

Semantic Features of Social Media–Related Lexical Units in English and Uzbek (Based on the Examples of Telegram, Twitter, and Instagram)

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Abstract. this article is devoted to the analysis of the formation and semantic characteristics of social media lexicon within the digital communication environment of the twenty first century. The study examines the contemporary impact of social networking platforms on the language system, with particular attention to the factors driving the emergence of new lexical units and the processes of their semantic transformation. Based on authentic discourse data collected from Instagram, Twitter (X), and Telegram, the pragmatic and sociolinguistic functions of lexical innovations are identified. The analysis demonstrates that frequently used social media lexical units contribute to the expansion of the evaluative, emotive, and identificational functions of language. The findings of the study serve to clarify the role and significance of social media lexicon in the development of modern language.

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technologies and the expanding role of social networks in everyday communication are providing a strong impetus for the dynamic evolution of the language system. Social media platforms have become the principal arena of modern communication, a process that leads to the emergence of new lexical units, shifts in the semantic scope of existing words, and the redistribution of communicative functions within the lexicon. As a result, the vocabulary formed within social networks has become a phenomenon that requires independent and systematic linguistic analysis.

Lexical units that emerge in the social media environment are not limited to the nominative capacities of language alone; rather, under the influence of factors such as the speed of information transmission, the compactness of communicative forms, and intensified interactive engagement with audiences, they acquire new semantic features. Such units are often used with enriched pragmatic load, evaluative meaning, and social connotation, which contributes to the intensification of semantic change processes.

In particular, words and terms used in social networks are frequently formed on the basis of metaphorical, metonymic, and figurative meanings and enter widespread usage within a short period of time. Compared to traditional models of lexical development, this accelerated process demonstrates distinctive characteristics and reflects a new stage in language evolution. At the same time, the communicative environment of social networks stimulates phenomena such as semantic extension, narrowing, and evaluative shifts.

In global linguistics, the study of social media lexicon is mainly addressed within the frameworks of sociolinguistics, pragmalinguistics, and media linguistics. However, research aimed at providing a systematic account of semantic transformations remains insufficient. Therefore, the present article seeks to examine the process of formation of social media lexicon and its impact on semantic change through a theoretical and analytical approach [17:56].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In recent decades, the widespread expansion of digital communication tools, particularly social networking platforms, has led to the emergence of new research directions in linguistics, such as internet linguistics and social media discourse studies. Over the past years, lexical units associated with internet technologies have entered everyday life, and the study of this lexicon has gained increasing scholarly attention. Among various websites, pages, and search engines, social networks constitute a distinct object of linguistic research. Compared to general internet language, this lexicon represents the language of virtual networks and encompasses services related to establishing connections between users as well as the exchange of information resources such as photos, messages, files, images, and emails. In simple terms, these are web-based platforms that enable users to share personal information through which other participants of the network can find and interact with them. The study of this lexicon has been addressed by scholars such as Vulfov B Z, Sinyagin Yu V, Sinyagina N Yu, and Selezneva Ye V.

Within this research paradigm, newly emerged lexical units in social networks, semantic shifts, as well as pragmatic and discursive features have begun to be examined in a systematic manner. In global linguistics, the works of leading scholars such as Michele Zappavigna, Philip Seargeant, Caroline Tagg, Jannis Androutsopoulos, Susan C Herring, David Crystal, and Gretchen McCulloch hold particular significance in the academic analysis of social media lexicon.

Michele Zappavigna is regarded as one of the leading scholars who has analyzed social media lexicon from the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics. She interprets hashtags not merely as technical markers, but as metadiscursive and social affiliation resources. The theory of ambient affiliation developed by Zappavigna explains how lexical units in social networks facilitate ideological, emotional, and cultural alignment among users. This approach provides an in-depth understanding of the semantic, pragmatic, and identity-forming functions of hashtags and is now widely applied in the analysis of Twitter X, Instagram, and TikTok lexicon.

Philip Seargeant and Caroline Tagg conceptualize social media language as a process closely connected with social identity construction and community formation. In their edited volume titled *The Language of Social Media*, the lexical and pragmatic characteristics of social media communication are examined through corpus-based and discourse-analytic approaches. These studies describe social media lexicon as a hybrid linguistic form that differs from traditional written and spoken discourse and demonstrate that new lexical units emerge in close relation to platform-specific features such as hashtags, mentions, and emojis.

Jannis Androutsopoulos analyzes linguistic changes occurring in social networks in relation to various domains of social life. In his research, stylistic and sociocultural adaptation of lexicon in digital media environments is treated as a key analytical issue. He examines new lexical units in social networks in close connection with user engagement and discursive context, an approach that makes it possible to identify the underlying reasons for the emergence of neologisms in social media language.

Susan C Herring has made a significant contribution to the development of social media linguistics through the theory of Computer-Mediated Communication. She considers social media lexicon to belong to a distinct type of discourse that combines features of both written and spoken language. In her studies, the pragmatic functions of abbreviations, internet slang, emotive icons, and emotion-related lexical units are analyzed, and their communicative effectiveness is substantiated.

David Crystal is one of the scholars who laid the theoretical foundations of internet linguistics. In his research, social media lexicon is interpreted as an early stage of language development. He argues that lexical abbreviations, neologisms, and graphic modes of information exchange observed in internet language should not be viewed as linguistic decline, but rather as indicators of the adaptive flexibility of language.

Gretchen McCulloch examines social media lexicon as a contemporary stylistic phenomenon, revealing generational language differences and changes in communicative norms. Her work represents an important resource for understanding the discursive functions of emotion, punctuation, and internet slang.

The lexical system of social media language is characterized by rapid changeability, strong context dependence, and multimodal features. Therefore, the study of social media lexicon requires not only traditional linguistic methods but also modern, complex approaches. One of the most effective approaches in this field is the multi-method or integrative research model.

At the center of the methodological framework for lexical research lies corpus linguistics. Large volumes of authentic texts collected from social networks are compiled into specialized corpora, enabling the analysis of lexical frequency, distribution, collocational patterns, and the processes of word formation and neologization. Corpus analysis makes it possible to identify empirical regularities in social media lexicon and ensures the objectivity of the research.

Corpus-based findings are further deepened through discourse analysis. The discursive approach serves to identify not only the nominative, but also the evaluative, ideological, and communicative functions of lexical units in social networks. This method reveals how lexicon constructs social meaning within context and what role it plays in identity formation and positioning.

In addition, pragmalinguistic methods play an important role in the study of social media lexicon. Through this approach, the communicative functions of evaluative units, irony-based expressions, and lexical items combined with hashtags and emojis are explained. Pragmatic analysis allows researchers to identify goal-oriented communication and user intentions in social media discourse. The methodological framework is further enriched by a sociolinguistic approach, which examines how lexical units vary under the influence of factors such as age, gender, social group, and cultural environment. As a result, subcultures, virtual communities, and their lexical characteristics formed within social networks are described on a solid scientific basis.

ANALYSES

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the rapid development of information and communication technologies led to the emergence of social networks, which fundamentally transformed the system of communication in society. These digital platforms exert a significant influence not only on socio-economic and cultural relations, but also on the structural and semantic layers of language. As a result, lexical units formed within the social media environment are increasingly perceived as a distinct and active segment of contemporary language development.

The lexicon used in social networks is shaped under specific communicative conditions characterized by speed, brevity, and mass accessibility. These factors contribute both to the enrichment of existing lexical units with new contextual meanings and to the emergence of entirely new nominative units. For instance, such items as post, hashtag, like, and subscribe were initially used exclusively as technical terms, whereas today they have acquired broad socio-cultural meanings and are gradually entering general language usage.

Platforms such as Vkontakte, Instagram, and Twitter demonstrate different models of lexical processes. In Vkontakte, elements of written and spoken discourse are combined, resulting in a relatively informal and semi-formal mode of communication. In this environment, terms borrowed from English are adapted to national language norms and undergo morphological and syntactic modification. On Instagram, the dominance of visual content intensifies the evaluative and emotive properties of lexicon, meaning that words are frequently loaded with emotional and expressive meanings. Twitter, by contrast, due to limitations on the number of characters, promotes semantic density, abbreviation, and pragmatic compactness.

In the digital communication environment, linguistic innovation emerges under the influence of the speed, interactivity, and multimodality of social media communication. In such a context, language functions not only as a means of information transfer, but also as a mechanism for expressing the user's social position, emotional state, and identity. Consequently, lexical innovations arise at the intersection of communicative needs, technological constraints, and social context.

From a pragmatic perspective, new lexical units serve to compress discourse, add emotional colouring, or exert influence on the audience. From a sociolinguistic viewpoint, they intensify social differentiation within language and function as indicators of age, status, and group affiliation. Within the scope of the present research, the analysis of the pragmatic and sociolinguistic functions of social media-related lexical items on the Instagram platform constitutes one of the main objects of investigation.

As a platform centred on visual content, Instagram treats verbal language as a means of secondary intensification. Here, the primary function of lexical units is to supplement images or videos with emotional and evaluative context. Lexical items such as aesthetic, vibe, mood, slay, and goals function pragmatically as expressive intensifiers, producing maximum emotional impact with minimal verbal input.

These units are frequently used with evaluative connotations and openly express the user's subjective attitude. In the process of semantic expansion, words move beyond their original dictionary meanings and acquire collectively accepted social meanings. For example, the word aesthetic has shifted from an art-related term to an indicator of lifestyle and visual identity. From a sociolinguistic perspective, Instagram lexicon reflects the impact of globalization and mass culture on language. The dominance of English lexical items is associated with prestige, cosmopolitanism, and modernity. Through such units, users identify themselves as members of particular global subcultures.

In recent years, the study of the pragmatic and sociolinguistic functions of lexical innovations on the Twitter (X) platform has also gained prominence. The defining communicative feature of Twitter (X) is reflexive brevity and discursive intensity. Character limitations enforce semantic density, resulting in the emergence of items such as thread,

ratio, cancel, stan, and viral as compact codes for expressing complex social phenomena. From a pragmatic perspective, these units facilitate rapid information dissemination and the management of debate and controversy. Hashtags not only mark topics, but also align discourse with algorithmic systems, thereby expanding the potential audience. In other words, Twitter lexicon performs a discourse-optimizing function.

Sociolinguistic analysis shows that Twitter-related lexicon is often used with ideological loading. The lexical choices made by users reflect their political positions, social engagement, and value systems. Thus, Twitter lexicon functions not merely as a tool of information exchange, but also as an instrument of social struggle and power negotiation.

On the Telegram platform, the pragmatic and sociolinguistic functions of lexical units have become a particularly relevant issue in the twenty-first century. As a relatively closed, group-oriented, and structured communication platform, Telegram employs lexical units that primarily fulfil organizational, instructive, and cooperative pragmatic functions. Items such as admin, channel, subscribe, post, and forward serve to systematize communication.

The widespread use of abbreviations and informal units on Telegram reduces communicative distance and strengthens a sense of solidarity among participants. Pragmatically, these units enhance speed and convenience. From a sociolinguistic standpoint, the activity of national language units is relatively high on Telegram, as the platform is more oriented toward local audiences. This strengthens the role of language as a marker of national identity and turns the social network into an internal communicative space.

A cross-platform analysis demonstrates that lexical innovations are a universal phenomenon, yet they exhibit platform-specific pragmatic and sociolinguistic features. On Instagram, lexicon primarily performs emotive and representational functions; on Twitter, informative and ideological functions; and on Telegram, instructive and group-oriented functions.

Thus, lexical innovations in social networks provide clear evidence of the flexible and dynamic nature of language, demonstrating its adaptation to the needs of contemporary digital society.

TABLE 1: The philological aspects of social media lexicon in english and uzbek

No	Philological aspect	English	Uzbek
1	Neologisms and New Lexical items	<i>Tweet, unfriend, meme, viral, influencer, hashtag, self-ie, FOMO</i>	Tweet, unfollow, meme, go viral, influencer, hashtag, selfie, FOMO
2	Slang and abbreviations	<i>LOL, OMG, BRB, TBT, DM, RT</i>	<i>LOL, OMG, BRB, DM, RT</i> , Unfortunately, abbreviations are often adopted directly from English; however, shortened forms also exist in Uzbek colloquial usage: “xD”, “;””, “ <i>ruxsat</i> ” “ <i>rxst</i> ”
3	Emoji and visual lexicon	😊☹️👉👎 – <i>emotion, humor, dramatic effect, solidarity, trend</i>	😊☹️☐👉👎 – emotion, humor, dramatic effect, solidarity, trend, “heart” in some contexts” ❤️ mostly used in a romantic or friendly expression.
4	hashtags and sociolinguistic signals	<i>#ThrowbackThursday, #OOTD, #NoFilter</i>	#TBT, # yesterday’s photos, # today’s outfit
5	pragmatic functions	<i>Engaging, promoting, solidarity, humor, emphasis, irony</i>	engagement, advertising, solidarity, humor, emphasis, irony
7	sociolinguistic differences	age-, gender-, and region-related variants; “internet native” language	young and middle-generation network users; urban vs rural; use of English vs Uzbek
8	technological/format innovations	<i>GIF, meme, thread, story, live</i>	<i>GIF, mem, thread, story, jonli efir</i>
9	normative and non-normative lexicon	<i>Shorthand, profanity, trolling, clickbait</i>	<i>Shorthand, profane words, trolling, clickbait</i>

One of the most significant processes in social media lexicon is semantic transformation. This process manifests itself in semantic expansion, narrowing, metaphorization, and the intensification of evaluative connotations. For instance, certain words that are neutral in the general language system acquire positive or negative colouring in social media discourse. As a result, lexical units perform not only nominative, but also ideological and pragmatic functions.

Moreover, social networks have created new forms of expressing personal and collective identity through linguistic means. The lexical choices made by users serve as indicators of their social status, worldview, and cultural capital. This increases the sociolinguistic value of lexical units and necessitates their analysis in close connection with processes of social stratification

Analyses indicate that a large portion of the words actively used on social networks are borrowed from English, reflecting a close connection with the dominant language system of the global information space. These borrowings often adapt to the phonetic, morphological, and semantic rules of the national language, functioning in new forms. This process once again confirms the flexibility and openness of language as a system. Moreover, social media lexicon represents a multifaceted and dynamic phenomenon in modern linguistics, with these lexical units acting as key factors accelerating semantic changes within the language system. A systematic study of this lexical layer allows for a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between language and society, technology, and communication.

In the contemporary era, social networks have become one of the most significant sociolinguistic factors influencing language formation and development. The speed and mass reach of digital communication platforms enable users to express their experiences, emotions, and cultural perceptions in novel linguistic forms. As a result, new words, phrases, and semantic shifts actively emerge on social networks.

Social networks exert a notable influence on the lexical layer of language, often leading to the creation of new terms. For example, lexemes such as fake news/feyknyus, influencer/inflyuenser, and selfie/selfi have emerged due to the modernization of information exchange and communication practices in the digital environment and have rapidly entered everyday speech. This process demonstrates that language continuously evolves in response to social needs.

SOCIAL MEDIA LEXICON		
<div>FAKE NEWS</div> <div>Information manipulation</div> <div>Evaluative discourse</div>	<div>INFLUENCER</div> <div>Social influence</div> <div>Discursive power</div>	<div>SELFIE</div> <div>Personal identity</div> <div>Visual presentation</div>

FIGURE 2. Discursive features of social media lexicon

Social networks accelerate the synthesis of language and slang. In particular, in youth speech, lexical units borrowed from English and Russian, as well as abbreviations and metaphorical expressions, are widely used. Hashtags, memes, and viral trends emerge as key mechanisms that facilitate the popularization of new lexical units. For example, expressions like “cringe” or “I’m shocked” initially spread through memes and video content, later becoming active components of everyday speech [18-37].

Moreover, social networks also influence the semantic evolution of existing words. For instance, while the word “cringe” originally denoted physical discomfort, in digital discourse it has acquired extended meanings such as embarrassment or awkward situations. Such cases indicate that social networks promote the development of polysemy. Similarly, units like “friend” or “like” have shifted from their traditional semantics to acquire new functional meanings within the social media context.

One of the important features of social networks is their collective creative mechanism. Every user can participate in creating new words or expressions and in popularizing them. Through comments, reposts, likes, and discussions, lexical units are quickly evaluated and adapted. Lexical innovations accepted by the audience rapidly permeate general speech. Additionally, visual elements such as emoticons, stickers, and GIFs have become an integral part of digital discourse. They often function as independent semantic units, playing a key role in expressing emotions or condensing textual content. Visual signs expand the expressive potential of language and contribute to the emergence of new layers of meaning.

Semantic and cognitive analysis also serves to uncover the conceptual foundations of social media lexicon. This approach allows researchers to determine how abstract concepts (such as wealth, power, success, and freedom) are expressed through metaphorical models on social networks. Consequently, the semantic expansion and transformation of lexical units can be explained.

Considering the specific communicative nature of social media lexicon, research also incorporates the analysis of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC). This method supports the view that social media discourse represents a hybrid form combining written and oral features, and it explains how lexical units are used in multimodal contexts (text, image, video).

The algorithmic mechanisms of platforms also directly accelerate linguistic changes. By recommending popular content, promoting trends, and amplifying hashtags, new words and expressions reach wide audiences. As a result, some lexical units quickly become integrated into generally accepted language usage. Social networks thus not only alter the function of language as a communicative tool but also transform its nature as a social and cultural phenomenon. They act as a powerful catalyst in the formation of new lexical units and meanings, vividly demonstrating the dynamic and adaptive nature of language.

DISCUSSION

At the beginning of the 21st century, the rapid development of information and communication technologies led to profound changes in social networks from both a communicative and linguistic perspective. Research shows that digital platforms not only shape socio-economic and cultural relations but also significantly influence the lexical, semantic, and pragmatic layers of language. From this perspective, social networks form a new segment of lexical processes and actively contribute to contemporary language development.

The lexicon of social networks is formed under specific communicative conditions, adapting to the demands for speed, brevity, and mass accessibility. This process manifests two main trends: first, the enrichment of existing lexical units with new contextual meanings; second, the emergence of new nominative units. For example, units such as “post/post,” “hashtag/hashtag,” “like/layk,” and “subscribe/prescribe,” initially used as technical terms, have now acquired socio-cultural significance and have been integrated into everyday speech.

The unique characteristics of different platforms shape lexical processes in various ways. For instance, on the Russian-language “Vkontakte” network, written and spoken elements merge, creating a semi-formal, free communicative style. At the same time, terms borrowed from English adapt to national language norms and undergo morphological and syntactic modifications. “Instagram,” with its emphasis on visual content, enhances the evaluative and emotive functions of lexical units. “Twitter,” due to character limitations, promotes semantic density, abbreviations, and pragmatic conciseness. The specific communicative environments of these platforms allow lexical innovations to emerge rapidly and spread widely.

Another important feature of lexical processes on social networks is semantic transformation. These transformations appear as semantic expansion, narrowing, metaphorization, and the intensification of evaluative connotations. For example, the word “cringe,” originally neutral, has become a polysemous unit expressing negative, awkward situations on social networks. Thus, lexical units develop not only as nominative tools but also as instruments performing ideological and pragmatic functions.

Furthermore, social networks have created new forms for expressing personal and collective identity. The lexical choices made by users serve as indicators of their social status, worldview, and cultural capital. This elevates the sociolinguistic value of lexical units and necessitates studying them in relation to social stratification.

The connection between language change and globalization is also noteworthy. Studies show that a significant portion of lexemes actively used on social networks is borrowed from English. These borrowings adapt to the phonetic, morphological, and semantic rules of the national language, functioning in new forms. This process confirms once again the flexibility and open nature of language.

Another important aspect is that social networks have enhanced the multimodal nature of communication. Visual elements such as emojis, stickers, and GIFs function as independent semantic units, playing a key role in expressing emotions or condensing textual content. In addition, the analysis of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) demonstrates that social network discourse represents a hybrid form, combining written and oral features.

The algorithmic mechanisms of platforms also act as tools accelerating language change. By recommending popular content, promoting trends, and amplifying hashtags, new lexical units reach a wide audience. This process reshapes not only the communicative function of language but also its nature as a social and cultural phenomenon.

As a result, social network lexicon is viewed in modern linguistics as a multifaceted and dynamic phenomenon. It serves as a crucial factor accelerating semantic, morphological, and pragmatic changes in language, enabling a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between language, society, technology, and discourse. Thus, social networks demonstrate that language is constantly renewed according to social needs and technological conditions.

CONCLUSION

This study presents a comprehensive analysis of the pragmatic and sociolinguistic functions of lexical innovations emerging on social networks—specifically Instagram, Twitter (X), and Telegram. The findings indicate that the digital communication environment serves as a significant factor accelerating the emergence of new lexical units within the language system, and that this process is directly related to the functional and technological characteristics of the platforms.

Analysis revealed that on Instagram, lexical innovations primarily perform emotive-expressive and evaluative pragmatic functions, semantically enriching visual content and serving as a means for users to express personal and social identity. In the Twitter (X) environment, lexical units acquire informative, argumentative, and ideological loads, enabling the expression of social positions through concise and semantically dense discourse. On Telegram, lexical innovations serve instructive, cooperative, and group-oriented pragmatic functions, contributing to the formation of the internal mechanisms of collective communication.

Sociolinguistic analysis demonstrated that lexical innovations on social networks are differentiated according to users' age, cultural background, and social status. Through these lexical units, users present themselves as members of specific social groups or as part of global or local communities. In this regard, social network lexicon becomes an effective tool for constructing social identity through language.

Overall, the findings of the study allow us to evaluate social network lexicon as an active, adaptive, and dynamic layer of contemporary language development. These lexical innovations expand the communicative potential of language while reinforcing its social and cultural functions. The results of this research provide both theoretical and practical foundations for future studies within the fields of media linguistics and internet linguistics.

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