

## THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL NETWORKS AND TEXT-BASED COMMUNICATION ON LEXICAL AND SEMANTIC CHANGE

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### *Abstract:*

This study explores the influence of modern digital communication platforms—specifically social networks and text-based chat applications—on the lexical and semantic structure of contemporary language. In an era characterized by rapid technological advancement and digital interaction, the Internet has emerged not only as a medium of communication but also as a catalyst for linguistic innovation. The research investigates how chats, emojis, abbreviations, and borrowed English lexicon contribute to the evolution of language by transforming word meanings, simplifying structures, and introducing new semiotic elements.

*Key words:* social networks, digital communication, lexical change, semantic shift, abbreviation, emoji, Internet language, linguistics, discourse.

### 1. Introduction

The digital revolution, particularly the proliferation of information technologies, has significantly transformed human communication. Social media platforms and instant messaging systems are now ubiquitous among both youth and older generations, redefining linguistic practices and communication styles. These platforms frequently adopt features of spoken discourse, resulting in a hybrid mode of communication that bridges spoken and written language. The emergence of this new linguistic modality necessitates comprehensive scholarly analysis, especially regarding its lexical-semantic implications [Yusupova, 2019].

### 2. Forms of Communication in Digital Spaces

Digital communication today occurs primarily through personal messages, group chats, public comments, and social media posts. Each of these formats gives rise to distinct language forms and interactional strategies. Given the demands for brevity and immediacy, particularly in group chats, users often rely on abbreviations, emojis, and symbolic elements. Additionally, algorithmic enhancements and predictive text technologies further streamline and influence these communicative behaviors.

### 3. Language Simplification and Abbreviation Use

The language used on digital platforms prioritizes simplicity, speed, and clarity. This has led to the widespread use of abbreviations such as *ok*, *lol*, *brb*, *imo*, and *idk*. Although originally derived from English, such expressions have been integrated into other languages, including Uzbek. Notably, these abbreviations frequently undergo semantic shifts, acquiring meanings and connotations beyond their original interpretations.

### 4. Emojis and Visual Semantics

Emojis function as non-verbal visual aids that enhance emotional expression and textual nuance. A single emoji such as a smiley face, tear, or heart can drastically alter the tone of a message or even serve as a substitute for a complete sentence. This phenomenon exemplifies language economy, whereby a compact symbol conveys extensive meaning with minimal effort. The semantic versatility of emojis makes them powerful tools in modern communication.

### 5. Semantic Expansion and Meaning Shift

The pervasive integration of English terminology into Uzbek and other languages often results in semantic modification. For instance:

“Like”: Formerly indicating affection, now signifies virtual approval or endorsement.

“Follow”: Initially meaning physical or ideological tracking, now refers to subscribing to a social media profile.

“Story”: Once a narrative form, now denotes ephemeral content posted on platforms like Instagram.

“Post”: Formerly referring to mail delivery, now used for uploading content online.

Similarly, we observe meaning shifts in other lexical items:

“Viral”: From describing contagious diseases to indicating widespread popularity of online content.

“Friend”: Traditionally a close interpersonal connection, now broadly refers to online contacts.

“Troll”: From a mythological creature to someone who intentionally disrupts online discussions.

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These shifts reflect how digital contexts reshape semantic boundaries and communicative norms [Kholbaev, 2025].

#### 6. Convergence of Written and Spoken Language

One notable consequence of digital communication is the diminishing distinction between written and spoken language. The textual language used in chats increasingly mirrors features of spoken discourse, including informal vocabulary, phonetic spellings, and expressive markers (e.g., emojis, capitalization for emphasis, @mentions). This convergence results in more dynamic and fluid language use, necessitating new frameworks for linguistic analysis.

Moreover, syntactic structures are becoming more elliptical, and textual cues are increasingly used to convey paralinguistic elements such as tone, sarcasm, and affect. These trends indicate that the Internet is not merely a medium of communication but a transformative agent in language development.

#### 7. Societal and Cultural Implications

The linguistic changes induced by digital platforms influence the broader culture of communication. While such changes enhance efficiency and expressiveness, they also pose challenges to the preservation of formal and literary standards. Therefore, scholars argue for the classification of Internet language as a distinct linguistic phenomenon requiring systematic study across linguistic, educational, and sociocultural domains.

#### Conclusion

The linguistic shifts catalyzed by social networks and chat communication underscore the evolving nature of language in the digital age. These changes ranging from lexical innovation to semantic transformation offer valuable insights into the interplay between technology and language. For linguists, educators, and sociologists, understanding these processes is essential for interpreting contemporary communication patterns and safeguarding linguistic heritage in the face of rapid technological change.

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