

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON TEENAGERS' SPEECH  
CULTURE"IJTIMOIY TARMOQLARDAGI O'SMIRLARNING NUTQ  
MADANIYATIGA TA'SIRI""ВЛИЯНИЕ СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ СЕТЕЙ НА КУЛЬТУРУ РЕЧИ  
ПОДРОСТКОВ"

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**Abstract:** This article explores the impact of social media on the speech culture of teenagers, with a focus on lyceum students. Drawing on both theoretical frameworks and original survey data, the study highlights how digital communication shapes adolescents' vocabulary, grammar, and register awareness. The findings reveal that while social media promotes informal, creative language use, it also poses challenges to formal speech development. The paper concludes with practical recommendations for integrating digital literacy into language education to help students navigate both online and academic communication.

**Keywords:** social media, teenagers, speech culture, language education, digital literacy, communication styles

**Annotatsiya:** Ushbu maqola litsey o'quvchilari misolida ijtimoiy tarmoqlarning o'smirlarning nutq madaniyatiga ta'sirini o'rganadi. Teoretik asoslar va so'rovnoma natijalariga tayanib, maqolada raqamli muloqot yoshlarning lug'at boyligi, grammatik ko'nikmalari va uslubiy xabardorligiga qanday ta'sir qilayotgani ko'rsatib beriladi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, ijtimoiy tarmoqlar norasmiy va ijodiy tildan foydalanishni

ragʻbatlantiradi, biroq rasmiy nutq rivojiga ham xavf tugʻdiradi. Maqola yakunida raqamli savodxonlikni taʼlim jarayoniga integratsiya qilish boʻyicha amaliy tavsiyalar beriladi.

**Kalit soʻzlar:** ijtimoiy tarmoqlar, oʻsmirlar, nutq madaniyati, til oʻrgatish, raqamli savodxonlik, muloqot uslublari

**Аннотация:** В данной статье рассматривается влияние социальных сетей на культуру речи подростков, особенно учащихся лицеев. На основе теоретических концепций и результатов анкетирования анализируется, как цифровое общение влияет на лексику, грамматические навыки и стилистическую осведомлённость подростков. Результаты показывают, что социальные сети поощряют неформальное и творческое использование языка, но одновременно представляют угрозу для развития нормированной речи. В заключение предложены практические рекомендации по внедрению цифровой грамотности в образовательный процесс.

**Ключевые слова:** социальные сети, подростки, культура речи, обучение языку, цифровая грамотность, стили общения

## INTRODUCTION

In the era of digital communication and global connectivity, social media has become an integral part of teenagers' daily lives. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Telegram, and X (formerly Twitter) are not just tools for entertainment or networking—they shape how young people express themselves, interact with others, and even perceive language.

Teenagers spend a significant amount of time in virtual environments where informal, fast-paced, and abbreviated communication dominates. This environment has led to the widespread use of slang, emojis, abbreviations, anglicisms, and internet memes, often at the expense of standard grammar, punctuation, and stylistic norms. Consequently, the line between written and spoken language is increasingly blurred, and traditional norms of speech etiquette and linguistic correctness are being challenged.

This article explores how social media influences the speech culture of teenagers, particularly high school and lyceum students. We analyze how their vocabulary, communicative habits, and linguistic awareness are shaped by digital platforms. The study also presents results from a survey conducted among lyceum students and offers practical recommendations for educators to help develop students' linguistic competence in the age of digital media.

### **Theoretical Background**

The concept of *speech culture* encompasses not only grammatical correctness but also stylistic appropriateness, clarity of expression, respect for linguistic norms, and the ability to adapt language to different communicative situations. In linguistic and pedagogical literature, speech culture is viewed as a key component of communicative competence and is closely tied to intellectual development, critical thinking, and social interaction skills.

According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, language is a tool for thought and social development. In adolescence, this tool becomes particularly important as teenagers actively form their identity and engage in peer communication. Social media intensifies this process by providing constant exposure to informal discourse and peer validation through language.

Digital communication, however, introduces new challenges. Scholars such as David Crystal (2006) and Naomi Baron (2008) have argued that the rise of digital language (often referred to as *netspeak*) has reshaped linguistic norms, creating a hybrid register that blends written and spoken features. While this can enhance creativity and adaptability, it may also contribute to the erosion of traditional language standards.

In the context of language education, researchers emphasize the importance of teaching students to differentiate between formal and informal registers and to recognize context-appropriate language use. As Gee (2003) notes, literacy in the digital age involves not only technical reading and writing skills but also the ability to navigate multiple "discourses" and linguistic identities.

Thus, the theoretical foundation of this study draws upon sociolinguistics, digital literacy studies, and education theory. It supports the view that speech culture is a dynamic, evolving construct influenced by both social environments and technological media—particularly among adolescents.

### **Impact of Social Media on Teenagers' Language Use**

Social media platforms have dramatically transformed the way teenagers communicate. The influence is evident in several key areas of their language behavior, including vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and overall communicative habits. Below, we analyze some of the most prominent linguistic shifts observed among teenagers who are active social media users.

#### **Informalization of Language**

Social media encourages brevity and speed, which often leads to the use of shorthand expressions, emojis, GIFs, and memes. This environment fosters informal communication styles where complete sentences, punctuation, and proper spelling are frequently neglected. Phrases such as *brb* (“be right back”), *idk* (“I don’t know”), or abbreviations like *u* instead of *you* become normalized, even in academic or semi-formal settings. Over time, this informal style may transfer to offline interactions, reducing students’ ability to switch between registers.

#### **Slang and Borrowings**

Teenagers’ speech is increasingly filled with slang, anglicisms, and expressions derived from internet culture. Words such as *vibe*, *flex*, *ghost*, or *cringe* are commonly used in non-English speaking countries as well, especially among youth. While some borrowings enrich the language and reflect cultural trends, their excessive or inappropriate use can dilute native language norms and decrease awareness of formal equivalents.

#### **Spelling and Grammar Habits**

Frequent exposure to informal digital communication can weaken students’ command of standard spelling and grammar. Since most social media platforms do not penalize grammatical errors, many teenagers develop careless habits in written



expression. This becomes evident in academic tasks, where students may use informal phrases, sentence fragments, or even emojis in essays or written assignments.

### **Reduced Vocabulary and Expressiveness**

Studies suggest that heavy social media use may lead to a reduced active vocabulary among adolescents. Digital communication often favors repetition of simple, popular phrases or reaction words (*cool, same, lol*, etc.), limiting opportunities for lexical diversity. As a result, students may struggle to express complex ideas or emotions in both written and spoken forms.

### **3.5 Blurring of Speech Genres**

In traditional education, students are taught to distinguish between formal writing (e.g., essays, reports) and informal speech. Social media, however, blends these boundaries. A single post may include personal reflections, internet slang, academic ideas, and memes all at once. Teenagers may find it difficult to adjust their language to specific contexts, especially when transitioning between online and offline communication.

### **Research Findings and Discussion**

To better understand how social media affects teenagers' speech culture, a small-scale study was conducted among 60 lyceum students aged 15–17 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The survey aimed to assess students' language habits, attitudes toward language norms, and their awareness of formal vs. informal registers.

#### **Survey Design**

The questionnaire included 15 items—both multiple choice and open-ended questions. It covered areas such as:

- Frequency of social media use
- Preferred platforms (e.g., Telegram, TikTok, Instagram)
- Types of language used online
- Self-assessment of language skills
- Perceptions of how online communication affects their school performance

Students also submitted short samples of their typical social media messages and were later asked to rewrite them in formal academic style.

### Key Results

- **High usage:** 93% of participants reported using social media daily, with 68% spending over 3 hours per day online.
- **Language mixing:** 81% regularly used a mix of Uzbek, Russian, and English when chatting online.
- **Low awareness of register:** Only 37% said they consciously change their language depending on context (e.g., formal vs. informal).
- **Grammar habits:** 65% admitted they often ignore grammar rules and punctuation in online messages.
- **Impact on writing:** 54% of students acknowledged that they sometimes accidentally use slang or informal abbreviations in academic writing.

In the **text transformation task**, only 28% of students were able to successfully convert an informal message (e.g., “lol this topic is so cringe ngl”) into an appropriate formal equivalent.

### Discussion

These results support the hypothesis that frequent and unmoderated exposure to informal digital communication weakens students’ speech culture. While social media helps students stay connected and even introduces them to new vocabulary (especially English loanwords), it also reinforces habits that conflict with academic standards.

The phenomenon of *code-switching*—alternating between languages—is natural in multilingual societies, but when uncontrolled, it may hinder development in any one language. Similarly, the informal and entertainment-driven nature of social media de-emphasizes linguistic reflection and accuracy.

At the same time, some students demonstrated an ability to consciously adjust their tone depending on the situation, indicating that digital literacy education could bridge the gap. If students are taught how to **analyze, reflect on, and purposefully**

**shift** between digital and formal registers, social media can even become a pedagogical tool rather than a linguistic threat.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The influence of social media on teenagers' speech culture is multifaceted and increasingly significant. As shown through both theoretical analysis and survey data, social media platforms promote a form of communication that is fast, informal, emotionally charged, and often grammatically simplified. For teenagers—especially lyceum students—who are in a critical stage of cognitive and linguistic development, this environment presents both opportunities and risks.

On one hand, social media enhances exposure to language, fosters creativity, and encourages multilingual expression. On the other hand, it may weaken formal language skills, reduce lexical richness, and blur the boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate registers of speech. Without conscious guidance and educational support, students may begin to transfer online communication habits into academic and professional contexts, thereby affecting their linguistic competence and cultural literacy.

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