



THE LINGUISTIC AND DISCURSIVE FEATURES OF SOCIAL MEDIA LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the linguistic and discursive features of social media language with a particular focus on Twitter interactions. Drawing on both global and Uzbek sociolinguistic research, it examines how lexical innovation, slang, multilingual code-switching, and platform-specific discourse strategies shape online communication. The analysis synthesizes findings from Zappavigna (2012), Ndibe and Nduka (2023), Murugesan et al. (2023), Baugh (2005), Saidova (2023), and Muminov (2021) to demonstrate how identity, community affiliation, and sociocultural norms influence digital discourse. Results highlight the hybrid nature of online language, where global trends intersect with local communicative practices, creating dynamic forms of expression.

KEYWORDS

Social media discourse, Twitter, slang, multilingualism, identity, Uzbek sociolinguistics.

INTRODUCTION

Social media has transformed communication by merging written, spoken, and visual modes into rapid, multimodal discourse. Twitter, in particular, has emerged as a site of linguistic innovation, where brevity and immediacy encourage new forms of expression. As Zappavigna (2012) argues, Twitter discourse fosters “ambient affiliation,” enabling users to build social bonds through hashtags, mentions, and stylistic markers such as emojis and non-standard spelling.

The study of online discourse has often emphasized global patterns, yet local sociocultural norms also play a crucial role. In Uzbekistan, communication styles are influenced by politeness strategies, multilingual practices, and the interplay between Uzbek, Russian, and English. Saidova (2023) shows how slang and jargon in Uzbek digital spaces reflect both global youth culture and local creativity, while Muminov (2021) highlights the persistence of traditional politeness norms even in informal online settings.

This paper seeks to answer three key questions:

1. What are the main linguistic features of social media discourse?
2. How do these features function in constructing identity and community?
3. How do local sociocultural factors shape their use in the Uzbek context?

LITERATURE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

Research shows that social media discourse is marked by lexical creativity. Murugesan et al. (2023) observe that abbreviations (e.g., idk), blended words (e.g., infodemic), and playful misspellings are widely used for efficiency and stylistic effect. In the Uzbek sphere, Saidova

(2023) notes the adaptation of English slang into hybrid forms, such as like qilish (“to press like”), combining English and Uzbek morphology.

Discursive strategies on Twitter fall into strategic and emotional modes (Ndibe & Nduka, 2023). Strategic posts often use concise, persuasive language and links to shape public opinion, while emotional posts rely on repetition, intensified adjectives, and emojis to express stance and engage audiences. Hashtags function both as topical labels (#ClimateChange) and as markers of in-group identity (#AdulthoodFail).

Multilingualism further enriches online interaction. Baugh’s (2005) notion of linguistic profiling suggests that lexical and grammatical choices index identity categories such as ethnicity, age, or social class. In Uzbekistan, users frequently switch between Uzbek, Russian, and English. Muminov (2021) demonstrates that even within informal discourse, politeness norms persist—such as respectful pronouns when addressing elders—revealing the influence of offline hierarchies in digital contexts.

Overall, social media language reflects a hybrid system. It combines global conventions such as abbreviations and memes with local adaptations shaped by cultural norms and multilingual practices.

CONCLUSION

The linguistic and discursive features of Twitter illustrate how global and local practices intersect in digital communication. Lexical innovation, emotional and strategic discourse, and multilingual code-switching all contribute to identity construction and community formation online. In the Uzbek context, global youth slang is localized through hybrid expressions, while traditional politeness strategies remain evident, showing that online discourse is not detached from offline social norms.

Future studies could employ corpus-based methods to analyze Uzbek Twitter discourse more systematically, tracking how younger generations innovate with language across multiple platforms.

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