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THE IMPACT OF ONLINE COMMUNICATION ON CHANGES IN ENGLISH VOCABULARY AND GRAMMAR

ВПЛИВ ВІРТУАЛЬНОГО МОВНОГО СЕРЕДОВИЩА НА ФОРМУВАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ ЛЕКСИКИ ТА ГРАМАТИКИ

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The present article examines the phenomenon of the virtual language environment and provides an in-depth analysis of the influence of social media on contemporary English vocabulary and grammar [5]. In the twenty-first century, digital technologies have fundamentally transformed patterns of human interaction, giving rise to new modes of communication that transcend geographical and cultural boundaries. Social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram have developed into dynamic communicative ecosystems where language is not only used but continuously created, modified, and disseminated [4]. Within these spaces, linguistic innovation occurs at an unprecedented speed, reflecting the technological, social, and cultural shifts characteristic of the digital era.

The concept of a virtual language environment refers to a digitally mediated communicative space in which linguistic norms are shaped by immediacy, interactivity, multimodality, and global accessibility. Unlike traditional forms of written communication, online discourse combines elements of spoken and written language, often resulting in hybrid structures that challenge established grammatical conventions. Emojis, hashtags, memes, audiovisual components, and algorithm-driven visibility further contribute to the transformation of language practices. In such conditions, users become active participants in linguistic change rather than passive recipients of normative standards.

The relevance of this research lies in the rapid and large-scale transformation of contemporary English under the influence of social media. Internet neologisms, abbreviations, slang expressions, and non-standard grammatical constructions increasingly penetrate offline communication, advertising discourse, popular culture, and even academic contexts, as emphasized by numerous scholars [1; 4]. These developments necessitate a systematic investigation of the mechanisms governing linguistic innovation in digital environments. Furthermore, they raise important questions regarding language standardization, the preservation of grammatical norms, and the adaptation of English language teaching methodologies to current communicative realities.

The object of the study is the language used by English-speaking users on social media platforms. The subject of the research comprises lexical and grammatical innovations emerging in digital communication and their role in shaping contemporary youth language.

The aim of the study is to analyze the ways in which social media influence the formation, adaptation, and dissemination of new lexical units and grammatical forms in English, as well as to identify the dominant tendencies underlying these processes.

The empirical foundation of the research consists of 300 units of English-language content collected from TikTok and Instagram, alongside the results of a survey conducted among 100 adolescents aged 13–18. The combined qualitative and quantitative analysis enables the identification of recurrent lexical and grammatical patterns, as well as the evaluation of young users' attitudes toward digital language practices. The findings support the hypothesis that social media function as a linguistic "laboratory," where experimentation, creativity, and communicative efficiency drive continuous language modification.

One of the most prominent tendencies observed in online discourse is grammatical simplification. This tendency manifests particularly in verb morphology, agreement patterns, and syntactic reduction. Frequently encountered examples include forms such as "I haven't drank coffee yet"

instead of the grammatically normative “I haven’t drunk coffee yet,” or “She go to school” in place of “She goes to school.” The elliptical construction “I can’t even” illustrates the omission of syntactic completion for expressive effect. Such structures reflect a prioritization of speed, emotional immediacy, and conversational tone over strict adherence to prescriptive norms. Through constant repetition in highly visible digital spaces, these forms become normalized within informal communication and may influence broader language practices .

Another significant grammatical feature of online discourse is syntactic economy. Users frequently omit auxiliary verbs, articles, and subjects, as in “He funny,” “I saw cat,” or “Going out now.” Double negatives such as “I don’t know nothing” also appear with considerable frequency. While traditionally classified as errors, in digital communication these constructions often function as stylistic devices that enhance emotional intensity or mimic spoken language. The preference for brevity is further reinforced by platform constraints, character limits, and the rapid pace of interaction, all of which encourage linguistic compression and reduced structural complexity.

Substantial changes are likewise evident in the lexical system of modern English. Social media serve as powerful generators and accelerators of neologisms that capture emerging social realities and cultural trends. Among the lexical items identified in the study are aestheticianing (acting as an aesthetician without professional certification), brainrot (an obsessive interest in a show or meme), cap and no cap (markers of falsehood and truth), and gaslighting (psychological manipulation causing someone to doubt their perception of reality). These neologisms arise from the need to describe experiences specific to digital culture, such as online fandoms, influencer practices, and meme-based communication. Their rapid circulation demonstrates the collective and participatory nature of lexical innovation in virtual environments.

In addition to neologisms, the widespread use of abbreviations and acronyms represents a defining characteristic of digital discourse. Units such as BRB (Be Right Back), BFFR (Be For Freaking Real), FYI (For Your Information), and TMI (Too Much Information) function as tools of linguistic economy and efficiency. They enable users to maintain a high tempo of interaction while conveying nuanced meanings. Notably, many of these abbreviations have transcended digital boundaries and entered spoken language, illustrating the permeability between online and offline communicative spheres.

Internet slang and informal expressions also contribute significantly to the expressive richness of contemporary English. Lexical units such as vibe check, flex, simp, stan, and ghosting allow speakers to articulate

attitudes, social dynamics, and interpersonal relationships in concise yet culturally resonant ways [4; 5]. These expressions often serve as markers of generational identity and group affiliation, reinforcing solidarity within specific online communities. The performative aspect of language use on social media – where communication is frequently public and audience-oriented – further amplifies the symbolic value of such lexical choices.

The survey results reveal that adolescents not only recognize but actively incorporate internet-derived vocabulary and non-standard grammatical forms into their everyday communication. Respondents reported that social media encourage a communicative style characterized by brevity, emotional expressiveness, creativity, and a heightened awareness of social identity. Many participants perceive digital language not as incorrect but as contextually appropriate and reflective of modern communicative norms. These findings confirm the profound influence of online environments on the linguistic behavior of young people and highlight the necessity of re-evaluating traditional attitudes toward language change .

In summary, the lexical and grammatical transformations observed in contemporary English under the influence of internet culture demonstrate the dynamic and adaptive nature of language. Social media platforms act as catalysts for linguistic innovation, facilitating rapid experimentation and widespread dissemination of new forms. Understanding these processes is essential for linguists, educators, and discourse analysts, as the virtual language environment increasingly shapes the evolution of English in both digital and real-world contexts.

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