stay wit sm1 lk her cox walahi we go injure **oursef** (www.twitter.com).  
 Helping **mysef** by helping you (www.obesityhelp.com).  
 They jst dunno they R competing btwn **themsef** coz ...(www.twitter.com)  
**himsef** standing from Major Point Orion Chocopie... (www.twitter.com)  
*Get **urself** tranin' whels cat (www.obesityhelp.com).*

Interestingly enough these linguistic innovations have spread out so rapidly throughout English social media platforms that have been quickly included in many modern English online dictionaries: www.urbandictionary.com, www.wordnik.com, www.Wordreference.com.

The concise and comprehensive overview of different platforms of social media has also shown that the percentage of people who take away or drop the final consonant letter *f* in singular and plural reflexive pronouns like **myself-mysef**, **yourself-yoursef**, **himself-himsef**, **herself-hersef**, **itself-itsel**, **ourselves-oursef**, **yourselves-yoursef**, **themselves-themsel** is on its way to increase. Considerable examples of these invariants with double "l" can be noted as well:

You want me to touch **mysel**? Well since you asked nicely ;-)  
 (www.reddit.com).

she just didn't knew exactly how to deal with us, but try to put **yourself** on her place. (www.twitter.com)

Raid, have 2 lvl 26's abd **mysell**, lvl 28, need people who know what they're doing to join our fireteam (www.reddit.com).

HE WILL HAVE FOUND **HIMSELF** F O (www.facebook.com)

@DoubleMRacing bring the chip pan here she blows **hersel** oot (www.twitter.com).

Dina realise how shitty foke are/can be till your sittin **yourself** thinkin about things thits happened befor (www.twitter.com).

I'll no longer argue with any of stans who faves didn't **oursell** mine (www.twitter.com).

Brains sweep **themsel** (www.flickr.com).

Interestingly enough the loss of final l and f is only the start of deletion. Speakers also cut the vowel e and the final consonant l to economize time and space like: **myse-mys, yourse-yours, himse-hims, herse-hers, itse-its, ourse-ours, themse-thems**:

About to lose **myse**...I mean my friend SMH (www.twitter.com).

Love your neighbour as **yourse** (www.facebook.com).

... Had Known Sessions Would Recuse **Himse**...(www.twitter.com).

... it's time to step up into our inherent radiance, to truly love **ourse**...  
http://ift.tt/2uyZUah (www.twitter.com).

A little #mondaymotivation that should also give you some #peaceofmind !!  
Read more about the 5 lies we tell **ourse**... http://ift.tt/2ublFwB (www.twitter.com).

Someone's feeling sorry for **themse**. Arh bless little girl (www.facebook.com).

Democracy will always fail you. If I were to do with Steve Reich's music is to vote **themse**....(www.twitter.com).

let me introduce **mys** (www.twitter.com).

Go easy on John he's in Jr high and things are complicated for **hims**. (www.twitter.com).

this one goes out to all my they **thems** out there #NonbinaryDay (www.twitter.com).

That and trumps admitting hes full of shit and everyone who voted for **hims** (www.twitter.com).

The Lord is protecting our #FirstFamily and those who r against them r to destroy **thems** (www.twitter.com).

From the perspective of time and space economy, it will be interesting to see the following deviations of reflexive pronouns as well: **mself, uself, hself, sself, wself, yself, tself**. The intensive use of wself, yself, tself leads the English language to simplification, i.e. plural forms of reflexive pronouns develop singular forms,

which are yet regarded grammatically incorrect because these pronominal anomalies go against the traditional grammar of modern English:

... but compare everyone and just get **mself** down (www.twitter.com).

I always try to see if I can set the table for, **yself** before it dings (www.twitter.com).

good, goes bad but at the end redeems **hself** & saves the protagonist (www.twitter.com).

@nyjets Welcome aboard. Hopefully this team finally has **tsself** a quality (www.twitter.com).

Good plant. Sstrong **ssself** defense...( www.twitter.com)

As the examples illustrate, in both stems of reflexive pronouns speakers delete the vowels and consonants. As a result one can note that in near future it is quite possible that online speakers will make use of initialized reflexive pronoun forms: **ms**, **ys-us**, **hs**, **ss**, **ws**, **ts** and so forth.

The following linguistic innovations of reflexive pronouns also enjoy much popularity in various platforms of contemporary English social media: **myselfie**, **yourselfie**, **himselfie**, **herselfie**, **itselfie**, **oursselfie**, **yourselfie**, **themselfie**:

...cierra go have too clown by **oursselfie** 'm 4th period (www.twitter.com).

#CuteSelfie#**YourSelfie** will never look so perfect it eliminates (www.twitter.com).

I'm Pelham! The Man Who Haunted **Himselfie**? (www.twitter.com)

Here's the Bard **himselfie** Rabbe Burns #museumsselfie @NtlMuseumsScot (www.twitter.com).

They'd rather do it **themselfie** (www.twitter.com).

DI HATE **MYSELFIE** (www.YouTube.com).

Studies in online platforms show that many users tend to drop the final letter e in the above mentioned pronominal innovations. The final drop is done in order to save time and space, on the one hand, and to keep synchronous conversation, on the other hand:

my new teacher told us to write about **oursselfi** wroetin huge (www.twitter.com).

@katywesley2 WHO IS UP **THEMSELFI** WANNA KNO FU (www.twitter.com).

aint felt so good in ages i aint been depressed for once... (www.twitter.com)

Don,t compromise **yourselfi** you're all you've got (www.twitter.com)

JAHAJATSJSHSHSHAHA SHA IM PEEING **MYSELFI**(www.twitter.com).

Torturing **myselfi** wanna be fangame late night stream (www.twitter.com).

On different platforms of English social media we also come across examples where speakers homogenize singular and plural forms of reflexive pronouns with the conversion of final *f* to *v* like: **myself-myselfv**, **yourself-yourselfv**, **himself-himselfv**, **herself-herselv**, **itself-itselv**, **ourselves-ourselv**, **themselves-themself**:

Last weekend alive. Monday I drink black tooth grin & shoot **myself** to tribute Dimebag (www.quora.com).

2012 neverweigh **yourself**? anyone interested? how you doing ? progressing nicely?!?!? (www.quora.com).

If you find **yourself** in an enraging argument ... . (www.quora.com)

I think the interviews really speak for**themselv** (www.facebook.com).

whoever indulges **himself/herselv** in2 hrdwrk must av +ve resultz in return (www.facebook.com).

Last weekend alive. Monday I drink black tooth grin & shoot **myself** to tribute Dimebag (www.quora.com).

I thinks lil pump are an meme into **himself** (www.twitter.com).

Tweef about Twitter **itselv** to get more followers (www.twitter.com).

As we look to improve them, we must ask ourselves how are we acting? Are we serving **ourselv**... (www.twitter.com)

“We’ll make no excuses to continue to accumulate points and keep **ourselv**... (www.twitter.com)

In order to enhance the attention of other users to one’s self, social media users reconstruct the structure of reflexive pronouns in their microposts i.e. they attempt to rebuild and converse reflexive pronouns like **yourself-selfyour, myself-selfmy, themselves-selvesthem/selfthem**:

My first ever selfie!-wo now the selfwe & **selfthem** & every (www.facebook.com).

2hello friend. nice to see you. hyb? I'm good thanks for asking. kill **selfyour** now (www.twitter.com).

starting to burn, meaning i would have to try to control **selfmy** around my servants so i wouldn't spring and attack >> (www.twitter.com)

Even more in order to highly focus on their own self, microblog users not only reshape the pronouns but also make use of capitalized second stem i.e. the possessive pronouns: **selfMY, selfYOUR, selfOUR** etc:

#Fox #NFL #49ers #Bills your nothingcompared to the people who have died for #Kapernick to protestand express him **selfYOUR** Nothing #Buffalo (www.twitter.com).

@Rotten2Co Hi How's it going? Introduce **selfMy** name is... (www.twitter.com).

A tendency of reflexive pronoun separation into two separate words, like your self, my self, it self, our selves and so forth, is on its way and these alternations are used by many subscribers of different microblogging services:

I'm not trying to overestimate **my self** or anything but ..music is me... (www.twitter.com)

For those who barking on Mahesh - 14 reels..Your Love Helped Us Regain **our Selves**" – 14 (www.twitter.com).

When your wife prepare **her self** to go out Oh my beard (www.facebook.com).

The intensive and active use of these pronominal variations has developed in such a systematic and dynamic way, that has become the subjects of a number of different word-forums, chats and discussion boards: www.WordReference.com, en.allexperts.com, www.Neogaff.com and so forth.

So, to sum up what we have already mentioned in this paper, we can come to the conclusion, that the Internet has given arise to many literary genres and subgenres. Among these electronic genres “social media” plays an important and unique role because it stimulates an exchange of information, creating a simple and quick communicative platform, where information dissemination is easily distributed to other subscribers of this domain. The active use of words in different platforms of social media makes an efficient ground of different linguistic deviations and variations. Among these variations reflexive pronouns are not exceptions. Elaborate example of reflexive pronoun deviations can be noted in this genre among which **myself, yourself, himself, ours, urse, weself** and so forth have already been involved in many English online dictionaries. Some of these variations will eventually lead the English language to change.

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**Գ. ԳՐԻԳՈՐՅԱՆ – Անգլերենի անդրադարձ դերանունների այլաձև տարբերակները համացանցային սոցիալական մեդիա ժանրում.** – Սույն հոդվածը նվիրված է անգլերենի անդրադարձ դերանունների այլաձև տարբերակների ուսումնասիրությանը ժամանակակից անգլալեզու «սոցիալական մեդիա» ժանրում: Ներկայումս սոցիալական մեդիայի բազմաթիվ հարթակներում օգտատերերն ազատորեն կարողանում են ինքնադրսևորվել և հաղորդակցվել, ինչի արդյունքում ձևավորվում և զարգանում են լեզվական միավորների նոր ձևաչափեր և այլաձև կիրարկումներ, որոնց շարքում անդրադարձ դերանունները բացառություն չեն կազմում: Ավելին, վերջիններս համեմատաբար մեծ հաճախականությամբ են կիրառվում և միտված են ժամանակի ընթացքում վերածվելու լեզվական նորմի:

**Բանալի բառեր.** խոսքային ժանր, սոցիալական մեդիա, լեզվական նորմ, անդրադարձ դերանունների շեղումներ, լեզվական այլաձևություն, առցանց հարթակ, դերանվանական նորարանություններ, սպասարկու բառեր

**Գ. ГРИГОРЯН – Варианты английских возвратных местоимений в сетевом жанре социальных медиа.** – Данная статья посвящена изучению вариационных применений возвратных местоимений в английском языке в онлайн жанре «социальные медиа». Кроме выполнения функций самовыражения пользователей и оборота информации, последний служит также платформой для формирования языковых отклонений и их частого применения. В ряде этих отклонений особое место занимают возвратные местоимения, так как они отражают реальную речь собеседников и предоставляют возможность прогнозировать будущие изменения языка.

**Ключевые слова:** словесный жанр, социальные медиа, лингвистическая норма, отражение местоимений, лингвистическая отчужденность, онлайн-платформа, местоименные инновации, служебные слова