
INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT:

In recent years before the advent of the media, traditional observation of grammar, sentence structure, spelling etc. were highly acknowledged and adhered to, especially when it comes to written conversations. During this time, people were measured by their mode of creative writings, composure etc. There was no welcoming of errors that lead to misunderstanding of what one was meant to say. However, with the introduction of media communication in the 20th century, the world of language has witnessed a lot of transformation and changes. Some of those changes include the carving of words, particularly shortcuts, abbreviations and acronyms, emojis, etc. that represent and suit the space (media) through which they are used. During this time people no longer follow the diction that defines what was earlier known as the formal way of communication. Users find it however more suitable to use, because of the impacts it has (easy understanding) in the course of the conversation. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), and WhatsApp encourage this rapid and interactive informal communication, leading to noticeable changes in vocabulary, grammar, and writing styles. Owing to this fact, this paper examines the influence of social media on language, with reference to the informal English language used in digital communication. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach and is particularly based on secondary sources like books, journal articles, and scholarly discussions on language and digital media. It focuses primarily on the key linguistic features commonly found in social media communication, which includes abbreviations, slangs, emojis, informal writing styles, and also, code-mixing. This finding indicates that social media is not a tool that creates division in linguistics, particularly on its strict observance of rules, but as a tool that welcomes creativity, efficiency, and emotional expression in communication while contributing to increasing informalization of language. At the

same time, particular concerns are drawn regarding the reduced attention to standard grammar, spelling and formal writing conventions. This paper affirms that social media has in no way threatened English language but functions as a dynamic space where language adapts certain changes that enhance communication among people of different backgrounds. Therefore, understanding these changes does not only help us to understand media communication language alone, but leading us to recognize how language continues to evolve in the digital era. By the end of the study submission, it would suffice to welcome media language rather than gazing at it from the optical point of view as a tool that inflicts injuries to the ever-cherished mode of formal conversation. This is highly important because it enables users to communicate effectively with every group of learners.

KEYWORDS:

Social Media, Language Change, Digital Communication, English Language, Internet Linguistics, Informal Language.

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Introduction

The emergence of social media platforms has revolutionized the way we communicate and interact with others. In this article, we will explore the profound impact of social media on language and communication. By examining the various ways social media has influenced language use, linguistic patterns, and communication practices, we can gain a deeper understanding of the transformative effects of this digital phenomenon (Crystal, 2011). Social media has had a profound impact on language and communication, revolutionizing the way we interact with others. The rise of social media platforms has facilitated global connections and real-time interactions, transcending geographical boundaries and time zones. Language has adapted to the brevity and informality of social media, giving rise to new linguistic strategies such as abbreviations, acronyms, and hashtags. Social media has also become a hub for language creativity and innovation, with users co-creating new words, expressions, and memes. Communication practices have

been transformed, allowing for both immediate and asynchronous interactions, fostering the formation of global communities. However, challenges arise from the potential for misunderstandings and the spread of misinformation in online communication. Responsible communication and critical evaluation of information are essential in navigating the digital landscape. Ultimately, by embracing the opportunities and addressing the challenges presented by social media, we can foster meaningful and inclusive interactions in the ever-evolving realm of language and communication.

Literature Review

A lot of scholars, especially the English scholars, have examined the relationship between language and digital communication. On this, David Crystal in his book titled *Language and the Internet* highlights the influence of online communication on language where it creates new varieties of language code that are very odd in the consideration of traditional language vocabulary.

Naomi S. Baron, in *Always On: Language in an Online and Mobile World*, dwells heavily on how digital platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc. encourage the usage of informal style in communication, particularly in chats. She notes that social media and texting encourage informal, conversational styles of writing, often resembling spoken language more than traditional written forms (Baron 67). Baron stresses that while the language is good in some ways where it creates and promotes immediacy in communication and easy understanding, they may blur the boundaries between formal and informal registers, especially when these users carry the same mode of shortcutting and abbreviating which is acceptable in the digital space into academic or professional contexts.

Thurlow and his colleague argue that computer-mediated communication mirrors social identity and inventive skills rather than linguistic decline. Studies on internet linguistics also point out the role of abbreviations, emojis, shortcuts, code-mixing etc. in enhancing expression and accessibility. These concepts and studies

provide the theoretical base to understanding language change in digital avenues.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative and descriptive research approach in order to examine the influence of social media on language in our contemporary world. As earlier stated, it relies importantly on secondary sources, including books, scholarly articles, and some other online publications that discuss the shift in language patterns and modes, with regards to digital communication, and internet language. Key sources here include the works written by David Crystal, Naomi Baron, and studies in sociolinguistics and internet linguistics.

The study focuses on the mostly and vastly used common platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram to observe language patterns in everyday communication among users. The prominent features this work analysed greatly include abbreviations which involve “BRB” (Be Right Back), “LOL” (Laugh out Loud), “OMG” (Oh My God) etc., and acronyms like “GOAT” (Greatest of all time), “JOMO” (Joy of missing out) etc. It also includes slangs, informal writing styles, code-mixing, and the use of emojis as a mode of non-verbal communication. Examples of these key features were derived through textual observation of online publicly available posts, captions, advertisements, and discussions.

The analysis involves differentiating and categorizing linguistic features according to the role they play and the impact they have on language. For example, abbreviations and acronyms are examined for efficiency in communication, while emojis and visual symbols are analysed for their tremendous role in effective emotional communication. Code-mixing is explored in the context of cultural identity and multilingual communication. For example, the art of code-mixing Kannada language with English language among users in a communication which helps in understanding each

other effectively.

This descriptive approach is particularly suitable for a UG-level study, because it helps to enhance the researcher's understanding, interpretation and critical observation rather than quantitative measurement. The methodology provides a structured way to analyse how social media functions as a tool responsible for linguistic change, while remaining within the ethical and practical limits of undergraduate research.

Findings

The study reveals the technical words that have shown how social media transformed the way English is used in digital communication. One of these major findings is the global spread and understanding of the abbreviations and acronyms, such as “Gr8” (Great), “ASAP” (as soon as possible), “FYI” (For your information), and “DM” (Direct message), etc. which is often part of everyday writings in digital communication. These shortenings make communication quicker, faster, and more concise for understanding one's point, especially in platforms like WhatsApp, Messenger etc. Another notable finding is the use of slang and informal expressions, which often differ from region to region, country to country and which reflects cultural and social trends. For instance, phrases like “Yeep” or “Nay” have gained popularity online but are seldom used in formal writing.

The study also highlights the growing role of emojis, GIFs, and stickers, which replace some kinds of gestures that are regarded as non-verbal communication. Emojis, most to mention, serve as emotional symbols that explain the tone of the message, prevent misunderstandings, and give textual conversation more expressiveness and meaning. They echo and communicate feelings that words may not suffice, just at the sight or viewing of it. For example, a simple “I am happy” or “sad” can communicate completely different feelings depending on whether it is accompanied by a 😊, 😞, or 🙄, 🙊 emojis.

Another aspect that this finding reveals is the prevalence of code-mixing, where communicators (users) follow and understand each other well by blending English with other local languages. In India, for instance, I often read people giving affirmation to questions that demand “yes” with the code-mixing of these two unidentical words “Yes da.” In this way people are able to understand, not only the affirmation but the mood of the sender of the text. This reflects linguistic creativity and adaptability, showing how language evolves to suit social contexts and digital platforms.

Finally, the use of informal writing style is never left out; it is highly observed. Users of the digital media often shy away from the strict rules that demand the correct observation of grammar, punctuation, spelling conventions that are mostly checked in conventional writings. It is good to say that in digital communication “everything goes” just the way it is often regarded, provided one understands the other. For example, a sentence like “cant wait 4 d show” replaces “I can’t wait for the show,” just as a statement like “Uza kasua yo, bring bread” replaces the formal way of saying “When you had gone to market, remember to bring bread” among Nigerians. This might sound awkward but the interesting thing is that people find it more appealing and understanding than what one would feel otherwise. Such trends, however, highlight the shift towards efficiency and speed in online communication, although they challenge formal writing norms.

Social media has both positive and negative impacts on language use. Stressing on the positive side, it promotes creativity, conciseness and expressiveness by letting users explore with new words, abbreviations, slangs, shortcuts, symbols, and emojis. It also makes communication faster, and more understandable, especially across diverse cultures and linguistic backgrounds, promoting multiple languages and code-mixing. However, on the negative side, over-reliance on informal language and symbols can weaken one’s grammar accuracy, spelling, syntax, particularly among students, in this way inflicting more injuries to their academic

excellence than the pleasure it gives for easy understanding of media communications. The frequent use of shortcuts and non-standard forms may also blur the distinction between formal and informal writing. This being said, while social media enriches and revolutionizes language, it also poses challenges to maintaining standard language norms, highlighting the need for balanced and context-appropriate language use.

Observations

Based on these findings, several observations emerge about the wider and broader influence of social media on language, particularly in this our vast growing idea of science and technology.

First, social media encourages and welcomes linguistic innovation and experimentation. Users in this case are not just breaking rules by formulating codes, acronyms, abbreviations, shortcuts, emojis, etc. for convenience. They are formulating norms and standards that define the fast-paced, interactive environment of digital platforms. Language has become easy and more adaptive, with individuals negotiating meaning through text, symbols, and multimedia content simultaneously. Unlike the traditional understanding that was known in the recent past where people fail to communicate understandably by trying to follow the laid-down rules of formal writing, digital media has reshaped this concept by providing easy access through which individuals communicate and understand each other in a different and unique way – be it through words, symbols or emojis.

Second, the study observes that while social media encourages creativity, it also contributes to the informalization of language. Now, in some cases and instances, traditional grammar and vocabulary are often neglected or looked down upon, and which sadly, may affect students, professionals, and others who rely on standard English in formal settings. However, this informalization does not indicate language decline; rather, it points out the emergence of a new code, or better said, a new register of digital English – a

kind that balances efficiency, clarity, expressiveness and understanding.

Third, social media facilitates diverse modes of communication. Unlike face-to-face conversation, where body language, facial expressions, tone, renders meaning, digital communication summarizes all these into a single text enhanced by emojis, GIFs, and at some point, memes. This shift though useful, poses implications for literacy and communication studies. It shows that understanding modern language use now requires much attention to spoken, written and visual elements.

Lastly, the study observes that social media promotes and welcomes cross-cultural exchange. Slangs, memes, and expressions can take a wider spread meeting global reach within hours, while also exposing users to diverse linguistic patterns and cultural references. This dynamic creates a global digital linguistic community, where English acts as a lingua franca, but with local adaptations and innovations.

Conclusion

The study concludes that social media is a transformative force in contemporary language use. Rather than causing blunders or degradation of English, social media reshapes it to meet the demands of millions of people who were long lost in the understanding of communication with the view to following the traditional observation of conventional language. It helps in meeting rapid, interactive, and expressive communication. Features such as abbreviations, slang, emojis, code-mixing, and informal writing styles reflect the adaptability and pliability of language.

The findings suggest that educators, linguists, and communication specialists should acknowledge and embrace these digital trends rather than resisting by judging it harshly. At one point, resisting its usage in academic space where examinations are evaluated and certified is fine but not its cancelation entirely. This

is because understanding digital English is crucial for teaching, learning, and professional communication in the 21st century. Moreover, social media illustrates that language is living and evolving, responding not only to technology but also to social, cultural, and emotional needs.

In summary, this study stresses that the influence of social media on language is complex, multifaceted and should be appreciated as such. It promotes creativity, efficiency, and expressiveness while challenging traditional norms. Far from signaling the decline of language, social media demonstrates how English evolves to remain relevant, practical, and engaging in a rapidly changing digital world.

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