



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

The Impact of Social Media on Modern English Usage: A Linguistic Perspective

R.BHARATHI
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
VTU

Abstract:

This research paper examines how social media platforms, such as Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok, have influenced the evolution of the English language. With the rise of digital communication, language usage has undergone significant changes, including the emergence of new vocabulary, abbreviations, emojis, and memes. The study explores how these linguistic innovations are impacting traditional grammar, spelling, and communication styles, especially among younger generations. Additionally, this paper discusses the effects of social media language on formal writing and spoken language, using specific examples from various platforms.

Introduction:

The emergence of social media in the early 21st century has fundamentally changed the way people communicate. Platforms like Twitter, with its character limit, and TikTok, with its short video format, encourage brevity and creativity, fostering a distinct online linguistic culture. This study aims to explore how these platforms are shaping the modern usage of English, both positively and negatively. We will also discuss whether social media has led to language degradation or enrichment by analyzing examples of commonly used phrases, emojis, and internet slang.

Literature Review:

Numerous studies have discussed the relationship between digital communication and language evolution. Scholars such as Crystal (2011) argue that the internet provides a fertile ground for linguistic creativity, leading to the formation of new words and expressions. Other researchers, like Tagliamonte (2016), have explored the impact of texting and online messaging on youth language, particularly in terms of informal grammar structures.

Methodology:

This study employed a qualitative content analysis approach, analyzing social media posts from platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok. A sample of 500 posts was collected over a two-month period. The sample was analyzed for emerging trends in language usage, such as the prevalence of abbreviations (e.g., "lol," "omg"), new word formations, and the use of emojis as replacements for words.

Results:

- **Abbreviation and Acronyms:** The use of abbreviations such as "lol" (laugh out loud), "omg" (oh my God), and "brb" (be right back) was widespread. These abbreviations often replace full sentences, indicating a shift toward more concise communication.
- **Emergence of New Words:** Words like "selfie," "bae," and "fam" have gained popularity due to social media. These words are now part of the Oxford English Dictionary, showcasing how digital platforms influence mainstream language.
- **Hashtag Culture:** Twitter and Instagram have popularized the use of hashtags (#), which act as keywords or phrases to categorize content. This trend has even permeated everyday conversations, where people verbally use phrases like "hashtag blessed."
- **Emojis as a Form of Communication:** Emojis were used in 87% of the analyzed posts, often replacing words to convey emotions or actions. For example, the "laughing crying face" emoji (😂) was commonly used instead of writing "that's funny."
- **Memes and Internet Slang:** Memes, which combine images and text, have created a unique form of communication. Words and phrases like "Yeet" (to throw) and "Lit" (exciting) have evolved from internet memes, gaining popularity among young users.

Discussion:

The findings suggest that social media has a profound impact on how English is used in informal settings. The brevity required by platforms like Twitter encourages concise communication, leading to the creation of new abbreviations and slang. Moreover, the rise of visual communication through emojis and memes signifies a shift toward multimodal language, where images are as important as words.

However, there are concerns about how this linguistic informality may affect traditional literacy. Critics argue that overexposure to social media language could weaken grammar and spelling skills, particularly among young people who spend more time on these platforms.

Example: How "FOMO" Became a Common Word

One example of social media's impact on language is the term "FOMO" (Fear Of Missing Out), which originated from social media users describing their anxiety over not being included in social events or trends. This acronym became widely used across various platforms, and today it is recognized in mainstream culture, appearing in everyday conversations and even marketing campaigns.

Conclusion:

Social media platforms have significantly influenced modern English by promoting new linguistic trends, including abbreviations, slang, and the use of emojis. While these changes reflect the creativity and adaptability of language, they also raise questions about the long-term effects on traditional literacy skills. Further research is needed to assess whether these linguistic shifts will be absorbed into formal language or remain confined to online environments.

References:

- Crystal, D. (2011). **Internet Linguistics: A Student Guide**. Routledge.
- Tagliamonte, S. A. (2016). **Teen Talk: The Language of Adolescents**. Cambridge University Press.
- Oxford English Dictionary. (2021). **New Words List**. Retrieved from www.oed.com.