Digital Discourse: Social Media as a Catalyst for Linguistic Change

Muhammad Dawood $^{\rm 1}$ Ahma Raza $^{\rm 2}$ Muhammad Waqas Tufail $^{\rm 3}$

Abstract

In current status que digital media and social platforms are the dominant source of language shifting. In this study we have scrutinized that how new platforms are shaping new language like Fb, Twitter, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Tick tock have immensely commenced the sophisticated and short avenue of conversations. This paper also demonstrates how these platforms manipulated the traditional typical style of language and take us on the threshold of new linguistic features, unique expressions and introduced new symbols in a language. Due to the social media youth is using acronyms, abbreviations, hashtags and memes on social media. These platforms enhance the chances of hybrid languages through multifarious interactions like code switching and codemixing tools and different emojis are mammoth exaggeration for the fresh users. Emojis may have different meanings across different cultures, because there are mighty chances these emoji portray different meaning in a specific culture. Social media make a connection between peoples and causing a speedy invention of language unconsciously. So, it has both positive and negative aspects for language. it also causes the invention of creative features and expressions which continuously gaining attention. So, it remains a major contributor to its sophistication.

keywords: Language change, Social media, Digital communication, Code-switching, Codemixing, Emojis, Abbreviations, Linguistic innovation.

Introduction

As we know language is not static although it is dynamic or flexible and continuously change its vocabulary ,symbols , and its formal attitude with the passage of time, And to have a technological

¹ dawoodjoiya82@gmail.com, WhatsApp :+92 322 8726029, Islamiya University Bahawalpur

² Ahmadrazaa3535@gmail.com

³ Muhammadwaqastufal92@gmail.com

improvements make it easier to change its real shape(1). Some other major elements also change its direction as culture, traditions, and technological advancements(2)(3). In modern era the most transformative impact of social media and its widespread use can never be ignored .Language is tool or medium of communication that human beings have been using since the manifestation of life on earth and serving as main thing that relates people individuals of having different nationality, societies, and traditions as well but the innovation in technology and extreme use of social platforms have destroyed its indigenous look and credibility and tackle it as casually(4).It revolutionized the conventional behavior of language and made it more innovative, short, potent and meaningless. The increasing traffic on various platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Tick tock, Snapchat, and Twitter has changed the tone linguistic norms unpredictably and set new tendencies which are more short, and less formal (5)(6). They use different prominent Abbreviations, Acronyms, and short words which are impactful and not consuming at all like (e.g., LOL, TC, METOO,) they don't create sense fully but less time consuming. Some other amendments also worth mentioning while discussing the role of digital media in shaping language is the trending use of hashtags and emojis some people just use emoji signs to express their messages and emotions specially when they express their feelings of grief, happiness and wonder so they find the shortest way in the use of language and use emojis which create suitable and required meaning for the sender(6)(7). It is obvious these uses of social language violating the norms and rules of linguistics but according to their use and impact they are also beneficial. The use of slangs, abbreviations, acronyms, and symbols makes the language more complex and obscure and create misconceptions and meaning gaps and develop the roadmap that replace the formal way of using language with casual expressions(8). The exact epitome of this paper is to draw a discrepancy between traditional and new developed language and how social media platforms have a big source of reshaping language and language evolution. Here it is a big thing for intellectuals ,linguists and other experts to realize the future of language (9). Politicians , Hollywood, and Bollywood personalities use typical terms and their fans follow them and adopt them .So social media contribution in language is not limited it has multiple shades(10).

Literature review

When we deeply concerned with the dynamic nature of language and study more interestingly we will come to know about the mystery that over the decades languages has always been impacted International Journal of Pukhtunkhwa

by social, cultural and technological aspects of that age(11). The classical theories portray so authentic gesture about the language change, According to the theories of Saussure and Labov language is strongly interconnected with society that why its nature is social (1)(12). While the most fresh researches emphasize how digital communication plays a crucial role in the language evolution. Crystal stance is very clear he says internet is the main cause of language change and linguistics innovation, he erases the difference between spoken and written language varieties(13). Through social media users learn new ways and internet introduced new words, phrases, and signs and their widespread use all over the world through social platforms makes them prominent (14). Different prestigious platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram are institutions for the new abbreviations, acronyms, and symbols, different scholars recommend these digital platforms enhanced the creativity and innovation of language but less credible as compare to traditional norms of language (15). This change in language has positive and negative effects on language, defend it and appreciate the flexible temperament of language and others reprimand and take a stand against the informal usage of language through abbreviations, acronyms and different symbols and worried about it will debilitate the linguistic richness and original soul but very harmful in future for the formal way of speaking and writing(16). So they give importance to this issue and we may need to think its negative aspects is greater than its usefulness(17).

Methodology

This paper carries a mixed method to exactly judge how language is impacted by socially used platforms, comparing qualitative data with quantitative data (18). The main epitome of this paper methodology is to explore the innovation and change in linguistics field and the use o typical cultural words that are the part of social platforms discourse and an immense majority of contemporary English speakers who picked up it as first and second language use it broadly(18)(19).

Data Sources: We mentioned some social platforms because their extreme use in contemporary era like, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp and their impact on existing language , Shaping language into new direction(20). For this agenda a unique method was used different posts, comments, acronyms, abbreviations, signs and symbols, neologisms, memes, emojis, and

prominent hashtags that are on trending and put light on the innovation of linguistics features were collected, It took two months in collecting data(21).

Data Collection: Round about 2500 posts from social media platforms were collected through hashtags tracking and keyword, emphasizing specifically on the terms that have been gained fame all over the world(22). Moreover an online survey have conducted with coordination of 300 participants their age ratio was 15_30, its main agenda was that what users actually think how social media contributed for reshaping their language and how it affected their language too (23).

Data Analysis: For the content analysis, a coding framework was developed to categorize linguistic features, including word formation (e.g., acronyms, blends), grammar modifications (sentence shortening, omission of punctuation), and multimodal elements (emojis, GIFs, memes)(24). Thematic analysis was applied to identify recurring sociolinguistic patterns such as identity construction, humor, and code-switching(25). Survey data were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics to measure frequency of usage and perceived impact(26).

Ethical Considerations: Publicly available posts were anonymized to protect user identity, and participants in the survey provided informed consent(27).

By integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches, this methodology provides a holistic understanding of how social media shapes linguistic innovation, grammar, and sociocultural expression, allowing the study to capture both micro-level language practices and macro-level trends in language evolution(28).

Social Media and Linguistic Innovation

So these operational and organizational tools are not only served as organizational work but also for sake of linguistics features. Gifts, Memes, Hashtags, give versatility to words and other phrases and make them more flexible as they can perform as linguistics devices (29). The use of social media also manipulated the use of traditional use of language, emojis and different symbols totally replaced the traditional way of communication. Now a single sign can replace the whole sentence and portrays the same expression, whether it has to be conveyed emotionally, so these symbols and emojis can be detrimental in future for linguistics and gramma(2)(30). These symbols and emojis also demonstrate the same theme as a whole sentence deliver whether it is emotional, International Journal of Pukhtunkhwa

happy, humors, or grief. This trend getting peak in recent years ,giving space to non verbal communication and does not cover the grammatical and linguistic rules, Promoting informal temperament, on the other hand emergence of some newly cultural words grabbed from social media platforms, e,g words selfie, hashtags, one other word very common for verb is "DM" referring to private message and other socially coined words are unfriend and unfollow same in the case follow and friend also adapted from social media platforms (31)(32). On Tiktok we have seen a word "fyp" it means for you page some other words also picked up from social media and very common in chitchat and daily negotiations like "viral" is also a word socially coined. Another thing is very common blending of written and spoken and words (32)(33). So all these things and innovative and creative environment facilitate to hybrid linguistics trends that is far away from traditional usage of language. And overall the digital media is highly innovative in sense of linguistic change, neologisms and use of symbols. Social media has very strong role in the newness of language and revolution in linguistics field(19). This role is increasing eventually, And changing the direction of language how to express and use in daily gossips(34).

Impact on Grammar and Syntax

The impact of social media is multifarious and deep rooted on grammar and syntax, and portray the cunning and potent spreading of casual temperament of language on social platforms(35). This happen on the platforms that provide the facility of chat like Facebook messenger, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Instagram chat section, the users prefer time saving over accuracy that's why they use short words and phrases, and signs and emojis that deliver their message but grammatically wrong and even below the actual standard of grammar (35)(36). This also minimize the importance of formal use of language over informal. Another debacle in the standard of communication is the use of punctuation less language, this penchant involves the no use of punctuation, no use of quotation marks, commas, and full stop at the end of sentence, and rules of grammar that embellish the language and purify from every exaggeration and complexity, and make the language more articulated and simple, very easy to comprehend, but escaping from these rules of grammar leave the language obscure (36)(37). The youth users on digital media made the language more flat and they don't follow any conventional rules of language (38). The repetition of words on negotiations is also worth mentioning like the repetition of single words and phrases on social media when individual want to deliver his message, Sometimes this repetition is emotionally and sometimes to

show and love and affection and to implore more serenely as usual(39). Some words on social media we repeat intentionally or unintentionally is, plz-plz and wait-wait and sorry-sorry, sometimes to thank someone with core of heart is "thanku very- very- very much" and many more words and phrases (no-no, yes-yes, come-come, go-go, and good-good.) are the most repeated on different platforms (40). These words are shortlisted that are mispronounced and they are not exist in traditional language vocabulary. Social media is platforms where multi cultured and multi lingual people are present and they came into contact with each other and became the cause of code switching, code mixing and hybrid language in a backlash (27). Many scholars highlight, these shifts and trends on social media, how manipulating contemporary English copiously but other defending the use of language on social media and, they give argument it is in our genes to adapt the language to communicate with other and, also put light on the flexibility of grammar, and, their stance is social media has laxity for those who wish to communicate according to required demand, it has never destroyed the grammar reputation but reshape its dimension (16)(25)(41).

Sociolinguistic Perspectives

If we see it with the lens of sociolinguistics it is not specifically for sake of communication, but also demonstrates the cultural background of individual, gender, age of a person, its identity and its geographical structure too(42). It draws a line between the age of individuals how they use language on social platforms like the teenagers use miss mature words and young speakers use slangs, a lot of abbreviations, and acronyms, and short phrases in their chat to save time. It depicts their age gap from elders and also portray their cultural background (43). The other sources of study give the idea that on social media it has also learned by different observers it exposes the age gap and gender of people like women on social platforms use childish words, informal, and take the help of code switching, punctuation, and give unnecessary distension to spellings (e.g O my Gosh!) and (thankuuu very much), (e.g soooooo happy) etc (44). As compare to women, male majority prefer direct and informal use of language. So this phenomenon highlights how social media is tool for the development of social dynamics and identity construction, It also promotes cultural diversity through social communication because internet is source where all over the world people can communicate with each other, when globally people communicate on social media, they get aid from code mixing and code switching. It shows their cultural diversity when International Journal of Pukhtunkhwa

they typical cultural based words(45). Social media also gives flexibility to speakers they can change their dialects rapidly, these shifts from one language to another strengthen their cultural expressions on social media and promotes the online communication broadly. It is noteworthy thing some modern tendencies on social media viral in whole world and for typical country so the users use memes gifts emojis and abbreviations and other techniques in whole world and got a shape of international slangs and used as global slangs (46). So it would not be wrong if we say language is spreading continuously and never been static motionless, it also considered as social media did not changed the shape of language but also shape the identity, culture, of individual through digital communication(47).

Positive Impacts of Social Media on Language

Simultaneously social media has strong positive impacts on language evolution due to its creativity, cultural promotion and identity construction (48). It fosters neologisms in a language, open new ways, embellish the language with abbreviations, acronyms, emojis, and symbols, and set a new tendency using slangs words, all these things demonstrate that a man should not strict to language conventional rules but introduce sophistication in language. The best use in all of them is the use of democratization of language (49). In past the media was controlled by the dominant organizations, prestigious institutions, and higher authorities. But in current status que, social media gives liberty to all nations, classes, whether they belong from anywhere, and whatever their geographically structure is, they can share their relevant ideas, ideology and words of a language they speak, and can modify and reshape it, can express it beyond the traditional way on the social media platforms, can negotiate with foreigners by following hybrid technique, code switching, and code mixing (50). All this was possible with creative bound of social media with language. This relaxation on social media leads to linguistic innovation and open new ways for new words, also allows people belong from various backgrounds can contribute in the development and reshaping of language (46). Gradually the social media producing new words, and huge quantity of people have adopted from different platforms like Tiktok, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, some words are (selfie, follow, unfollow, friend, unfriend, fyp, and DM, and many more), social media users use short form of words and emojis to save their time, and to produce aesthetic and emotional impression (51). This positive influence on language made the language more flexible, simple, and impactful as compare to traditional International Journal of Pukhtunkhwa

language. Moreover on the social media a multi cultured people are present and they have multifarious norms, in social media communications people gathered from different placed and countries and they inject and adapt creative global vocabulary(52). The epitome is social media leads to neologisms, linguistic innovation, and creative expressions as well, while people use suitable vocabulary and symbols according the situation, audience, and context, so this skill also enhance the capability of communication. So the final things is social media is more congenial for the revolution of language as compare to a threat for traditional language (51)(53).

Negative Impacts of Social Media on Language

The extreme use of digital media has also negative impacts on language, is the major reason for the decline of its creativity (54). It is stand as an impediment for the credibility of language and one of major manipulation by social media is it minimizes the importance of formal writing and speaking skills. When we scrutinize more profoundly shorthands, abbreviations, acronyms, in a language we shall know how it reshapes the language and the change the priorities (55). Social media users give priority to use "wanna", instead of want to and in same case "gonna" in the replacement of going to (55)(56). Some other words which create complexity and their meaning is obscure for the some people are short forms of different words, "TC", for take care, and "GB", for God bless you, and in Muslim culture social media users prefer the word "A.O.A" for greetings to each other in daily routine. One other word is "IB" use to say a person for private message, "BY" for the replace of word bye. And "OMG" for the word "Oh my God" (24)(57)(58). One other cause of decline is oversimplication of language through emojis and short form of words. The emoji lead to misconception and complexity of language it is unable to clarify the whole message with single sign(59). The users express happiness, emotional temperament, grief, love, and feeling that create ambiguity for the receivers. Jeopardizing the linguistic richness with viral trends and prominent phrases and words, and promote dominant language (60). Moreover, the informal temperament of users and casual wording enhance the language barriers, the incorrect structure of sentence, miss use of grammar, violating the conventional rules of a language and false punctuation lead to the language a hard net to crack for the listeners, and it is very labor intensive to imbibe the exact meaning of the typical words like slang and jargon, newcomers find a lot of hampers to interpret it (61). So we finalize with this perception it creates new creative words and

innovation in linguistics but it also damage the standard of language and risky for formal communication (62).

Case Studies / Examples

The profound impact of the social media on language evolution is unprecedented, erasable throughout the history. In contemporary English the word selfie is the best example which is prominent on all prestigious platforms Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter (63). It was a slang that became the part of dictionary. In 2013 one of reputed dictionary named this word as the word of year. So we can realize how social media contributes in the evolution of new words and promote neologisms in very short time (64). In contemporary age the extreme use of hashtags for great agendas like political stances, international movements, protests, and for powerful slogans, to attract the intension of audience, hashtags use all the over all world, like a slogan for the rights of women "#METOO" got the international attention (64)(61). So the they are used as different campaigns like for the rights fo marginalized groups classes, and attain the shape of powerful discourse. Now hashtags considered as the linguistics features (65). How a single hashtags contain and deliver powerful agendas, and debates, demand for the social and political rights. Now hashtags are the source to spread awareness through their bold temperament among countries, and shape new language and leave deep impact on social trends. The worldwide use of emojis is also contributes practically in the new shape of language (66). It is also called the type of visual language that is more impactful, concise, and time saving, vanished the possibilities of language barriers. Some emojis nominated as the words of the year in Oxford dictionary, this demonstrates how the use of emoji is prominent, and think as the true source of expression in a specific language. The emojis are the portrayal of emotions, happiness, grief, feelings of joy, feelings of wonder, and replace a sentence with a emoji (67). Mega platforms like Tiktok, Facebook, WhatsApp, gave viral slangs words and with passage of time they got viral, and these words are used extremely among the youth on social media. So the epitome is the social media platforms contributing immensely in the reformation of language (68).

Discussion

The extreme use of social media, consuming a lot of time on interesting content creators like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, change the linguistic environment first time in the history of language evolution, It became the linguistic environment for the communication (69). Some other revolution and inventions which have reshaped the language are printing press, television, and their use and influence was limited and pertinent, But the use of social media platforms and their impact on users language is more profound and visible (26)(57). The case study highlights how language is detrimental for the future of standard of linguistic. The innovation in language through social media platforms, both has negative and positive influence, like the use of abbreviations, acronyms, emojis, symbols, and the neologism, demonstrate how language is creative, flexible, adaptable, and expressible, eventually it has demerits as well, how it is violating the standard of English like grammar, and the linguistics rules, and how one simple emoji can deliver the whole message as it is, if a person don't know the meaning of these emojis or if he takes different of this emoji in their culture (70). So it is very difficult to scrutinize the dual nature of linguistic innovation whether it is harmful than it is beneficial or helpful for the language. The other shortcomings we have learned is the new trends on social media don't follow the grammar and syntax rules (5)(2)(71). The digital communication lake of grammar correction and they prefer grammarless conversation and also think the wrong order of sentence and miss arranged setting of phrases, words, and clauses is not a flaw (72). Scholars and linguist think, it makes the formal writing fragile and diverting the mind of people specially youth from formal to informal writing. Moreover the sociolinguistic perspective shows it is less dangerous because grammar is always responsive and flexible according the new context of communication (73). One other worth mentioning change of social media is sociolinguistic diversity, and the creation of identity, the huge majority of youth have adapted the slangs, hybrid expressions, and some cultural specific words that make them different from their ancestors language (74). It portrays how individual use language personally with the help of multifarious blending. The existence of code switching and code mixing enhance the chances of cultural hybridity. But the shortcomings and errors of of newly produced language through social media can be ignored(75). This facilitate the usage of informal language and manipulate the academic and professional use of language and erode the linguistic environment for formal language. And the risks of dominancy of typical language on online platforms increase, e.g the dominancy of English language over the other marginalized language on social media (76). Social media is a spot of homogenization and the users adapt different

cultural expressions and use them in digital conversations so it portrays the multifarious expressions through hybrid form(77)(78). It is obvious that it demonstrates the social, cultural, and generational dynamics, how it reshapes the language, it also puts light on the positive and negative effects of social media on language, we may no need to restrict its influence and creativity, instead we should think how to keep safe the linguistic rules, cultural expressions, how we should make the online communication clear and understandable. So the influence of social media is erasable and the epitome is there is deep relation of language and social media how it is generated, spread, and fade with passage of time (79)(80)(81).

Conclusion

The evolution of language is continuous process, influenced, and shaped by technological platforms, by social and cultural shifts immensely. In this era social media has performed a paramount role in shaping language. It creates words and expressions which users apply informally and then change into formal structure. Prestigious platforms Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, and Tiktok, are the source of manifestation of slangs, abbreviations, acronyms, emojis, symbols not only produced but also become the part of original discourse in a very short time. Out of all this scenario we can guess how human communication is flexible and adaptable. It also demonstrates that how individuals who belong from various cultures and generations contribute in the creation of distinguishing linguistic norms. But the impact of social media on the nature of language is not free of challenges and without impediments. It is major concern how it reacts badly, the risks of decline of standard of linguistic and the common use of emojis and the symbols are the causes of existence of many questions that are still unanswerable. It evolves the social media has profound impact on language it describes the dual nature of language, discussing language is replenished with creativity, and also contains misconceptions, exaggeration, and complex ideas of language, danger of linguistic clarity. This shows social media is not only threat for the perseverance of old linguistic conventions but also enhance the linguistic criteria. Simultaneously it is hamper for the formal writing but in same case it facilitates the users to use language for the current communication needs beyond linguistic norms. The scholars and the linguist needs to think the positive effectiveness of these innovations, and how broaden the linguistics boundaries while keep in mind the conventional norms of linguistics.

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 Volume 10 | Issue I | January June 2025

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