



THE INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL AND ONLINE TECHNOLOGIES ON THE EVOLUTION OF LANGUAGE

Xudoyorova Shohsanam Xasan qizi

Student of the Uzbek Language and Literature Department
at Shahrizabz State Pedagogical Institute

Tel.: +998 88 802 30 04

Email: xudoyorovashohsanam36@gmail.com

Based on the review of PhD in Philology, G. Bahodirova

Abstract

This article examines the development of language in the context of rapidly advancing computer and internet technologies. The study demonstrates that digital technologies play a crucial role in shaping modern language and continuously contribute to the expansion of users' vocabulary according to their level of engagement with digital environments. In particular, younger generations, despite possessing strong English language skills, are frequently unfamiliar with business-related slang, while older people often struggle to understand youth slang formed within entertainment and online cultures. The practical value of this research lies in its relevance for philologists and specialists in digital technologies who are interested in improving communication through the integration of computer- and internet-based lexical units into everyday speech.

Keywords: Neologism, slang, digitalization, communication, social networks, language development.

Introduction

No language in the world represents a fixed and unchanging system of words and expressions. Languages continuously evolve under the influence of various social, cultural, and technological factors, becoming enriched with new lexical



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units and linguistic transformations. This process affects not only globally widespread languages such as English, but also national languages like Uzbek, which, despite having a more limited international presence, actively adapt to contemporary changes.

Today, language development is strongly influenced by digitalization, which has penetrated nearly every sphere of modern life. The majority of people in both developed and developing countries use social media platforms for entertainment and the Internet for professional and educational purposes. Globalization and the expansion of international trade have accelerated the spread of international communication languages within business and intercultural interactions. At present, proficiency in foreign languages, especially English, is considered an essential factor for obtaining well-paid employment opportunities in Uzbekistan. Therefore, it is natural that both foreign languages and digital technologies are widely used in international communication processes, directly contributing to language evolution. In such communicative environments, participants tend to employ simplified and universally understandable vocabulary. As a result, expressions become shortened, while grammatical and syntactic structures gradually undergo transformation.

It can undoubtedly be argued that digitalization influences language development; however, this assumption remains a hypothesis that requires empirical investigation and factual evidence. The present study aims to evaluate the impact of digitalization on the development of both the Uzbek and English languages.

Literature Review

The issue of the influence of digital technologies on language development, particularly on individual world languages, is a relatively new and insufficiently explored field within linguistics. Nevertheless, several significant studies related to this topic can be identified. Initial research in this area began to emerge in the 1980s. One of the earliest notable works was the article “Computer-Mediated Communication as a Force in Language Change” by the prominent Brown University scholar Naomi S. Baron published in 1984. Later, Baron devoted several comprehensive monographic studies to this issue, among which “Always



On: Language in an Online and Mobile World” (2010) deserves particular attention.

The work of Gao L. (2006), which examines changes in the Chinese language under the influence of computer communication and the Internet, is also noteworthy. Another important contribution, in our opinion, is the article by O. Panyushkina (2014) entitled “Language Transformation under the Influence of Social Networks (Based on Spanish Language Materials).” Although this study focuses specifically on the Spanish language and reveals several distinctive characteristics of communication within Spanish-speaking social networks, the author nevertheless draws a number of significant and broadly applicable conclusions.

Methodology

The methodological foundation of this study is based on the scholarly works devoted to English and Uzbek lexicology. During the research process, descriptive, structural, and comparative methods were employed. Component analysis was used to determine and interpret the semantic meanings of lexical units.

Results and Discussion

Language is not a static collection of words; rather, it is closely connected to numerous social and communicative processes occurring within speech communities. Therefore, language development represents a natural and continuous phenomenon. In this context, digitalization plays a particularly significant role in the evolution and transformation of language.

One of the primary outcomes of digitalization is the emergence of neologisms that denote new concepts such as the Internet, email, browsers, and servers. The appearance of such neologisms influences the phonetic and grammatical aspects of language, contributing to the widespread use of abbreviations, simplified spelling, punctuation changes, and other linguistic transformations.

The most significant impact of information technologies on language development can be observed in the creation of neologisms directly associated with the field of computer technologies Tom Chatfield (2013). Consequently,



over the past few decades, the English vocabulary has been enriched with words such as avatar, hashtag, trolling, meme, spam, LOL, and geek. These lexical units are now actively used not only in English but also in Uzbek, particularly among people who frequently engage with social media or work in the field of digital technologies.

Thus, it can be argued that the development and widespread expansion of information technologies represent a decisive extralinguistic factor influencing language formation and evolution. In scientific literature, newly emerging digital vocabulary is described using different terminological approaches. Furthermore, researchers apply various classification principles when analyzing this lexical layer, including historical perspectives, social-network-based communication, and terminology associated with remote work.

Chronology of Digital Neologisms:

- Words and expressions that have existed since the emergence of digital technologies and have become fully integrated into different languages, such as computer, program, data, language, keyboard, and programming;
- Lexical units that have appeared relatively recently, mainly within the last 10–20 years, as a result of new digital concepts such as social networks, content, and selfie;
- Obsolete lexical items associated with outdated technologies, including floppy disk, ICQ, and modem.

Neologisms of Social Media. Internet memes represent one of the most productive sources of neologism formation in both English and Uzbek Shchurina; Christian Bauckhage. Researchers studying this phenomenon emphasize that the ironic and creative culture of online communication generates a substantial number of new lexical units. Moreover, many of these expressions gradually move beyond the boundaries of the Internet and become part of everyday spoken language.

Abbreviations and emojis deserve particular attention. They emerged under the influence of the rapid development of mobile communication and instant messaging technologies, supported today by widely used platforms such as



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WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger. Among the consequences of this influence are the appearance of new abbreviations, the replacement of words and letters with symbols, and the widespread use of hashtags and emoticons. Furthermore, the desire to save time while typing in everyday communication has led to significant changes in spelling, punctuation, and grammatical structures. These tendencies can be observed in both English and Uzbek.

Neologisms of Remote Work. The development of digital technologies enabled societies around the world to adapt successfully to the quarantine restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Within a short period, many professional and industrial processes shifted to remote working modes, which contributed to the emergence of a new culture of communication through video conferencing. In this respect, digitalization facilitated rapid interaction through online meetings and calls, while also helping individuals organize work schedules, deadlines, and tasks performed from home.

Today, the global Internet space has created a unique multilingual and multicultural environment in which neologisms and new expressions are actively formed and disseminated. The study of Internet language was pioneered by the British linguist David Crystal in 2001. The international online community plays an important role in analyzing, spreading, and popularizing these lexical innovations. Moreover, continuously updated dictionaries of neologisms and Internet slang have appeared, explaining the meanings of words and expressions that are especially popular among young people in online communication Pyrkalo; Lesya Stavytska.

The research investigated whether the emergence of new lexical units is primarily a result of digitalization or influenced by other social processes. Empirical findings demonstrate that social networks constitute a more significant source of new vocabulary than foreign languages themselves, since the number of social media users considerably exceeds the number of people actively communicating in foreign languages. According to Kuznetsova and Vakhromova (2009), no sphere of human activity, with the possible exception of medicine, can compete with computer technologies in generating neologisms. Both Uzbek and English have been substantially influenced by processes of informatization and digital



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communication. Today, English functions not only as an international language but also as the dominant language of the Internet and the primary source of neologisms associated with information technologies

At the same time, computerization and digitalization influence language both directly and indirectly. In particular, indirect linguistic influence is realized through processes of globalization and the worldwide spread of American English Hans (2017).

An analysis of people's attitudes toward newly emerging vocabulary demonstrates that such changes are generally perceived positively, although some individuals consider words originating from the digital sphere to be a negative phenomenon Liu and others (2019). According to studies conducted by Maulidiya and colleagues (2021), as well as Golovanova and Yakimenko (2019), the majority of young people actively use slang in their everyday communication.

Furthermore, young speakers employ slang not only while communicating on social media but also during face-to-face interactions with friends. Many young people believe that slang is more easily accepted by their peers than literary language and that the use of such expressions contributes to creating a modern image and maintaining friendly social relationships. This observation confirms that communication through social networks stimulates language development through the emergence and spread of slang vocabulary. At the same time, the literary language in everyday communication is increasingly associated with formality, conservatism, and traditional speech norms Maulidiya et al. (2021).

In this context, certain discursive debates emerge when some members of society and academic researchers argue that the excessive use of slang expressions diminishes the value of national culture and language Semeniuk et al. (2020). There is also a phenomenon commonly referred to as the "Americanization" of weaker languages, which can be observed not only in Uzbek but also in many other languages around the world Chaoyuan; Stig Hjarvard. In general, the Uzbek language is gradually losing some aspects of its linguistic uniqueness under the influence of information technologies and rapid globalization, while literary language in digital correspondence is now used mainly in formal or professional communication.



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It should also be emphasized that the use of slang vocabulary is usually not determined by a person's age or social status. Instead, the range of slang expressions employed depends largely on the type of activity an individual engages in on the Internet. For example, working-age adults who are actively involved in professional activities often use foreign lexical items necessary for organizing work processes. By contrast, younger people frequently have limited understanding of business slang and only partial familiarity with computer-related slang. Therefore, understanding particular slang expressions generally requires participation in the communicative environment where such vocabulary is used or the use of specialized slang dictionaries and translators.

Many Uzbek neologisms are formed through the addition of affixes and grammatical elements to existing English words, which often makes them relatively easy to recognize and interpret in conversation. However, there are also cases in which the meanings of such lexical units cannot be understood without special explanation, even by individuals with an intermediate knowledge of English. The most widespread method of enriching Uzbek vocabulary in the sphere of information technologies is borrowing primarily from English. At the same time, there also exists a considerable number of originally created Uzbek lexical units and expressions, many of which function as synonyms of borrowed terms.

Conclusion

The findings of the study demonstrate that digital technologies have a considerable influence on language and speech development. However, digitalization is not the only factor shaping linguistic change. An equally important role is played by globalization, which contributes to the spread of English across various spheres of life, particularly in business communication and entertainment culture.

The results of the research indicate that younger generations generally show a neutral attitude toward the emergence of new lexical units, whereas older people often express mixed or uncertain opinions regarding such changes. The study also reveals that the use of slang vocabulary depends less on age than on the communicative environment in which a person participates. For instance, young



people who actively use social media for entertainment purposes tend to employ youth-oriented slang expressions, while adults more frequently use business-related slang that may be difficult for younger users to understand.

Regarding the direct influence of digitalization on language development, this process occurs primarily through the emergence of new concepts, objects, phenomena, and processes related to computer technologies. Such lexical innovations first transform the English language and are subsequently borrowed and adapted by other languages. During this process, words and expressions may undergo grammatical and structural modifications according to the linguistic rules governing the relevant parts of speech that describe actions, states, qualities, or characteristics.

International communication carried out through digital technologies also plays a significant role in language evolution. Individuals who possess knowledge of foreign languages often incorporate foreign lexical elements into everyday conversation. The practical significance of this research lies in its potential application by philologists and software developers in the creation of unified communication dictionaries and modern linguistic resources.

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