

LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF SOCIAL MEDIA DISCOURSE

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Abstract. *This article examines the linguistic features of social media discourse in contemporary digital communication. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), TikTok, and Telegram have significantly transformed language use by introducing new forms of interaction that integrate written, spoken, and visual communication. The study explores key linguistic characteristics of social media discourse, including informality, abbreviations, multimodality, hashtags, and grammatical variation.*

Keywords: *social media discourse, linguistics, informality, abbreviations, emojis, multimodality, hashtags, digital communication, online language, grammar variation.*

Social media has become one of the most dominant forms of communication in the modern world. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, and Telegram allow users to communicate instantly, share information, and express opinions in diverse formats. As a result, a new type of communication known as social media discourse has emerged.

Social media discourse refers to language used in digital environments where communication is fast, interactive, and often multimodal. It combines written text with visual elements such as images, emojis, GIFs, and videos. Unlike traditional written communication, it is highly informal, flexible, and constantly evolving.

This article analyzes the main linguistic features of social media discourse and explains how digital communication influences modern language use.

Informality and Colloquial Language. A key feature of social media discourse is informality. Users often communicate in a casual and conversational style that resembles spoken language. Slang, contractions, and emotional expressions are frequently used, such as “gonna,” “wanna,” “bro,” or “that was sooo good!”

Grammar rules are often relaxed, and sentences may be incomplete, for example: “so tired today” instead of “I am so tired today.” This reflects the fast-paced nature of online communication, where speed and emotional expression are more important than formal accuracy.

Abbreviations and Short Forms. Another important feature is the frequent use of abbreviations and acronyms. These linguistic shortcuts make communication faster and more efficient. Common examples include “LOL” (laugh out loud), “BRB” (be right back), “IDK” (I don’t know), and “IMO” (in my opinion).

Users also shorten words such as “u” for “you” and “thx” for “thanks.” These forms are widely used across platforms and contribute to the development of a shared digital language that strengthens online community identity.

Multimodality: Emojis, GIFs, and Images. Social media discourse is highly multimodal, meaning it combines text with visual elements. Emojis are widely used to express emotions quickly and effectively. For example, 😂 represents laughter, ❤️ represents love, and 🤔 can express strong emotions depending on context.

In addition to emojis, users often use GIFs, memes, and stickers to enhance communication. These visual elements allow users to express emotions, attitudes, and meanings that are difficult to convey through text alone, making online communication richer and more expressive.

Hashtags and Online Identity. Hashtags are a distinctive feature of social media language. They are used to categorize content and increase visibility, such as #travel, #love, or #MondayMotivation.

Hashtags also help create online communities and express identity, such as #studentlife or #fitnessjourney. Through hashtags, users connect with others who share similar interests and participate in global digital trends. They play an important role in shaping online identity and communication.

Syntax and Grammar Variation. Social media discourse often includes non-standard grammar and syntax. Users frequently write fragmented sentences, omit subjects, or use repetition for emphasis, such as “soooo good” or “can’t even.”

These features are not considered errors in digital communication but rather stylistic choices that reflect emotion, speed, and informality. The focus of social media language is on meaning and interaction rather than grammatical correctness.

Conclusion. In conclusion, social media discourse is a dynamic and rapidly evolving form of communication shaped by digital technology. Its main linguistic features include informality, abbreviations, multimodality, hashtags, and flexible grammar structures.

Although it differs from traditional formal writing, it represents a natural development of language in the digital age. Social media discourse is creative, expressive, and efficient, reflecting the changing nature of human communication in online environments.

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