

Language Evolution in Social Media: Exploring English Transformations through Digital Communication.

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ABSTRACT

With the expeditious proliferation of social media platforms in the lives of individuals across the globe, the choice of communication in the digital age has also witnessed a humongous transformation in the choice of language used. This study specifically the adaptation of the English Language as the main focal point while investigating the fascinating impact of language evolution within the various dimensions of social media. Employing the theoretical framework inspired by Howard Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), the research seeks to explore how social media has influenced the dynamics of speakers of the English language.

Through a comprehensive introspection of linguistic data collected from a range of diverse social media platforms, this study attempts to apply the principles set by CAT in order to decode the linguistic adaptations, innovations, and related intricacies that stemmed as a response to the exclusive context of communication implemented by social media.

The findings of this work not only contribute to the understanding of language adaptation and evolution in the current digital era but also provide potential policymakers, communication professionals and educators an opportunity to recognize the dynamic nature of the language which is crucial for effective communication and highly instrumental in staying attuned to the ever-evolving linguistic norms of the online environment.

Keywords: Social media, Language adaptation, English, Communication Adaptation Theory.

Introduction:

Communication is a multifaceted process that utilizes various modes and technologies to exchange complex information, ideas, and emotions among individuals or groups on different levels. Communication in prehistoric times primarily relied on spoken words, gestures, and drawing on cave walls by which tribes and communities would utilize the art of storytelling, oral traditions, and physical signals to convey information and maintain social cohesion. Rapid advances in communication facilitated the world to metamorphose from written and printed communication in the form of the telegraph to the creation of mass communication through telephone and radio. These mediums played a central role in disseminating news, entertainment, and advertisements to more people within a short span of time. By the late 20th century, the internet transformed personal and professional communications through email and instant messaging. The introduction of social

media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram by the 21st century facilitated the globalization of cultures but it was through the advent of more advanced forms of digital communication like smartphones and mobile apps that enabled people to communicate, conduct business and share media virtually from any corner of the world.

However, the evolution of communication from the aforementioned areas was possibly mainly due to the use of language for communication. The most common form of communication preferred by human beings in order to exchange thoughts, ideas, emotions, and intentions using complex symbols, sounds, and gestures with each other occurs in the form of language. A language is a dynamic and structured system of conventional spoken, manual (signed), or written symbols by which beings express themselves.

When languages and technology combine, they are able to create environments like media because both media and technology are languages of expression that have unique semantics and syntax of their own.

In this paper, we seek to understand language evolution in social media through the use of the Communication Accommodation Theory, which is applicable to the evolution of the English language over the span of time, as it provides a clear picture of how language is adapted and changed on the basis of social interactions and needs pertaining to communications. Therefore, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How is CAT theory applicable to the transformation of the English language?
2. Which factors have contributed to the evolution of language in the world of digital communication?
3. If language is linked to social media, how does one prove their inter-dependency?

Literature Review

1. **"Language and the Internet" by David Crystal (2006):** This book explores the impact of the internet on language, covering topics like email communication, online chat, and social media. Crystal examines how the internet has influenced written language and communication patterns.

2. **"Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings" by Benjamin Lee Whorf (1956):** Whorf's writings explore the relationship between language and thought, introducing the concept of linguistic relativity, which suggests that language shapes our perception of reality.

3. **"Contexts of Accommodation: Developments in Applied Sociolinguistics" edited by Howard Giles, Nikolas Coupland, and Justine Coupland (1991):** This book delves into the concept of communication accommodation theory (CAT) and its application in sociolinguistics. It examines how people adjust their language in social interactions.

4. **"The Multilingual Internet: Language, Culture, and Communication Online" edited by Brenda Danet and Susan C. Herring (2007):** This book explores the impact of multilingualism and cultural diversity on online communication, emphasizing the role of language in shaping online communities.

5. **"Language and the Internet" by David Crystal (2001):** Crystal's work discusses the linguistic aspects of online communication, including code-switching, emoticons, and the transformation of language in the digital realm.

6. **"Always On: Language in an Online and Mobile World" by Naomi S. Baron (2008):** Baron's book examines how digital communication tools, particularly mobile devices, have changed language use, communication norms, and interpersonal interactions.

7. **"Talking Back to Facebook: Theorizing via Social Network Sites" by Crispin Thurlow and Laura Poff (2013):** This book provides a comprehensive analysis of language use on social network sites, exploring how individuals construct their identities and relationships online.
8. **"Text-Messaging: The New Lingua Franca of the Virtual World" by Brenda Danet (2008):** Danet's work investigates the language of text messaging, highlighting its role as a dominant mode of communication in the digital age.
9. **"Effects of Auto-Correction on Students' Writing Skills at Three Different Universities in Sulaimaneyah City" by Tariq H. Alhusban (2016):** This research examines the impact of spellcheckers and autocorrect on students' writing skills, raising questions about overreliance on technology for writing.
10. **"Social Media Platforms like Twitter" by David Crystal (2011):** Crystal discusses how social media platforms like Twitter have introduced character limits and unique language conventions, influencing the way users communicate.
11. **"Digital Discourse: Language in the New Media" by Crispin Thurlow and Kristine Mroczek (2011):** Thurlow and Mroczek explore digital discourse in various contexts, including social media, blogs, and online forums, shedding light on the language used in these spaces.
12. **"Exploring Digital Communication: Language in Action" by Claire Tagg (2012):** Tagg's book delves into digital communication practices, emphasizing the role of language in shaping online interactions and communities.
13. **"Because Internet: Understanding the New Rules of Language" by Gretchen McCulloch (2019):** McCulloch's book provides insights into internet linguistics, including the use of memes, emojis, and new linguistic norms that have emerged in digital communication.
14. **"Words Onscreen: The Fate of Reading in a Digital World" by Naomi S. Baron (2015):** Baron explores the impact of digital media on reading habits and language use, discussing how digital platforms have affected literacy.
15. **"Making Sense of Grammar: A Quick Guide to Sentence Structure" by David Crystal (2017):** Crystal's work focuses on grammar in the digital age, offering guidance on sentence structure and language use in contemporary communication.

Research gap

The previous research works covers language evolution, its connection with social media, and the influence of digital media on language, there are a few key points that this research paper addresses that isn't extensively covered:

1. **Evolution of Language and Regional Variations:** The text highlights how languages evolve over time due to historical influences, regional variations, and language evolution. It gives a specific example of how the English language evolved and diverged into various forms due to historical events like the Norman Conquest. This focus on historical context and regional variations adds depth to the understanding of language evolution.
2. **Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT):** The text introduces the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) by Howard Giles, emphasizing how language adapts and changes

based on social interactions and communication needs. It discusses convergence and divergence in speech patterns and provides real-life examples, which can be valuable for understanding how language evolves in different social contexts.

3. Language and Social Media: The text explores the intricate relationship between language and social media. It discusses how social media platforms have influenced language through text-based communication, emojis, acronyms, slang, memes, and hashtags. It also highlights the role of language in branding, marketing, and content creation on social media, providing a comprehensive view of language's impact on digital communication.

4. Technological Advancements and Language Change: The text emphasizes the role of technological advancements, especially the internet and digital tools, in shaping language use. It discusses how technologies like spell-checkers and autocorrect affect spelling conventions and how character limits on platforms like Twitter lead to innovative language use. It also touches on the emergence of neologisms due to technological innovations.

5. Multilingualism and Globalization: The text addresses the impact of globalization on language, showcasing how foreign words are incorporated into English due to global influences. It emphasizes that digital communication has allowed for the coexistence of multiple languages and dialects, promoting code-switching and multilingual expressions.

6. Implications for Online Identity: The text highlights how individuals adapt their language and tone to fit the expectations and norms of different social media platforms, shaping their online personas. This discussion adds depth to the understanding of how language influences online identity construction.

Language:

An ever-evolving concept, language is a distinguishing feature of humans that allows the transmission of knowledge, culture, traditions, and principles across multiple generations. It is also used as one of the many variables in order to draw and create boundaries of behaviour.

As much as language is considered to be the primary mode of interaction dominant in human civilization, it also exhibits a sense of belongingness and demonstrates affiliation to members of a group, creed, or race even in the non-human kingdom. Furthermore, it would not be unrealistic to ignore the fact that the planet's enormous geography also plays an important role in how language is configured individually, despite being shared as a society. Languages have been known to split into separate branches over time enabling regional variations and dialects to materialize. For example, Spanish, Italian, and French split as different branches of the Latin language owing to factors like regional operations, influence, divergence, standardization and other factors affiliated with the Roman conquest and colonization over a span of several centuries. Below is an example of how the English word "Horse" was embraced with different pronunciations, spellings, and names due to regional variations. Example:

Word: "Horse"

- Spanish: "Caballo"

- French: "Cheval"

- Italian: "Cavallo"

In this example, it can be seen how the word for "horse" has evolved differently in each of these Romance languages, all of which descended from Latin. These linguistic changes over time are a result of historical influences, regional variations, and language evolution.

The typical functions of language include communication, the expression of identity, play, imaginative expression, and emotional release. According to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, it is argued that language is a spectrum that goes from **linguistic determinism** which suggests that without language there can be no thought to **linguistic relativity**, which in turn suggests that language could also be influenced by thought. Nonetheless, both observations imply that the words employed by humans are influential in shaping their thought processes.

Individual identities and interpersonal interactions are crucially dependent on the use of language, thereby proving that its evolution over time has been a multifaceted process. What is indeed fascinating is that no two individuals use language in precisely the same way. From word choice and pronunciation to grammar and tone, language becomes a powerful form of self-expression. Each person adapts the use of language according to his/her own personality. From the usage of choice words to pronunciation, grammar, volume, and decision of tone of voice- be it formal or informal- language is one of the major forms of self-expression that shapes how we interact with others and comprehend our surroundings. It molds how we interact with others and interpret the world around us. Needless to say, speakers of any language are endowed with a unique, intricate, and constantly changing medium of expression. Given these multifaceted influences on language, it's intriguing to delve into the factors that have contributed to its evolution over time, and it would be interesting to analyze the factors contributing to the evolution of language, specifically English.

ii. Implication of CAT Theory on the English Language:

The Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) proposed by Howard Giles in 1970, offered an insight into speech variability that is centered more on the addressee than the context. Since it suggested that findings of context-based shifts in speech style could usefully be re-interpreted as having been mediated by the interpersonal accommodation process, it moved the focus in research on communication adjustment to receiver characteristics as an integral part of the consideration that compelled speakers' stylistic shifts. In simpler words, the CAT theory suggests that communication styles and behaviors are adjusted by speakers to either converge (become similar to) or diverge (become more distinct from) the speech patterns of their conversation partners. This theory is applicable to the evolution of the English language over the span of time, as it provides a clear picture of how language is adapted and changed on the basis of social interactions and needs pertaining to communications.

Of the world's approximately 7.8 billion inhabitants, an estimated 1.35 billion use English to communicate in their daily lives. Interestingly though, despite the majority of this population are not native speakers of the English language, a staggering 360 million people speak English as their first language. It is the official language of many countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia. Being one of the most dominant international communication languages used for, business, education, tourism, diplomatic relations, trade, and education today, the English language finds its roots in Anglo-Saxon, a West Germanic language spoken by the Anglo-Saxons who settled in Britain in the 5th century. It was also a very different language from the English spoken today as it was highly inflected, meaning that words could change their form depending on how they were used in a sentence.

This inflectional system began to break down and words started to lose their endings owing to the Scandinavian influence during the Norman Conquest which subsequently made the English vocabulary simpler and more regular. For example, the Old English word for a king was *cyning* or *cyng* which was replaced by the Norman word we use today, *king*.

Below is an explanation of the evolution of the English language in the context of the Communication Accommodation theory, along with some examples:-

Convergence and standardization:

Convergence refers to adjusting one's communicative behaviors to be similar to others. It can either occur at an individual or group level in which they alter their styles of communication to sound and appear more like their interlocutor. It occurs as a result of conscious efforts to strike similarity with the ones being admired or the speech can be accommodated subconsciously to establish a sense of alliance. Preferred as the most positive form of communication, convergence inspires alterations to occur across a wide range of variables such as language, accent, utterance length and pitch and it has been extensively studied in both laboratory and naturalistic settings.

Example:- During the Norman Conquest in 1066, the English vocabulary absorbed influences

from the ruling French, alongside the Norse and Scandinavian influences from the earlier centuries. With intermarriage between the immigrant Normans and the native English population becoming more common, an estimated 30,000 new words became a part of the English vocabulary because people commonly spoke both languages. There was more convergence of the language as English speakers adapted their language to appear more similar to Norman French. Therefore, it can be concluded that in scenarios associated with social prestige or power imbalance, people may choose to converge their language in order to align with the dominant group. Such inclinations to coordinate with the predominant group resulted in the addition of newer words, syntax, lexicon, grammar and pronunciations.

Divergence and regional variations:-

Divergence, in contrast, refers to adjusting communicative behaviors to accentuate verbal and non-verbal differences with others, to appear more dissimilar. It involves changing the style of communication to emphasize or highlight distinctiveness from an interlocutor.

For example, the English language diverged into various dialects over time such as, Middle English evolved into different dialects in regions like London, the West Midlands, and the North of England. Another example is that of Bourhis (1984) who had a female confederate approach Anglophone and Francophone pedestrians in downtown Montreal (Quebec) to ask for directions in either English or French. When the request was voiced in French, nearly half of the Anglophone pedestrians nonetheless responded in English (i.e., maintenance of their default language). Maintenance tactics such as this can sometimes be seen as “under accommodative” (see below). Some speakers are habitual non-accommodators, or maintainers, given their self-confidence and high self-esteem, together with a desire to be their own person and not concerned with being liked by all.

It should be noted that both convergence and divergence can each take multiple forms. (Gallois & Giles, 1998; see, for example, Table 1). With importance to social value pertaining to the dimension of adjustment, convergence, and divergence can be conceptualized in an upward or downward trend. While upward convergence refers to shifts towards a more prestigious variety of speech, downward convergence refers to a stigmatized variety.

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Table 1 Accommodative moves (after Gallois & Giles, 1998). With permission from Greenwood Publishing Group/ABC-CLIO.

<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Speaker and partner</i>	
Symmetrical convergence	A---->	<----B
Asymmetrical convergence	A---->	<--B
Convergence with maintenance	A---->	B
Convergence with divergence	A---->	B---->
Symmetrical maintenance	A	B
Symmetrical divergence	<----A	B---->
Asymmetrical divergence	<----A	B-->
Divergence with maintenance	<----A	B
Divergence with convergence	<----A	<----B

Note: Lines indicate direction and amount of change over time (short-term or long-term). The perspective of A is taken and should be reversed for B. Accommodation may be behavioral or perceived, intergroup or interpersonal, and may not be in accord with optimal levels.

Upward divergence, on the other hand, involves an individual accentuating their social status in a bid to appear more influential and admirable. It is used to assert dominance and superiority over others and societal expectations are mostly based on such trends. In contrast to this, downward divergence requires an individual to accentuate a working-class dialect or accent. For example, The Linguists Gregory & Webster (1996)⁴ found evidence of both **upward** and **downward convergence** in a TV chat show hosted by Larry King. They noticed King would change the pitch and tone of his voice to match his more prestigious guests (e.g. President Bill Clinton), but less-prestigious guests would match their speech to his.

In the paper titled “A Non-Verbal Signal in Voices of Interview Partners Effectively Predicts Communication Accommodation and Social Status Perceptions”, Stanford W. Gregory, Jr. and Stephen Webster from Kent State University present the derivations from non-verbal communications accommodation theory in which student ratings of the social status of the same talk show host and guests were correlated with factor loadings.

Correlation of Dominance and Deference Mean Factor Loadings between Mr.King and Guests.

Partners compared by correlation	Dominance factor statistic (<i>r</i>)	Deference factor statistic (<i>r</i>)
King 1 with Guest 1	-.77	-.54
King 2 with Guest 2	-.82	-.71
King 3 with Guest 3	-.88	-.60

Note. Numbers in column 1 refer to temporal periods in interviews.

Name of guest	Factor 1 loading		Factor 2 loading	
	Guest	Mr. King	Guest	Mr. King
Mike Wallace	.85	.26	.28	.80
George Bush	.85	.18	.27	.89
Elizabeth Taylor	.84	.19	.16	.78
Ross Perot	.82	.18	.03	.51
Bill Clinton	.81	.35	.28	.67
Barbra Streisand	.80	.29	.07	.76
Sean Connery	.71	.56	.60	.67
Tip O'Neill	.70	.55	.44	.76
Mario Cuomo	.60	.32	.55	.77
Bill Cosby	.59	.81	.36	.38
Norman Schwarzkopf	.54	.77	.39	.46
Al Gore	.44	.55	.50	.66
Jimmy Carter	.42	.84	.50	.33
Julie Andrews	.40	.84	.47	.34
Daryl Gates	.37	.86	.41	.26
Gordon Sullivan	.33	.72	.49	.34
Lee Iacocca	.30	.81	.67	.32
George Mitchell	.29	.74	.79	.55
Henry Kissinger	.25	.74	.60	.42
Garrison Keillor	.24	.80	.74	.32
Jean Kirkpatrick	.23	.68	.32	.47
Arthur Ashe	.17	.77	.28	.42
Spike Lee	.15	.89	.80	.17
Robert Strauss	.12	.84	.83	.31
Dan Quayle	.09	.92	.83	.05

Note. Factor loadings represent a mean of the three temporal periods and are sorted from highest to lowest loadings of Factor 1 of the guest factor analysis. Loadings for guests' Factor 2 and for both of Mr. King's factors are presented in this same order.

2. Which factors have contributed to the evolution of language in the world of digital communication?

1. **Technological advancements:** With the advent of new-age technologies, especially the internet and digital communication tools, people's access to agile information available at a single click and their ability to connect with people from different parts of the world has democratized access to crisp communication. This increased connectivity has led to the proliferation of English

as a Lingua Franca in online communication. Language use has been greatly influenced by the convenience and speed provided by digital communication tools thereby leading to the development of the shorthand, acronyms, and emoticons that have now become an indispensable part of digital discourse. Traditionally, there has always been a 'right' and 'wrong' way of speaking that is being blurred by the internet. Correct grammar, despite its existence, is no longer purely dictated by education or literacy. The argument here is that if a huge number of people prefer to speak in a certain way, there is no longer a need for a clearly defined or, 'established' way of speaking that ought to be 'correct'.

2. **Spell-checkers and autocorrect:** Spellcheckers and autocorrect features in word processing software and message apps may have contributed to the betterment of people's written communication but the dependency and reliance on such digital tools has also affected the proficiency in spelling conventions. In a research paper by the Arab World English journal, titled '*Effects of Auto-Correction on Students' Writing Skills at Three Different Universities in Sulaimaneyah City*', the observation suggests the following: *The more students rely on technology to write assignments, the worse their writing ability will become. Students' capacity to articulate their full thoughts is deteriorating, and they cannot think for themselves. Technology generally hides students' misunderstandings and interferes with their learning (Alhusban, 2016). Students cannot think critically and interpret data, synthesize facts, write evidence-based statements, or identify acceptable grammatical and structural errors as a result (Rothman, 2012).* In addition to digital applications, text messaging has also been shown to "heighten the propensity among students to adopt due to the significant rise in texting. In their classwork, non-standard uses and contracted forms of English words" (Dansieh, 2011, p. 222). Students' concentration spans become shorter due to texting, causing them to write in minor detail and replace more appropriate words with more specific, less sophisticated words. The above observation is found to be true for most people in this generation and is not exclusive to the student group alone.

3. **Social Media:** Social Media Platforms like Twitter introduced a 140-character limit for posting a tweet that was later increased to 280 characters but the shortage of characters forced its users to condense their thoughts to succinct messages. This need to compress messages has given rise to innovative language use, hashtags and the blending of words to fit within the character limit. For example, the word 'Netizen' that stands for "Internet Citizen."

4. **Neologisms:** Technological advances often introduce new concepts and terms, leading to the creation of neologisms (new words). For instance, words like "googling," "selfie," and "tweet" have become widely used due to innovations in technology and social media platforms.

5. **Language Adaptation:** Language adapts to the medium of communication. For example, spoken English differs from written English, and both have adapted to digital communication. Email etiquette, online forums, and chat platforms have their unique language conventions.

6. **Multilingualism:** Globalization through the use of digital communication has led to the incorporation of foreign languages within English with terms like "sushi", "emoji" and "taco" being borrowed from other languages that reflect the impact of globalization on the English language.

7. **Implications:** The transformation of the English language in digital media has allowed people to code-switch between formal and informal language, depending on the platforms preferable to their audience, thereby shaping their distinct online personas. For example, someone using a professional networking platform like LinkedIn would present him/herself with a formal and business-oriented persona by using precise, industry-specific jargon when sharing content with followers. Yet the same person, while using a platform known for its informal and visual nature,

would opt for using a more relaxed and informal tone along with the use of emojis and hashtags. This adaptability in language and tone is a testament to the way people shape their distinct online identities by tailoring their communication style to fit the expectations and norms of different social media platforms and their respective audiences.

3. If language is linked to social media, how does one prove their inter-dependency?

The advent of social media has greatly influenced the lives of billions of people around the globe. With a plethora of social media platforms meant for expressing one's opinion without any restrictions, it has also metamorphosed the ways in which communications are performed. Needless to say, language and social media are deeply connected with each other in an inseparable manner because with the evolution of language over time, social networking has been proven to be a global phenomenon that has caused a vast paradigm shift in the world of communications.

1. **Text-based communications:** Language is the most preferred choice of the medium through which communications are performed, information is exchanged, engaging discussions occur and connections are made by users from different parts of the globe through social media. For example, platforms like Twitter and Facebook facilitate users to primarily communicate through the usage of text wherein users can post comments, and express views, thoughts, feelings and opinions through tweets, status updates, comments, and messages.

2. **Emojis and Emoticons:** The language used on social media consists of emojis and emoticons that have replaced traditional methods of communicating one's feelings as they help add a layer of emotional depth to text-based communications. Emojis have been embraced to be used as a universal language that transcends cultural and linguistic barriers. It is found that the use of these symbols helps users to convey non-verbal cues and enhance their message which may be challenging to convey through words alone. Interestingly, the use of emoticons is not restricted to personal communications but it has found acceptance in the business world as well. Companies often use emojis to connect with their customers to foster a better sense of personal touch to their brand's message.

For example, Domino's Pizza has co-opted for a pizza emoji in their food ordering mechanism, the brand has reduced the time it takes to order to mere five seconds and added more value to people's needs for instant gratification.

3. **Abbreviations and Acronyms:** One of the examples of the impact of social media on cultural norms is the choice usage of acronyms and abbreviations as a quick and efficient way of communicating thereby creating a sense of familiarity and understanding among users. The use of abbreviations and acronyms has become so prevalent that these words have become constituted in one's daily vocabulary. Owing to its nonchalant acceptance by most individuals, it has instrumentally affected the way in which communications are performed on a professional and personal basis. Abbreviations and acronyms like "BRB (Be Right Back), ICYMI (In Case You Missed It)" are used on social media to save time and space while conveying common phrases or expressions.

4. **Hashtags:** Hashtags are a linguistic feature that allows users to participate in trending topics, conversations, movements or discussions in a manner through which they identify themselves with a group and allows them to connect with other users who share similar views or interests. Hashtags are often used to create awareness of an ongoing issue or demonstrate one's passion or solidarity for/ with any movement.

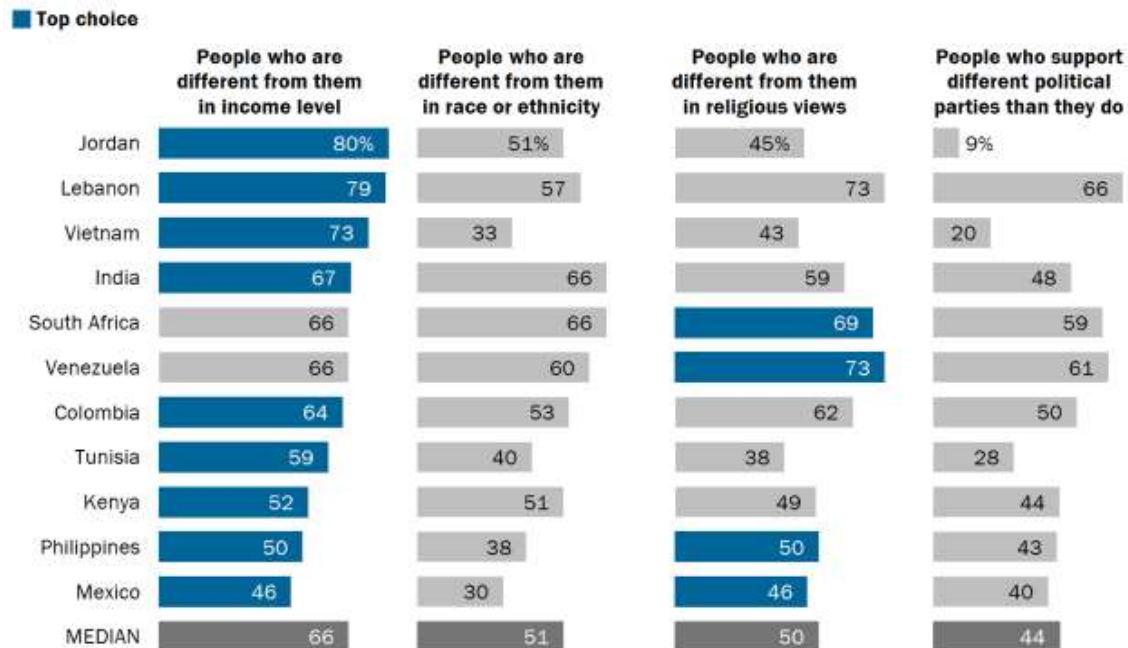
5. **Slang and Memes:** Slang and memes are the linguistic phenomena that were born on social media as a means to communicate through visibility, transmission, mental application, and serious thought. Humans tend to see and understand images faster than texts and invoke quicker responses, therefore humorous texts, images, or videos have become a part of popular internet culture. While slang language appeals more to the youth and memes possess the qualities of inside jokes within a group of people, they tend to reflect the dynamic nature of language as they adapt and evolve in response to online communities and trends. For example, internet slangs like “fam, bae, lit”, that demonstrate a sense of belongingness or camaraderie are often used on social media to present alignment with the followers.

6. **Global Multilingualism and Diversity:** Since social media transcends barriers of states and languages, it is a rich source of cultural diversity wherein people communicate in their native languages or mix languages in their posts, reflecting their cultural identities and global connections. This coexistence of multiple languages and dialects allows users to code-switch or use multilingual expressions. Below is a chart that depicts social media users’ willingness to interact with people of other ethnicities, income groups, religious and political views.

Given below is a chart that depicts the pattern of interactions with regards to the aforementioned factors.

More say they regularly interact with people of other income levels than say they interact with people of other races, political affiliations

% of adults who say they frequently/occasionally interact with ...



Source: Mobile Technology and Its Social Impact Survey 2018, Q38a-d.

"In Emerging Economies, Smartphone and Social Media Users Have Broader Social Networks"

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7. **Branding and Marketing:** Brands and businesses are increasingly dependent on social media to connect with customers in order to promote their business through offers, subscriptions, and services. Marketers make use of a persuasive tone of language and clever storytelling techniques while crafting marketing messages and advertisements.

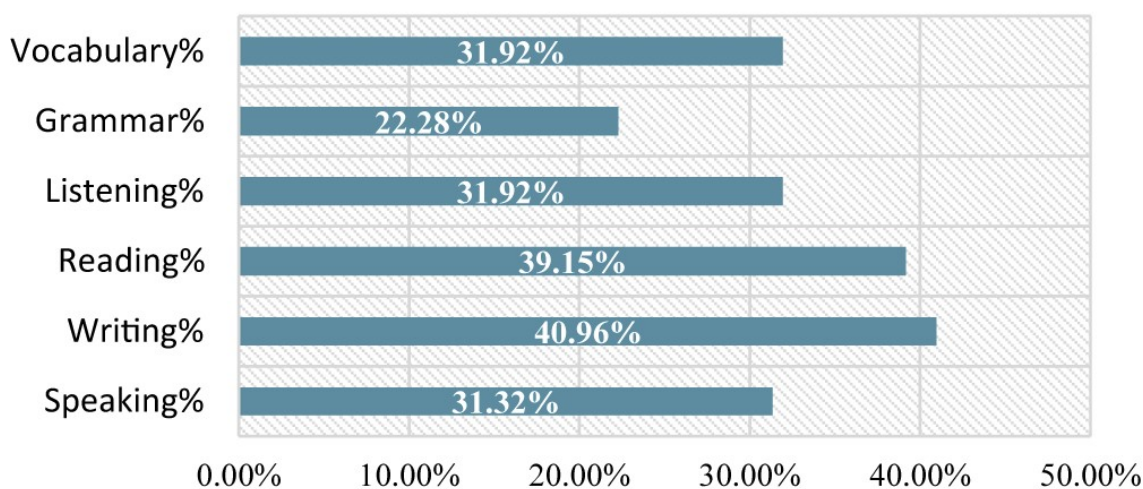
8. **Content Creation:** Language is a crucial component of content creation as content creators use language as a medium to convey messages through a range of content, mainly blog posts, articles, videos and images. For example, a Youtuber would create a video and utilize spoken language in a voiceover while also providing video description, captions and titles to help viewers understand the purpose of the content.

Proving their interdependence: The following scenarios should be considered to understand the interdependence of social media and language:

No language no social media: The social media web-based communication tools comprise various channels of electronic or mediated technologies that facilitate communication and interaction among people and language is a type of social communion, which is communicatively shared by a group of users. In the absence of language, there would be no means of communication on social media platforms and social media would lose their primary function as a communication tool.

No social media, Altered Language use: In the absence of social media, language would be adapted to perform other forms of communication such as face-to-face interactions, handwritten letters, or traditional media thereby resulting in a linguistic landscape with fewer opportunities for linguistic innovations specific to online culture.

9-What aspects of language skills do you improve via social media?



Limitations of the Study:

1. **Language Specificity:** While this research primarily engages with the English language, the impact of digital communication on other languages is equally relevant and warrants separate investigations. Future studies could explore the evolution of languages other than English in the digital age to gain a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon.

2. **Age and Generational Differences:** This research doesn't extensively delve into the variations

in language use among different age groups and generations in the context of digital communication. Examining how younger and older generations adapt their language on social media platforms could be a valuable area for future research.

3. Qualitative vs. Quantitative Analysis: The study primarily employs qualitative analysis and relies on examples to illustrate language evolution. Future research could incorporate more extensive quantitative methods to analyze large datasets of social media content, allowing for a more comprehensive analysis of language trends.

Scope for Further Studies:

1. Comparative Language Studies: Comparative studies between different languages and their evolution on social media could provide insights into cross-linguistic influences and variations in language adaptation. These studies could explore how languages interact and borrow elements from one another in the digital space.

2. Multimodal Communication: The impact of multimedia elements (images, videos, GIFs) on language evolution in digital communication is an area ripe for exploration. Future studies could investigate how the integration of multimedia affects language use and expression.

3. Language Policy and Regulation: Examining the role of social media platforms in shaping language norms and policies, including issues related to content moderation, hate speech, and linguistic inclusivity, is an important avenue for research.

4. Psycholinguistic and Cognitive Aspects: Further research could delve into the psychological and cognitive aspects of language adaptation in digital communication. This might include investigating how users' mental processes influence their language choices on social media.

5. Educational Implications: Research on how the evolution of language in digital communication impacts language learning and education, including its effects on literacy and language proficiency, could be valuable for educators and policymakers.

6. Societal and Ethical Implications: Investigating the broader societal and ethical implications of language evolution in digital communication, such as its role in misinformation, polarization, and online identity formation, could be an important area for further exploration.

Conclusion:

Within the realm of social media, the evolution of language is a fascinating and complex phenomenon that is deeply intertwined with the dynamics of digital communication. By exploring the transformation of the English language through the understanding of the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), the following conclusions attributed to the linguistic evolution in a digital age, have been uncovered:

First and foremost, the dynamic and adaptive tendencies of language are found to be reflective of the ever-changing nature of human interactions. The English language has experienced tremendous shifts owing to the influences of social, cultural, and technological factors. Moreover, the implications of the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) on the linguistic evolution of English outlines the ways in which language adapts and changes in response to rapid transformations within the social and communication arenas. Besides that, concepts of convergence and divergence explained in the CAT theory have also been instrumental in understanding the different ways in which speakers adjust their language to align or differentiate themselves from their interlocutors, thereby proving the interdependency of language with communication styles.

Additionally, the study has highlighted that users from diverse backgrounds communicate in English through culturally specific ways that transcend geographical barriers thereby contributing to the ongoing evolution through the creation of new words, phrases and expressions and giving rise to new linguistic conventions that are unique to the digital landscape.

In conclusion, the interdependency of language and digital communication is a testament to the

adaptability and resilience of language as a means to productively harness the power of effectively communicating, engaging and navigating the ever-changing linguistic norms of the online environment.

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