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**The Impact of Social Media Discourse on Language Acquisition and Communication Competence**

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**Abstract**

This research investigates the effect of social media language on language learning and communicative competence in the digital era. With social networking sites like Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp becoming an integral part of everyday communication, they bring about new language habits marked by informality, multimodality, and speedy information transfer. The research investigates the impact of such sites on the grammatical accuracy, vocabulary acquisition, formal writing skills, and face-to-face communication of the users. In qualitative descriptive research, i.e., literature review and digital ethnography, the research identifies both positive and negative linguistic effects of social media use. On the one hand, the websites have opportunities for instantaneous communication, peer-to-peer acquisition, and observation of authentic use of language, which encourages creativity and intercultural consciousness. On the other hand, they can foster non-standard linguistic practices and over-reliance on informal grammar, which may hinder formal language acquisition. The findings highlight the necessity of integrating digital literacy into language learning in an effort to bridge the gap between informal digital communication and formal communicative competence.

**Keywords:** Social Media, language learning, communication, digital literacy

**Introduction****1.1. Background of the Study**

Social media has become a core part of everyday communication in the 21st century, and it is radically transforming the way individuals communicate, express themselves, and consume information. Social media sites such as Facebook, X (formerly twitter), Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, and Snapchat have not only transformed interpersonal communication but have also created new linguistic landscapes. The lexicon used in these websites—characterized by abbreviations, emojis, acronyms, slang, and informal sentence structures—is a deviation from what has traditionally been thought of as language use.

Because users who are well-versed with technology continue using and embracing the platforms more, growing concern and interest have evolved regarding how social media discourse contributes to their language development and speaking skills. Inasmuch as it is argued by some people that social media promotes creativity as well as language creativity, fear has arisen that it discourages good language acquisition, formal writing, and proficient face-to-face communication.

Understanding such a dual-edged effect is important in education, sociolinguistics, and psychology because communication remains a fulcrum of human development and social integration.

**1.2. Problem of the Study**

Despite the growing use of social media among all age groups, particularly youth and kids, there is limited realistic evidence about its impact on language acquisition and communication skills. The informal and fast-paced nature of social media discourse raises some important questions:

- Whether use of social media language affects grammatical accuracy, vocabulary richness, and overall language competence?
- Are communication skills, particularly verbal and written articulation in formal settings, being shaped or impaired by use of online communication practices?
- How does this shift from traditional to digital communication modes affect individuals' linguistic confidence and fluency?

This study seeks to explore these questions and uncover the underlying dynamics between digital discourse and linguistic development. In spite of the increased usage of social media across all demographics, especially young people and children, there is scant realistic data regarding its effect on language learning and communication ability. The casual and rapid speed of social media conversation pose some crucial questions:

- Is use of social media language an influence on grammatical accuracy, vocabulary richness, and overall language ability?

- Are speech and written communications skills, particularly in formal settings, being established or inhibited through use of internet communication patterns?
- How do the shifts to digital modes of communication affect individuals' linguistic confidence and fluency?

This study is intended to explore these concerns and uncover the dynamics of digital conversation and language evolution.

### **1.3. Objective of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to examine how social media conversation impacts language learning and communication skill among users of all ages. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Analyzing the language characteristics that prevail over social media use.
2. Analyzing the effect of such trends on users' use of formal language and grammar and so on.
3. Assessing how excessive usage of social networking websites impacts written and oral communication skills of the users.
4. Examining the potential cognitive and social impacts of internet communication on language usage and learning.

## **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

The intersection of social media discourse, language learning, and communication proficiency has been at the center of increasing academic concern during the past few decades. As digital media have increased, so have communication processes, with new ways of communication and new possibilities of language acquisition arising outside of conventional settings. This literature review considers major aspects of current research in the fields of social media discourse, online communication, and their influence on linguistic and communicative development.

### **1. Social Media and Language Evolution**

The emergence of social media has significantly influenced how language is used, learned, and adapted. Studies such as Crystal (2011) have noted the rise of “**Netspeak**”, a new linguistic register that blends spoken and written language features—characterized by abbreviations (e.g., “idk,” “btw”), emojis, acronyms, and non-standard punctuation. **Tagliamonte & Denis (2008)** found that young users often innovate new forms of expression online, contributing to the evolution of language and reinforcing their identities. Social media fosters the rapid spread of **neologisms**, **slang**, and culturally contextual expressions, leading to language change at a much faster pace than traditional media.

This study suggests that social media is both a driver of linguistic innovation and a platform for creative, user-generated language practices.

### **2. The Use of Language on Social Media**

Different social media platforms serve different feature and service. Due to the distinctness, it affects how people communicate and speak within these platforms. For example, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Twitter is used for quick reading of information, thus encouraging the use of limited word per tweet. Meanwhile Facebook provides much

longer writing of messages. On the other hand, Instagram is primarily a picture and video media platform which has no limitations in terms of messages length (Mansor, 2016 and Sebah Al-Ali, 2014)

### **3. Language Acquisition in Online Contexts**

Language acquisition traditionally focused on formal instruction. However, research now acknowledges the value of **informal, online environments** for language learning in a large scale. Learners are turning to social media to gain exposure to authentic, real-world language use. **Godwin-Jones (2018)** emphasizes that digital platforms provide L2 learners with access to "authentic linguistic input" and interactive communities of practice. **Blattner & Fiori (2009)** found that social networks like Facebook help second-language learners improve cultural awareness and pragmatic competence by observing how native speakers communicate. **Reinhardt & Zander (2011)** introduce the concept of *social CALL* (computer-assisted language learning), where platforms like YouTube, Reddit, and Instagram support language learning through community interaction and user-driven content.

These studies collectively highlight that **language learners benefit from real-time interaction**, and the availability of multimodal resources, and peer-to-peer learning facilitated by social media uses.

### **4. Social Media Discourse and Communicative Competence**

Communication on social media completely differs from traditional spoken or written discourse as well. Online discourse is characterized by informality, interactivity, and creativity. **Herring (2007)** outlines features of computer-mediated discourse such as asynchronicity, reduced nonverbal cues, and message fragmentation. These features influence how users develop **discourse competence** and **strategic competence**. **Thorne (2010)** argues that social media platforms provide opportunities to develop **intercultural communicative competence**, particularly when users engage with global audiences and multilingual content. According to **Canagarajah (2013)**, digital environments allow for **translingual practices**, where users move fluidly between languages and codes, enhancing both linguistic awareness and communicative flexibility.

This body of literature supports the idea that **social media contributes to the development of multiple dimensions of communicative competence**—including the ability to adapt language based on context, purpose, and audience altogether.

### **5. Multimodality and Digital Literacy**

In this digital era, communication extends beyond words as it was before. Social media platforms are inherently **multimodal**, combining text, visuals, audio, and video so on so forth to construct meaning. **Kress & van Leeuwen (2001)** emphasize that understanding meaning in digital contexts requires proficiency in interpreting multiple modes of communication. Learners on platforms like TikTok or Instagram are not just consuming language; they are participating in a visual and performative culture where meaning is co-constructed. **Lankshear & Knobel (2008)** argue that digital literacy now includes the ability to remix and respond to content using diverse semiotic resources.

The multimodal nature of social media supports more **engaging, interactive, and contextualized learning** experiences that can reinforce language acquisition and expressive competence together.

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**6. Challenges and Limitations in Social Media Language Learning**

While social media offers rich opportunities for language development, several challenges persist: **Informal grammar and spelling** may hinder formal language skills, especially in academic or professional contexts (Tagg, 2015). **Misinformation or non-standard usage** may lead to fossilization of errors in L2 learners who lack proper feedback or instruction. Overreliance on digital tools may limit **face-to-face communication skills** or lead to **superficial learning** without deeper syntactic or semantic understanding (Sykes, Oskoz & Thorne, 2008).

Thus, while social media discourse can be a valuable complement to traditional language learning, it is not a replacement for structured, intentional instruction. The existing literature demonstrates that social media is reshaping how people acquire language and develop communicative competence. It serves as both a **rich input source** and a **dynamic space for language practice**, particularly in informal, peer-driven contexts. However, to maximize its educational value, users—especially language learners—must be aware of the **differences between informal digital discourse and formal language contexts**, and educators must find ways to integrate digital literacy into language curricula effectively. Thus, while social media talk can be a valuable complement to formal language teaching, it cannot replace systematic, deliberate learning.

Recent literature describes how social media is revolutionizing language learning and communicative competence development. It is both an input source with rich content and a dynamic space for language practice, particularly in informal, peer-to-peer environments. Nonetheless, to be able to benefit most from it, users—particularly language learners—need to be cognizant of informal digital discourse compared to formal contexts of language, and teachers need to learn to incorporate digital literacy into language lessons in an effective manner.

**Research Method**

This research was conducted by using descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive research is a research method that try describe and interpret object appropriate with situation. This study did in two ways were library research to found some books related to the topic and the researcher collected some data by getting involved in using social media in internet.

**Research Findings and Discussion****FINDINGS:**

There are some facts, i.e.:

- Social media includes a number of different websites which allow individuals to communicate and share data online.
- Social media websites can be classified into different categories, including collaborative projects, blogs and microblogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual gaming worlds, and virtual communities.

- Language is an inseparable component of social media and plays a central role in communication, content creation, community formation, identity construction, and influence.
- Different forms of language are used by users on social media, such as abbreviations and acronyms, emoticons and emoji, hashtags, memes, internet slang, and user-generated neologisms.

### Discussion

The study indicates that social media websites provide opportunities for individuals to communicate, share information, and interact. Language is the predominant means of communication in the online websites. Different types of social media websites have distinct characteristics that influence the manner in which individuals communicate and use language. For example, websites like Twitter encourage brief messages due to the character limit, while Instagram predominantly involves visual information.

The use of language on social media has both positive and negative effects on language learners. On the positive side, social media can enhance language ability by providing exposure to diverse texts, opportunities for collaboration, and interaction with native speakers. Learners can also get encouragement and confidence through their participation in online forums.

Social media language, however, also has its problems. The use of internet slang and informal language may negatively impact learners' writing and vocabulary development. Besides, excessive reliance on social media for communication may reduce face-to-face interactions and interfere with learners' communication competence in real life. The role of language in social media is multifaceted. It enables users to communicate, create content, establish communities, present their identities, and persuade others. Language in social media comprises numerous various types like abbreviations, emoticons, hashtags, memes, internet slang, and user-generated neologisms. They are the resources that facilitate successful communication, convey emotions, categorize content, create humor, and encode cultural references.

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