

Some Aspects of Hacker`s Language

“To follow the path:
Look at the master,
Follow the master,
Walk with the master,
Become the master!”



Who are the hackers?



Hackers have very rich culture because of intelligence and creativity. It has its own myths, heroes, folk epics, taboos and dreams. Hackers as a group are particularly creative people with their own values and working habits, they have unusually rich and conscious traditions, which unite them and help to recognize each other's places in the community.

Hackers might be characterized:

- as “an appropriate application of ingenuity”;
- “a create practical joke”.

MIT - *Massachusetts Institute of Technology*



Hacker`s speech

Hackish speech generally features extremely precise diction, careful word choice, a large working vocabulary and little use of contractions or street slang. Hackers, as a rule, play with words and are very conscious and inventive in their use of language. Dry humor, irony, puns and a mildly flippant attitude are highly valued – but underlying seriousness and intelligence are essential.



Gargonification:

Methods of gargonification:

- verb doubling;
- sound-alike slang;
- the P-convention;
- overgeneralization

And others.

Verb doubling

A standard construction in English, is to double a verb and use it as an exclamation.

For example: “Bang-bang!”,
“Quack-quack!”; “Lose, Lose!”; “Flame,
Flame!”; “Chomp, Chomp!”.

Sound-alike slang

Hackers often make rhymes or puns in order to convert an ordinary word or phrase in order to achieve a humorous effect.

For example: “For historical reasons” – “For hysterical raisins”;

“Government property” – “Government duplicity”;

“New York-Times” – “New York Slime”.

The P-convention

The P-convention means turning a word into a question by adding the syllable “P”. The question should expect a yes/no answer.

For example:

Q: “Foodp?”

A: “Yeah, I`m pretty hungry!”

The second example:

Instead of “How are you doing?”

Q: “State-of-the-worldp?”

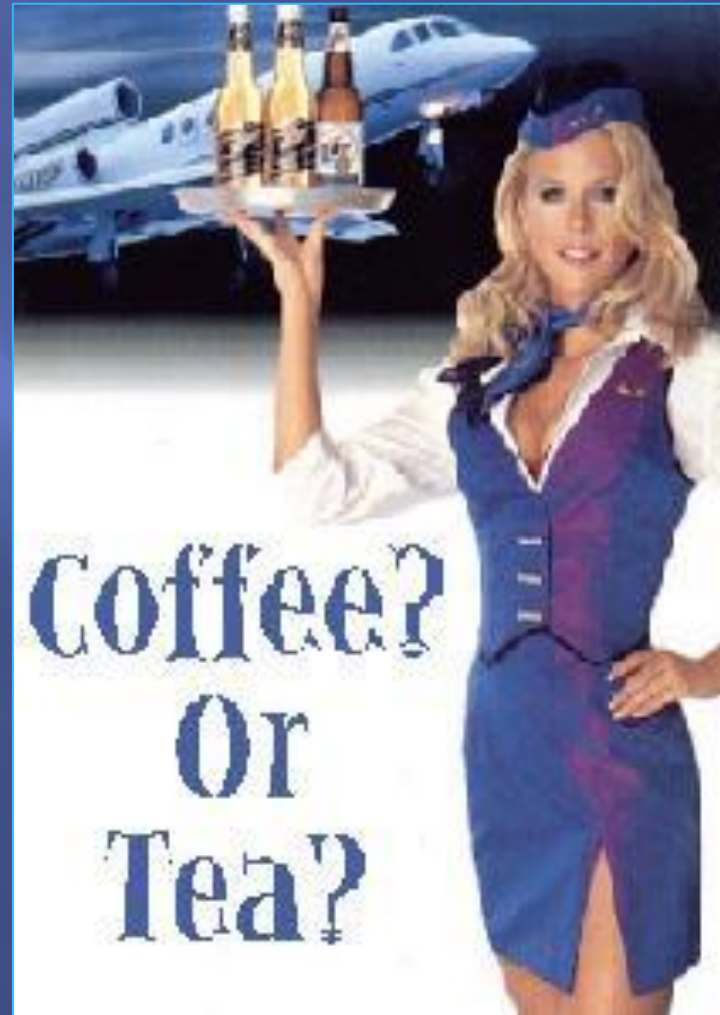
A: “Yes, the world has a state.”

T – yes

/

NIL - no

There are also ways to answer such questions: “T” for “yes”, “NIL” for “no”, and especially hackish “Mu”, which can be translated from Japanese as “Your question can’t be answered because it depends on incorrect assumptions”



Overgeneralization

Hackers enjoy overgeneralization on the grammatical level. Many hackers love to take various words and add wrong endings to them to make nouns and verbs:

mysterious – mysteriousity;

ferrous – ferriosity;

obvious – obviousity;

dubious – dubiousity.

Another class of common construction uses the suffix “-itude” to abstract a quality from just about any adjective or noun:

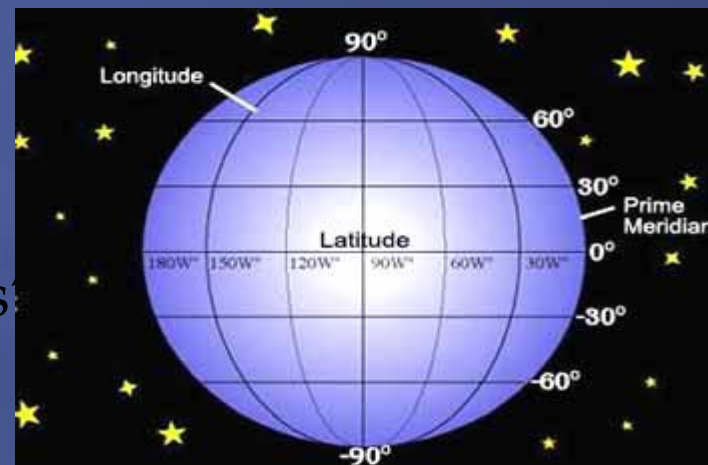
win – winnitude;

loss – lossitude;

craft – craftitude;

lame – lameitude.

Some hackers cheerfully reverse this transformation: they argue, for example, that the horizontal degree line on a globe ought to be called “lats – after all, they’re measuring latitude.



Also, note that “all nouns can be verbed”:

“All nouns can be verbed”;

“I’ll l mouse it up”;

“Hang on while I clipboard it over”;

“I’m grepping the files”



Similarly, all verbs can be nowned:

win – winnitude, winnage;

disgust>disgustitude;

hack> hackification;

There are also certain kinds of non-standard plural forms:

mouse – meeces;

caboose – cabeese;

bunch of sock – soxen;

mongoose – polygoose.



Conclusion

In conclusion I would say:
This is not “poor grammar”, as hackers are generally quite well aware of what they are doing when they distort the language. It is grammatical creativity, a form of playfulness. It is done not to impress but to amuse.



A simple vocabulary for understanding hackers language:

Cracker – a person, who deals with breaking into other`s system;

Hacker – a person, who enjoys exploring computer system;

Hack – an appropriate application of ingenuity;

Elite - a general positive adjective;

Elegant – combining simplicity, power, grace of design;

Kluge – a program that is very difficult to use because of poor design decision;

Loser – lamer, who is not able to use machine;

Magic – too complicated to explain;

Mu – your question cannot be answered;

Nil – no;

T – yes;

Suit – ugly and uncomfortable “business clothing”;

Real world – location of non-programmers.