THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATION ON THE EVOLUTION OF VOCABULARY AND GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURES

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the impact of emerging communication technologies and social networks on the development of lexical and grammatical norms of the English language. The study is dedicated to the most important tendencies in language evolution, i.e., the emergence of neologisms, acronyms, abbreviations and borrowings, and grammatical simplifications and non-standard syntactic structures. Its importance is due to the need to investigate the mechanisms of language norm adaptation into the ever-changing digital environment, reshaping traditional language standards and communication methods. The research is based on the study of linguistic features of five popular sites (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Reddit), which allows us to identify the specifics of the use of linguistic innovations in different situations of online communication. The article aims to determine the nature and causes of digital language changes, systematise their lexical and grammatical manifestations, and assess the impact of age and social factors on language dynamics. The study used a set of methods: content analysis, comparative and contrastive analysis, sociolinguistic approach, and descriptive analysis. The material was 250 text samples from five digital platforms. According to the research results, social networks are an effective mechanism for linguistic innovation, creating novel communication models and evolving forms of classical languages to digital ones. It has been established that different platforms have some linguistic features: Twitter is characterised by the active shortening of words and phrases, and TikTok and Instagram utilise non-standard grammatical forms with ironic or humorous connotations. Reddit is characterised by language play and violation of traditional syntactic rules. The research also revealed a strong dependency of language variations on users' age and social qualities: young people are the primary agents of language development. At the same time, their seniors keep traditional language norms. The findings may be used in future research on digital linguistics, namely how social media affects academic writing, professional jargon, and the long-term restructuring of the language system.

Keywords: *Social Networks, Language, Language Change, Online Communication, Communication, Language Tools*

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital communication plays a primary role in shaping and building the language environment in the modern world. Messengers, social networks, and other internet tools have opened up a new communication domain where traditional language rules are developing to meet the demands of convenience, speed, and brevity. Due to global integration and the constant flow of information, electronic communication affects the tone and style of speech and leads to changes at the vocabulary and grammar levels.

In particular, active use of social media is to blame for forming new words, abbreviations, acronyms, and changes in traditional grammatical patterns. They are proof of the need to simplify language forms and simultaneously enrich the linguistic sphere with new means of expression [1]. Despite its adverse effects on language standards, its contribution to language change is diverse: it adds to the development of expressive capabilities, and on the other, it creates new challenges for linguists to save language culture and normativity [2].

This article considers the role of social media in developing lexical and grammatical norms, investigates central tendencies and driving forces of such changes, and assesses their long-term effect on the English language system. Social networks are now not only a tool for online communication, but also a factor in the dynamics of modern language. The novelty of the study lies in the analysis of the main causes of digital language changes, followed by the systematization of their lexical and grammatical manifestations.

The article aims to analyse how online communication and social media affect vocabulary and grammar changes, identify the key trends in language change, and assess their significance for the modern linguistic system. The objectives of the research are to explain the impact of social media on linguistic communication by identifying principal features of digital interaction; to investigate lexical changes caused by the active exploitation of digital media, e.g., borrowings, acronyms, neologisms, and slang; to research grammatical changes, mainly changes in sentence structure, reduction of syntax, and effects on spelling norms; to determine causes of linguistic changes, e.g., rate of communication, informality of communication, and the effect of globalisation; to assess the possible consequences of digital communication on the linguistic system and

its standardisation; and to propose possible directions of further research which could be of use in the study of language dynamics in the digital age.

The main objectives of the study include theoretical analysis of scientific sources on the impact of digital communication on English vocabulary and grammar; systematization of empirical data based on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Reddit; identification of the most significant linguistic phenomena; lexical analysis and grammatical analysis; interpretation of the results in the context of assessing the impact of social networks on the language system.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Language change research covers various aspects, including grammatical, morphological, phonological and semantic changes, and the impact of digital media on speech. Aitchison [3] deals with the progress or decline of a language in its process of change, emphasising the inherent growth of language forms. Anderson [4] deals with morphological changes, and Akidah [5] deals with the impact of borrowings on the phonology and semantics of languages. Winter and Srinivasan [6] capture the semantic change asymmetry with consideration for word frequency and cognition processes.

Much of the research is devoted to semantic shifts. Koch [7] analyses the changes in word meanings in different languages, and Perrone et al. [1] study the lexical semantics of ancient Greek and Latin. Hao and Chi [8] and Chen [9] look at the changing meanings of English words from a historical perspective. Asri et al. [10] investigate semantic changes in English and German in the context of historical influences and societal dynamics. Digital communication is an important factor in language change. Androutsopoulos [11] emphasises the impact of digital media on language standards, while Akimova et al. [12] analyse the specifics of young people's comprehension of online texts. Leonardo [13] explores how changes in English have affected digital communication.

Moreno et al. [14] address the impact of social media on communicative practices, and Hamilton et al. [15] assess cultural and linguistic change through the analysis of big text data. Tahmasebi et al. [16] propose computational approaches to semantic change research using natural language processing techniques.

Clayton [17] discusses attitudes towards language change and variation, while Lehtinen [18] discusses language change from an evolutionary process perspective. Hao and Chi [8] point out the role of the historical context in modifying English semantics. Jebaselvi et al. [19] discuss how social media influences language evolution and communication trends. The authors emphasise that social websites play a role in the process of modifications in vocabulary, grammar and stylistic norms, as well as the popularisation of new language formations. The authors believe the speed of such alterations is significantly greater than the ordinary speed of language evolution.

Dembe [20] also discusses the role of social media in language change, pointing out that digital media are now key drivers of word shortening, syntactic structure modification, and the spread of new forms of language. The author considers how these processes shape written communication norms and language norms.

Androutsopoulos [21], in his study of network multilingualism, focuses on the language practices of Facebook users. He is interested in how the online setting affects the encoding and mixing of languages and creates unique hybrid forms of communication. Baron [22] speaks about how digital reading affects language comprehension. The author explores how new text formats that have emerged on the Internet are reshaping cognitive information processing and the general culture of reading.

Akimova et al. [23] analyze the study of the specifics of young readers' comprehension of Internet texts, depending on the level of development of speech and thinking processes. The researchers emphasize that the success of interpretation significantly increases with the level of development of speech and thinking processes. Also, Akimova et al. [23] study emotional identification as a basis for understanding lexical and grammatical structures.

Crystal [24] analyses the overall impact of digital technologies on language, pointing out that the Internet has created a unique environment for linguistic experimentation. He describes how online communication impacts the evolution of new linguistic varieties, from text messaging to Internet jargon. Danesi [25] explores emojis in digital communication today, showing that they have become a new form of visual language. The author explores how emojis complement text communication by changing traditional linguistic approaches to expressing tone and emotions.

Studies generally emphasise that digital technologies and social media are potent factors in language change. They contribute to developing new language variants, reducing grammatical structures, language mixing, and emerging visual communication elements [26], [27]. In addition, researchers note that language evolution in the digital environment is faster than in traditional communication channels. The functionality of social media as a communication method and a means of unhindered intercultural online communication requires careful study in the context of linguistic tools.

3. METHODS AND MATERIALS

The study used a combination of theoretical and empirical methods. The research methodology was developed in such a way as to provide a systematic and objective analysis of the causes of digital language changes, followed by a systematization of their lexical and grammatical manifestations. A qualitative research design was used, which focuses on the analysis of existing concepts of the dynamics of Internet communication.

The stages of the study involve several successive steps. First, we conducted a theoretical analysis of scientific sources on the impact of digital communication on language, in particular on English vocabulary and grammar. Following that, empirical evidence was collected and systematised, e.g., the selection of platforms for analysis (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Reddit), the collection of textual samples of internet communication, and the identification of significant linguistic phenomena like neologisms, borrowings, acronyms, and grammatical transformations. The next stage was lexical analysis, where new words, abbreviations, and slang words were singled out and compared with standard English vocabulary. At the same time, we conducted a grammatical analysis, investigating the changes in syntax and morphology, such as simplifying sentence structure, deviations, and innovations in the spelling of grammatical categories' expressions. Interpreting and summarising the results was the final stage, including estimating social media's impact on the language system, identifying the most crucial trends, and predicting possible future vocabulary and grammar changes.

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The research methods include content analysis to study samples of textual digital communication, comparative method to study the differences and similarities of language change in English, and descriptive method to describe the identified language phenomena. Combining the methods provides a comprehensive picture of digital communication's impact on English grammar and vocabulary.

4. RESULTS

After gathering and structuring the empirical data from five of the most widely used digital communication platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Reddit), 50 text samples were chosen from each platform, totalling 250. Examining these samples enabled us to determine significant linguistic phenomena like neologisms, borrowings, acronyms and grammatical changes. The information collected from Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Reddit allowed us to identify important linguistic patterns characterising modern English digital communication.

Neologisms occur in all the samples, which confirms their significant contribution to the creation of modern language. For example, the word "simp" is actively used on TikTok to denote a man who is too flattering or compromising in a relationship.

Another word, "rizz," which is short for "charisma," refers to the ability to charm or flirt.

Borrowings are also significant. For example, in Reddit communities, you can often find the Japanese words "senpai" (respected or teacher) or "kawaii" (cute, beautiful). Such words enter digital communication through pop culture (anime, manga) and gradually take root in the English-speaking Internet. French loanwords such as "chic" (elegant, stylish) or "avant-garde" (innovative) are often used on Instagram, which demonstrates the popularity of fashion terminology in this environment.

Acronyms and abbreviations greatly simplify communication. For example, "TL;DR" (too long; didn't read) is commonly used on Twitter, usually before a summary of a long text. On Facebook, comments often contain "SMH" (shaking my head) or "IDK" (I don't know). On TikTok and Instagram, "FOMO" (fear of missing out) is widespread, reflecting the impact of social media on people's emotional state.

In terms of changes in grammar, there is a particularly noticeable tendency to simplify structures and deviate from standard spelling, which primarily reflects the dynamics of digital communication. For clarity, we present the data in Table 1.

Table 1: Grammatical changes in digital communication

Platform	Features of grammatical changes	Examples
Twitter	Active abbreviation of words and phrases to save characters and express ideas quickly. Frequent omission of apostrophes and use of non-standard spelling.	"u" instead of "you", "thx" instead of "thanks", "cuz" instead of "because"
TikTok, Instagram	Simplified grammar is used intentionally for comic or ironic effect. The use of non-standard constructions that reflect spoken informal language.	"it me" instead of "it is me", "no thoughts, head empty" instead of "I have no thoughts in my head"
Reddit	An ironic communication style is a game with syntax that often violates grammatical rules but retains a precise meaning.	"Am do think" instead of "I do think", "Such fun. Very excite." (playing with syntax in the style of the Doge meme)

Source: developed by the authors

On social networks such as Twitter, words and phrases are actively shortened to save characters or express a thought quickly. For example, users often omit apostrophes ("dont" instead of "don't") or use non-standard spelling ("gonna" instead of "going to", "wanna" instead of "want to"). This speeds up typing and reflects spoken, informal language in written communication.

In TikTok and Instagram, grammar simplification is often used intentionally to create a comic or ironic effect. For example, the structure "he do be vibin'" used instead of the normative "he is vibing" shows how native speakers play around with grammar to create new stylistic devices. These linguistic changes can originate from regional dialects or African American Vernacular English (AAVE) that later penetrated Internet culture.

Reddit even has its ironic style of communication. It often uses grammatically incorrect but still intelligible phrases such as "I can't even" – an expression of emotional shock when words cannot respond. Expressions such as "Much wow. Very impress", – a syntax play from the Doge internet meme and now a recognisable online communication style – are also favourites.

In general, grammatical changes of this kind convey new communication standards, where the expressiveness of style, communication speed, and situation are more important than strict adherence to formal grammatical rules.

Therefore, online communication reflects language change and plays an active role in its emergence and stabilisation. The identified trends – neologisms, borrowings, acronyms, and grammatical simplifications – demonstrate how social media forges new linguistic norms that can be long-term in English.

The user's age plays a significant role in language development in the digital environment. Young people, specifically teenagers and adults (13-30 years old), are the most avid creators of new words, abbreviations and meme phrases. They are prone to use emojis, informal constructions and internet slang and ignore grammatical rules for stylistic or character-count purposes. Their language is volatile, fast, and platform-focused on TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter. Middle-aged individuals (aged between 30 and 50) are less prone to radical linguistic innovations yet borrow fashionable slang terms. They retain grammar principles yet utilise simplified structures for informal speech. They engage especially on platforms providing more lengthy texts, such as Facebook and Reddit. The age group of 50+ years old uses fewer neologisms but catches the most widely used online expressions. They are more inclined to use a formal communication style, preserve standard orthography, and use social media sites for reading and commenting. Figure 1 displays the revealed influence of the age of users on the use of language innovations.

Gender also affects language changes in the digital space. Women are more likely to use emotionally charged vocabulary, emojis, and informal constructions. They are the driving force behind language trends, especially on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, and actively use softening words and elements of spoken language, such as "omg", "aww", and "lol". Conversely, men tend to be more concise in their communication style, avoiding unnecessary words. They are less likely to use emojis but often use specific humour and sarcasm. Their activity is noticeable on Reddit, Twitter, and Discord, where ironic language constructions are popular. Thus, the age and gender characteristics of users shape language trends in the digital environment, determining the nature of changes and communication features.

Table 2: Influence of users' age on the use of language changes, %
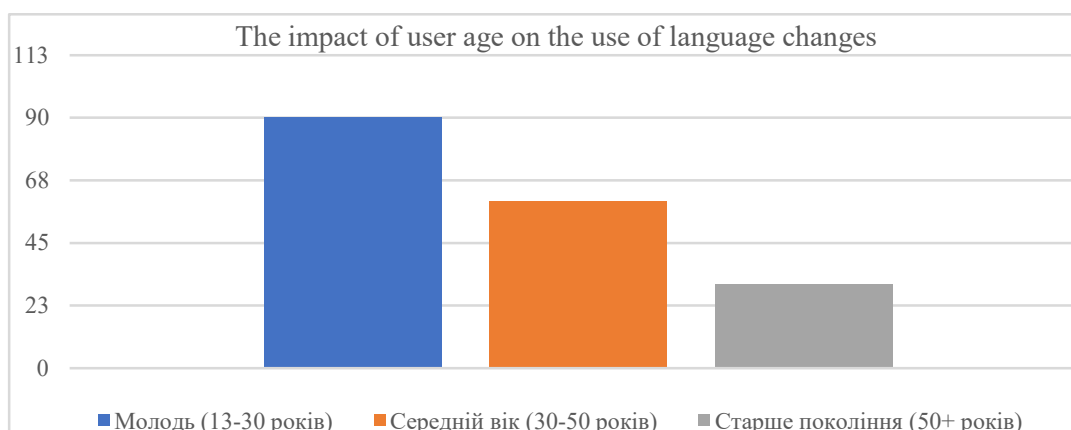
Source: developed by the authors

As we can see from the data, young people (13-30 years old) have the most significant influence on language changes in the digital environment (90%), actively creating new words, abbreviations and slang expressions. Middle-aged users (30-50 years old) adapt to popular language trends but change grammar less radically (60%). The older generation (50+ years old) is the least affected by digital language (30%), maintaining traditional language norms and a formal communication style.

5. DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was to identify the causes and specifics of digital language changes and their manifestations, as well as to assess the impact of age and social factors on language dynamics..

Our research shows that the digital environment significantly impacts language change, including spelling, syntax, writing and multilingualism. The main trends we observe include shortening and simplifying language structures, expanding vocabulary through language mixing, and developing visual communication through emojis and memes. At the same time, digital slang and new language forms do not displace traditional norms but only adapt to different communication situations. The language toolkit is undergoing a significant transformation under the influence of cross-cultural communication on social media.

Other studies confirm similar findings. Sebba [28] points out that digital communication promotes deviation from standard spelling, consistent with our observations on using non-standard spellings in social media. Tagliamonte and Denis [29] analyse the language of adolescents in instant messaging and conclude that despite abbreviations and new constructions, the language structure remains stable, which also resonates with our data. The current study emphasizes the validity of the findings of these scholars, as evidenced by the established correlation between the impact of the digital environment and language. It is important to note the aspect of age differentiation.

Shytyk and Akimova [30], after conducting a comprehensive analysis of the ways in which characters' internal speech is transferred in the psycholinguistic projection, concluded that internal direct speech and non-proprietary direct speech provide additional linguistic material for creating psychological portraits, reduce the distance between the narrator, reader, and character, and help to establish interaction in their dialogue. Undoubtedly,

such results should be used to develop the concept of transformation of vocabulary and grammar under the influence of digitalization and social media.

The influence of social media on writing is explored by Tahir and Hassan [31], who note that features of digital slang penetrate formal texts. However, users are good at distinguishing between stylistic norms, which is consistent with our finding that there is a clear distinction between formal and informal styles. Multilingualism and language mixing in social media are analysed by Barman et al. [32], who emphasise that users often combine words from different languages within a single message. Our observations also confirm this, especially in multilingual environments. The study also confirmed the obvious dependence of language variations on the age and social qualities of users.

Rumsiene [33] considers the technical nature of digital speech, emphasising that Internet language helps to optimise communication. This coincides with our findings of a tendency towards reducing grammatical constructions in social media. Al-Ahdal [34] analyses the features of academic online communication and shows that even in formal learning environments, digital communication is influenced by informal style, consistent with our data on transitional language forms. Our study actualizes the functionality of social networks in this context, which act as a mechanism for creating new models of communication. Moreover, this study differentiates the impact of different platforms: in particular, Twitter actively shortens grammatical forms, while Instagram uses non-standard variations with emotional connotations.

Sun et al. [35] analyze the potential of artificial neural networks in the context of forming new lexical definitions. The relevance of the publication seems obvious against the background of active integration of AI tools into social networks.

In continuation, the publications of Morales [36], Rueger et al. [37] conduct an in-depth study of the transformation of the English language in the lexical and grammatical context in the context of the rapid development of the Internet and mobile technologies. The researchers analyze the dynamics of language use, including abbreviations, hashtags, and emojis. The current article, on the other hand, confirms that basic grammatical structures remain understandable and recognizable to users despite the

speed of language transformations in the digital environment.

Finally, Stoika et al. [38] investigate the ways in which social media and online communication influence the vocabulary and style of modern English. There are similarities in the conclusions of Stoika et al. [38] and our results are seen in the recognition of the importance of tracking changes in cultural and social practices that are expressed through language tools.

Thus, our study confirms the general conclusion that language change in the digital environment is an evolutionary process reinforced by technological and social factors. The Internet facilitates the emergence of new language norms, but they do not replace traditional standards; they only adapt to new communication conditions.

6. CONCLUSION

The study showed that digital communication is one of the key factors of language change in the modern world. Social networks, messengers, and other online platforms actively influence vocabulary and grammar, stimulating the emergence of new language phenomena and modifying traditional language norms. Among the most notable trends are grammar simplification and spelling substitution, which demonstrates the need for brevity and efficiency in online communication.

The results of the analysis of a text sample from Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok, and Reddit showed that different social networks have specific linguistic features. It was also found that the age and gender of users influence their language behavior in the digital environment. Young people (13-30 years old) are the main drivers of language innovation, while middle-aged people (30-50 years old) adapt to popular trends, and the older generation (50+) preserve traditional language norms. Women are more likely to use emotionally colored constructions, emojis, and informal vocabulary, while men use laconic style and irony.

The study achieved its main objectives: it identified the most significant linguistic phenomena based on lexical analysis and grammatical analysis, and assessed the impact of social media on the language system.

The study is limited by the difficulty of empirical verification of theoretical conclusions.

Prospects for further research may include a more detailed analysis of digital communication's impact on official speech, academic writing, and professional vocabulary and forecasting long-term changes in the language system under the influence of digital technologies.

7. DECLARATIONS

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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