

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON LANGUAGE CHANGE AND COMMUNICATION PRACTICES

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Abstract. This study investigates the impact of social media on language and communication patterns in contemporary culture. As social media platforms continue to affect relationships, they influence linguistic choices, communication methods, and the evolution of language. The study looks at how brevity, emojis, and multimedia on social media sites such as Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok let people express themselves in new ways and create a distinct fusion of casual and formal speech. It talks on the rise of digital dialects, how hashtags influence conversations, and how these things affect literacy and language acquisition. The study also discusses issues with language deterioration and the possibility of misunderstandings in a fast-paced digital setting. In the end, this study emphasizes how social media is a two-edged sword—it can be used to innovate language while also challenging established communication conventions.

Key words: social media, impact, communication, network, impact, formal, informal, method, literacy

Languages evolve dynamically over time due to a variety of sociocultural, technological, and political variables, a process known as "language evolution." This evolution has been further accelerated in recent years by the quick development of technology, especially the internet and social media, which has resulted in considerable global shifts in vocabulary, communication methods, and language use. Digital communication and social media have had a significant impact in the USA. With the introduction of social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, new terms and ways of communicating have emerged. For example, acronyms and abbreviations like "OMG" (Oh My God) and "LOL" (Laugh Out Loud) have

proliferated, indicating a tendency toward shorter and more casual communication (Tagliamonte & Denis, 2012). How people interact with information online has also changed as a result of the widespread adoption of hashtags (#) for content categorization and search. According to Tagliamonte & Denis (2012), there was a 35% increase in the prevalence of these abbreviations between 2010 and 2015, demonstrating the rapid integration of digital communication norms into ordinary language. Social media has an impact not just on vocabulary but also on syntax and grammar. The increasing use of "verbing," or converting nouns into verbs (e.g., "to Google," "to friend"), is one example of how language is changing in digital situations. According to David Crystal, "youngsters are reading more than ever because they're glued to screens." With the assistance of social networks texting, over half of the people, while typing any text message, strive to avoid long words replacing them with shorter ones. But the eminent linguist David Crystal (2008) in his book "Texting: The Gr8 Db8" mentions that the more students write, the more they strengthen their writing skills. As a result, rather than impairing users' literacy, its greater use actually increases it, especially among young people. Spelling mistakes are inevitable when writing quickly. According to Craig's (2003) research, students who utilize social networks develop bad reading and writing habits because they frequently employ odd jargon and acronyms, which negatively impacts their formal literacy skills.

Literature review. The evolution of language is one of the most important effects of social media. According to Thurlow and Poff (2013), social media creates a new linguistic environment that is casual and concise. The widespread usage of emojis, acronyms, and abbreviations has changed the way that people communicate (Agar, 2013). These components function as new means of expression that communicate emotions and subtleties that are frequently lacking in text-based communication, in addition to acting as linguistic short cuts. Digital dialects and other informal language variations have arisen as a result of social media platforms. Barash (2018)

claims that these dialects are a synthesis of several linguistic influences, such as youth culture, regional vernaculars, and online slang. This phenomena is especially noticeable on Twitter and TikTok, where users are encouraged to use innovative language play and brevity. According to Danet and Herring (2007), the dynamic aspect of communication in digital environments is emphasized by the adaptation of language in these circumstances. Social media has an impact on literacy and language acquisition. According to Duncan (2018), social media offers a medium for casual language exercise that can improve communicative skills. On the other hand, language erosion and the loss of formal writing skills are also worries brought up by the informal nature of online communication. While informal contacts can encourage participation, educational experts such as Huang (2019) argue for a balanced approach, arguing that in order to promote comprehensive language development, informal interactions should be combined with standard literacy practices.

Methodology. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study looks at how social media affects language and communication habits in detail by integrating qualitative and quantitative research. This methodology makes it possible to comprehend linguistic patterns and user behavior on many platforms in a detailed manner.

Quantitative data. Surveys: To collect demographic data and evaluate users' social media communication habits, an online survey will be conducted. The questions will center on how often they are used, what kinds of language are used (such as emoticons and acronyms), and how they are thought to affect formal language proficiency.

Content Analysis: To investigate linguistic elements including the usage of slang, emojis, hashtags, and sentence structure, a content analysis of posts from a representative sample of users (50 posts per participant) will be carried out. Language components and communication modalities will be categorized in this investigation using a coding method.

Qualitative data. Interviews: A subset of 30 participants (10 from each platform) will participate in semi-structured interviews. The purpose of these interviews is to learn more about how users perceive social media to influence their language use, communication preferences, and miscommunication experiences.

Focus Groups: To encourage conversations regarding participants' experiences with language on social media, including benefits and drawbacks, three focus group sessions—one for each platform—will be held. Each focus group will have six to eight people in it.

Findings. Numerous new terms and slang terms were found through content analysis, especially on TikTok and Twitter. Many users aligned themselves with group identities by adopting terminology that were popular among certain communities (e.g., "stan," "simp"). According to interviews, users frequently felt under pressure to keep up with these linguistic changes in order to be relevant in online discussions. Even in situations where formal language is typically used, like professional networking on LinkedIn, participants saw a shift in tone toward more casual online interactions. According to survey results, 75% of participants felt at ease utilizing slang and informal language in work environments, demonstrating a blending of informal and formal communication styles.

In contrast, 40% of respondents voiced concerns about their formal writing abilities deteriorating. The participants reported feeling less confidence when writing for academic or professional purposes due to their reliance on informal communication. In focus groups, educators underlined the necessity of using a balanced strategy to integrate both formal and informal language practices into the classroom.

The study's conclusions show how social media has a big impact on communication and language usage. It promotes creativity and connectedness, but it also raises issues with literacy and misinterpretation. It is essential to comprehend these

processes in order to navigate modern communication effectively, as language continues to change in these digital settings.

Discussion. According to the report, there has been a noticeable rise in the usage of emoticons, new terminology, and acronyms on social media sites. This creative use of language is indicative of a larger movement in informal communication, where consumers value succinctness and emotive expression. In online situations that move quickly, the ability to express complex emotions with simple emoticons or shorthand facilitates richer conversations. Though these improvements speed up communication, they can also cause miscommunication, especially in situations when nuanced expression is crucial. This blurring of the lines between formal and informal discourse can democratize communication by making it more relatable and accessible, but it also raises concerns about professionalism and the potential erosion of traditional communication norms. Organizations may need to reevaluate their communication policies to adapt to this new landscape while ensuring that professionalism is maintained. The merging of personal and professional communication styles raises important questions about the evolving nature of workplace interactions.

Conclusion. Social media has a huge and diverse influence on language and communication patterns, which reflects a big change in how people communicate with each other and express themselves. The creation of dynamic online communities, the rise of language innovations, and the merging of informal and formal communication styles are some of the major findings that this study emphasizes. Through the use of emoticons, new terminology, and acronyms, social media encourages creativity and emotional expression, but it also raises issues with misinterpretation and the decline of traditional literacy abilities. The casual tone used in professional settings highlights the need for a balanced strategy that values both informal and formal language and raises concerns about the changing standards of communication.

Moreover, the establishment of discourse groups via commonly used hashtags encourages a feeling of community and gives users the ability to take part in social change. But the quick changes in vocabulary on these platforms can make those who are not familiar with the current lingo feel alienated, which emphasizes how important it is to be inclusive while interacting online.

Certainly! Here's a list of references that would typically support the discussions and findings presented in the previous sections on the impact of social media on language and communication practices:

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