



THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOUTH: A LINGUISTIC AND SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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Annotation: *This article investigates the influence of social media on youth from both linguistic and sociocultural perspectives. It explores how platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter shape communication styles, affect language development, and influence identity formation. The study also discusses the impact of social media on traditional language norms and the emergence of new digital dialects among young users.*

Keywords: *Social media, youth, digital communication, language change, online identity, sociolinguistics, digital dialects, internet slang, communication style.*

Introduction

In the digital age, social media has become an essential part of daily life, especially among the youth. These platforms serve not only as tools for connection and entertainment but also as powerful agents of language change and identity expression (Crystal, 2011).

Analysis and Discussion

Language Use on Social Media

Social media platforms have introduced new forms of expression that differ from traditional spoken and written language. Emoticons, acronyms (e.g., “LOL”,



“BRB”), and hashtags have become integral to digital communication (Tagliamonte & Denis, 2008).

Code-switching: Youth often switch between formal and informal language or blend their native language with English (Androutsopoulos, 2006).

Shortened forms and abbreviations: Words like “u” for “you” and “b4” for “before” are common, signaling a shift toward efficiency in communication.

Emergence of Digital Dialects

Digital dialects refer to distinct ways of writing and speaking that develop in online communities.

TikTok slang: Words like “rizz” and “delulu” are part of a growing lexicon (Eberhardt & Freeman, 2015).

Twitter English: Known for its sarcasm, irony, and creative punctuation use (Zappavigna, 2012).

Cultural Identity and Online Presence

Social media allows youth to craft digital identities. Profile bios, captions, and posts often reflect personal values, humor, and group affiliations (boyd, 2014).

Language as identity: Dialect and slang use signal belonging to specific online subcultures (Tagg, 2015).

Influence of influencers: Popular creators shape language trends, blurring the line between personal expression and mass communication.

Educational and Psychological Implications

While social media enriches linguistic creativity, it also poses challenges: Decreased use of formal writing: Spelling and grammar may suffer in academic contexts (Thurlow, 2006).

Cyberbullying and pressure: Online communication may affect mental health, especially when language is used for exclusion or ridicule (Livingstone & Smith, 2014).

Conclusion

Social media is a dynamic force reshaping how youth communicate, build identity, and engage with language. While it challenges traditional norms, it also fosters



creativity and inclusivity. Educators and linguists must recognize these shifts to better support language development in a digital world.

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