

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract. The advent and widespread use of social media have had a significant impact on how people use the English language. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter) and WhatsApp have ushered in new modes of communication which have led to the creation of new vocabulary, abbreviations, emojis, and styles of discourse. This study explores the extent of social media's influence on the English language and the changes that it has wrought on vocabulary, grammar, spelling and modes of communication. Qualitative research methodology was used based on an analysis of academic texts and digital communication samples. The research findings show that while social media acts as a catalyst for lexical innovation and the rapid development of language, it has also increased the popularity of informal grammar and writing. Despite these developments, it remains a key player in shaping the course of modern English and its global spread.

Keywords: Social media, English language, digital communication, vocabulary, internet slang, language change.

Annotatsiya. Ijtimoiy tarmoqlarning jadal rivojlanishi odamlarning ingliz tilida muloqot qilish usullarini sezilarli darajada o'zgartirdi. Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X (sobiq Twitter) va WhatsApp kabi platformalar yangi muloqot shakllarini yaratib, yangi so'zlar, qisqartmalar, emojilar va kommunikatsiya uslublarining paydo bo'lishiga sabab bo'ldi. Ushbu tadqiqot ijtimoiy tarmoqlarning ingliz tiliga ta'sirini so'z boyligi, grammatika, imlo va muloqot uslublariga ko'rsatgan ta'siri orqali tahlil qiladi. Tadqiqotda ilmiy adabiyotlar hamda raqamli muloqot namunalarini tahlil qilishga asoslangan sifat (qualitative) tadqiqot metodologiyasidan foydalanildi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, ijtimoiy tarmoqlar tilning ijodkorlik salohiyati va tezkor rivojlanishiga hissa qo'shishi bilan birga, norasmiy grammatika va adabiy me'yorlarga mos kelmaydigan yozuv usullarining keng tarqalishiga ham sabab bo'lmoqda. Shunga qaramay, ijtimoiy tarmoqlar zamonaviy ingliz tilining shakllanishi va uning global miqyosda keng tarqalishida muhim omillardan biri hisoblanadi.

Kalit so'zlar: ijtimoiy tarmoqlar, ingliz tili, raqamli muloqot, so'z boyligi, internet slengi, til o'zgarishi.

Аннотация. Стремительное развитие социальных сетей значительно изменило способы общения людей на английском языке. Такие платформы, как Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X (ранее Twitter) и WhatsApp, создали новые формы коммуникации, что привело к появлению новой лексики, сокращений, эмодзи и новых стилей общения. Данное исследование рассматривает влияние социальных сетей на английский язык посредством анализа их воздействия на словарный состав, грамматику, орфографию и особенности коммуникации. В исследовании использована качественная методология, основанная на анализе научной литературы и примеров цифрового общения. Полученные результаты показывают, что социальные сети способствуют развитию языкового творчества и ускоряют эволюцию языка, однако одновременно стимулируют использование неформальной грамматики и нестандартных норм письменной речи. Несмотря на эти особенности, социальные сети стали важным фактором формирования современного английского языка и расширения его глобального распространения.

Ключевые слова: социальные сети, английский язык, цифровая коммуникация, словарный запас, интернет-сленг, языковые изменения.

Language, it is noted, has perpetually evolved in the wake of technological and societal developments. Over the past decade or so social media has become an integral part of people's lives and, therefore, an increasingly dominant force in language use and communication. Every day millions of people communicate on networks such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp and X (formerly Twitter), where their conversations shape English, which has now become the lingua franca of the digital sphere. A direct consequence of this has been the rapid creation of new vocabulary, internet slang, abbreviations, and novel communication strategies.

Unlike formal or written communication, that which takes place on social networks tends to favor conciseness, spontaneity and innovation [1]. Users utilize elements such as emoticons, hashtags, memes, animated GIFs, and short forms to communicate effectively and efficiently. In this way expressions such as 'LOL', 'BRB', 'DM' and 'FOMO' have successfully entered contemporary vocabulary and are now considered by many as accepted forms and feature in several prestigious English dictionaries.

Although many educators express concern about how the widespread use of social media impacts grammar and orthography, linguists more generally tend to believe that what we are witnessing is nothing more than the natural progression of language [2]. It, therefore, has become increasingly relevant and important to study and analyze the social media phenomenon and the effect that it is having on the English language. The relationship between digital communication and the development of language has been widely documented in previous linguistic studies.

Crystal argues that it is not the writing that is changing but the communicative possibilities. Language naturally changes to accommodate the new mediums of communication [3]. According to McCulloch online language has developed its own peculiar forms of communication as internet abbreviations, emojis, capitalization and punctuation all possess communicative functions peculiar to digital communication. An examination of instant messaging and teen talk revealed that there was little evidence to show that online communication damages student writing skills. Most students were found to be perfectly capable of distinguishing between the features of online chat language and the standard formal English required at school level. Baron in her analysis of digital communication confirms that it has transformed modes of writing, however she acknowledges this to be a function of the adaptation to the medium and not a deterioration of the language [4]. As evinced by the findings of the previously reviewed researches it is clear that the social media's influence is not restricted to just the lexical and grammatical aspects of the English language but also impacts discourse, language use and acquisition.

A qualitative research approach based on document analysis was applied in this study.

Academic textbooks, peer reviewed journals, prior Linguistic analysis conducted on language and social media and actual samples of digital interaction gathered from social networking platforms were analyzed and interpreted. The collected research material was categorized into four main areas to better assess the positive and negative impact of social media on the English language: lexicon development, grammar modification, communication styles and pedagogical implications. The various sources were compared in order to ascertain the changes brought about by the growing phenomenon [5]. It has become apparent throughout this analysis that social media continues to be a major catalyst for lexico-graphic innovation in the English

language. The rapid pace at which words are coined by internet users, of which a vast number eventually make it into conventional dictionaries, is remarkable. Hashtag, selfie, emoji, unfriend, viral, influencer, livestream are just a few examples that showcase this phenomenon clearly. Another area that has seen a significant transformation is the grammar and spelling [6]. Due to the speed at which most interactions take place online, users feel less inclined to write the full lexical form and instead have found an increasing number of new ways to shorten what need be said, such as u for you, idk for I don't know, brb for be right back, or imo for in my opinion.

Although these short forms would be inappropriate in formal situations the communication process is enhanced thereby and more effective. With regard to communication styles it can be said that while on Facebook, Instagram etc. Etc, writing has turned into a multimodal process. It goes beyond letters and numbers as users increasingly incorporate emojis, GIF's, stickers, memes and images to convey what they mean far more affectively than words alone. As McCulloch argues "Emoticons and emoji-con-textual characters now constitute a recognised form of orthography, not merely decoration".

With regard to language learning, social media proves to be a useful tool for English language learners as it provides authentic context through interaction with native English speakers, and through the vast amount of learning material that exists on the internet. However, the teachers' duty should be to ensure that they differentiate the language used on social media networks from Standard English so that it does not filter through to the classroom writing. All in all, the results gained portray that social media is a revolutionary tool which should be viewed as contributing to language development rather than being seen as a nuisance and an impediment to learning the traditional linguistic forms. The role social media has played in the advancement of modern English language cannot be overlooked. It has increased our vocabulary, facilitated the formation of new communicative strategies and encouraged a more active engagement and discourse among users of English as a second or foreign language on a global level. It has however also contributed to the emergence of a more informal writing style, potentially undermining traditional forms of grammar.

Based on the results derived from this study, it is evident that social media constitutes but a parallel register alongside Standard English, meant specifically for its use. It does not wholly supplant standard forms but in many cases it does compete directly with them. Teachers should ensure they inform language learners of the context in which they must use these forms. Future research can look into the effects of AI, virtual reality and other technologies on the English language in the coming years.

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