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METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL**<http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/index>**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOCIAL MEDIA DISCOURSE IN ENGLISH AND
UZBEK: LINGUISTIC AND PRAGMATIC FEATURES****Gulshan Aliyeva***Jizzakh State Pedagogical University**Faculty of Philology**Department of English language theory and methodology**Trainee-teacher*Email: gulshan.aliyeva@jdpu.uz*Jizzakh, Uzbekistan***ABOUT ARTICLE**

Key words: social media discourse, digital discourse, linguistic features, pragmatic features, English, Uzbek, computer-mediated communication, multimodality, code-switching, pragmatics.

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Abstract: The rapid development of social networking platforms has significantly transformed contemporary communication and has given rise to new forms of discourse that differ from traditional written and spoken communication. Social media discourse is characterized by informality, brevity, interactivity, multimodality, linguistic creativity, and the rapid exchange of information and opinions. The present study examines the linguistic and pragmatic characteristics of social media discourse in English and Uzbek from a comparative perspective. The research focuses on the ways in which users of the two languages employ lexical, grammatical, pragmatic, and multimodal resources to construct meaning and negotiate interpersonal relationships in digital environments. Particular attention is paid to abbreviations, colloquial vocabulary, slang, code-switching, pragmatic markers, speech acts, evaluative expressions, politeness strategies, emojis, hashtags, and other digital discourse markers. The study applies a qualitative comparative approach informed by computer-mediated discourse analysis, discourse analysis, and linguistic pragmatics. The analysis

demonstrates that English and Uzbek social media discourse share several global characteristics, including informality, expressive language, conversationalization, abbreviated forms, and extensive use of multimodal resources. At the same time, differences can be observed in the realization of politeness, forms of address, code-switching practices, evaluative expressions, and culturally determined communicative strategies. The findings suggest that social media should be regarded not merely as a technological environment but as a dynamic linguistic space in which language users continuously adapt conventional communicative resources to new social and technological conditions.

Introduction. The emergence and rapid expansion of social media have fundamentally changed the ways in which individuals communicate, construct identities, express opinions, establish interpersonal relationships, and participate in public discussions. Platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Telegram, TikTok, and other digital services have created communicative environments in which written, spoken, visual, and symbolic resources are combined. As a result, language use in digital environments has become an important area of contemporary linguistic research.

Social media communication occupies an intermediate position between traditional written discourse and face-to-face conversation. Although many social media messages are produced in written form, they frequently demonstrate characteristics traditionally associated with spoken interaction, including informality, direct address, ellipsis, repetition, emotional expression, discourse markers, and rapid turn-taking. Herring (2004) argues that computer-mediated discourse can be systematically investigated through linguistic and discourse-analytical methods because online interaction produces observable textual and multimodal traces. This approach has contributed significantly to the development of digital discourse studies.

Social media discourse is also characterized by its multimodal nature. Meaning is not communicated exclusively through words. Users employ emojis, images, GIFs, hashtags, hyperlinks, punctuation, capitalization, reaction buttons, and other semiotic resources to communicate attitudes and interpersonal meanings. Recent research emphasizes that social media discourse should therefore be examined as a multimodal assemblage in which linguistic

and visual resources interact in meaning-making processes (Simungala, Jimaima, & Nkhatab, 2025).

Another important characteristic of social media communication is its strong interpersonal orientation. Users do not simply transmit information; they evaluate events, agree or disagree with other users, express emotions, request information, criticize, compliment, joke, persuade, and establish affiliation. Zappavigna (2011, 2012) demonstrates that social media language plays an important role in constructing communities and establishing what she terms “ambient affiliation.” Hashtags, evaluative vocabulary, and recurring linguistic patterns can enable users to associate themselves with particular people, ideas, communities, and values.

The study of social media discourse becomes particularly significant when different languages and cultures are compared. Although digital communication is influenced by global technological practices, users continue to employ culturally and linguistically specific resources. English, as one of the dominant languages of the Internet, has generated numerous forms of abbreviation, slang, internet-specific vocabulary, and hybrid linguistic practices. Uzbek, meanwhile, has developed its own digital communication patterns under the influence of Uzbek linguistic traditions, Russian and English, technological vocabulary, and the rapidly increasing use of social media in Uzbekistan. A comparative analysis of English and Uzbek social media discourse can therefore contribute to the understanding of how global digital communication practices interact with language-specific and culture-specific patterns. The present study aims to identify common and distinctive linguistic and pragmatic features of social media discourse in English and Uzbek.

The main objectives of the study are:

- to identify the major linguistic characteristics of English and Uzbek social media discourse;
- to examine pragmatic strategies used by English- and Uzbek-speaking social media users;
- to analyze the role of abbreviations, slang, code-switching, pragmatic markers, and evaluative language;
- to investigate the functions of emojis, hashtags, and other multimodal resources;
- to identify similarities and differences between English and Uzbek digital communication practices.

The research is based on the assumption that social media discourse represents a dynamic form of communication in which linguistic norms are continuously adapted to the technological, social, and cultural conditions of online interaction.

Main part

Theoretical Background and Literature Review. The concept of discourse has traditionally been associated with language in use and with the relationship between linguistic structures and their social contexts. Contemporary discourse analysis, however, increasingly recognizes that communication takes place across different media and semiotic modes. Digital technologies have consequently expanded the scope of discourse studies. Computer-mediated communication has received substantial attention since the development of Internet-based interaction. Herring (2004) proposed Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA) as an approach that applies methods from linguistics, communication studies, and related disciplines to the analysis of online discourse. According to this approach, digital communication can be examined at different levels, including structural, meaning-based, interactional, social, and multimodal dimensions. One of the important characteristics of digital discourse is the relationship between written form and conversational style. Social media users often write as if they were speaking. This phenomenon can be described as conversationalization. Instead of constructing highly edited and formally organized texts, users frequently produce short, spontaneous, and context-dependent messages.

For example, expressions such as “OMG, this is amazing!”, “Can’t believe it!”, “Seriously?”, and “Yeah, exactly!” demonstrate characteristics of spoken interaction despite appearing in written form. Abbreviations such as “OMG,” “LOL,” “BTW,” and “IDK” further contribute to the informal character of English digital communication.

The Uzbek digital environment demonstrates comparable tendencies. Users frequently employ colloquial expressions, shortened forms, emotional punctuation, and combinations of Uzbek with Russian or English. Expressions such as “Juda zo’r!”, “Rostdanmi?”, “Wow, gap yo’q!”, “Like bosib qo’ying,” or “Bu video super ekan” illustrate the interaction of standard Uzbek with colloquial and borrowed digital vocabulary.

Zappavigna (2011) emphasizes the importance of evaluative language in social media communication. Evaluation enables users to express approval, criticism, admiration, disagreement, irony, or emotional involvement. In this respect, social media discourse is strongly interpersonal because linguistic choices frequently communicate the speaker's attitude toward a person, event, product, idea, or previous comment.

Another important concept is affiliation. Users construct relationships with other participants by expressing shared attitudes and values. Hashtags can be especially significant because they connect individual messages to larger discourse communities. Thus, a hashtag is not simply a technical device but can also perform a discourse function by indicating the topic, attitude, or social group associated with a message (Zappavigna, 2011).

Pragmatic theory provides another important framework for analyzing social media discourse. Speech act theory, originally associated with Austin and further developed by Searle (1969), emphasizes that utterances perform actions. In social media environments, users perform a wide range of speech acts: they request, complain, praise, advise, invite, criticize, apologize, promise, and express agreement or disagreement.

Politeness theory is also relevant. Brown and Levinson (1987) distinguish between positive and negative politeness strategies. In digital communication, positive politeness can be expressed through compliments, inclusive pronouns, agreement, humor, and supportive comments, whereas negative politeness may involve hedging, indirect requests, or respectful forms of address.

However, digital communication also demonstrates forms of interaction that cannot be fully explained by traditional face-to-face models. The use of emojis, likes, reactions, GIFs, hashtags, and visual materials creates additional resources for interpersonal meaning. Therefore, contemporary social media discourse should be approached as a multimodal phenomenon.

Methodology.

The present research employs a qualitative comparative methodology combining discourse analysis, linguistic analysis, pragmatic analysis, and principles of Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis.

The analytical framework focuses on five major categories:

- lexical features – slang, colloquialisms, abbreviations, neologisms, borrowings, and internet-specific vocabulary;
- grammatical and orthographic features – ellipsis, sentence fragments, repetition, capitalization, punctuation, and non-standard spelling;
- pragmatic features – speech acts, pragmatic markers, politeness strategies, deixis, implicature, evaluation, and interpersonal positioning;
- sociolinguistic features – code-switching, identity construction, audience orientation, and community formation;

- multimodal features – emojis, hashtags, images, GIFs, mentions, and other visual or typographic resources.

The comparison between English and Uzbek is conducted functionally rather than mechanically. In other words, linguistic forms are compared according to their communicative functions rather than only their grammatical structures.

For analytical purposes, examples used in the discussion are treated as representative discourse patterns. They illustrate recurrent types of social media language rather than being presented as statistically quantified observations from a proprietary corpus. This methodological distinction is important because digital discourse varies according to platform, topic, age group, community, and communicative purpose.

Linguistic Features of English and Uzbek Social Media Discourse

Informality is one of the most visible characteristics of social media discourse in both languages. Users tend to avoid the syntactic complexity and lexical formality associated with academic, administrative, or traditional journalistic writing.

In English, expressions such as “Hey guys!”, “Love this!”, “Totally agree!”, “No way!”, and “Can’t stop laughing!” are common in informal digital interaction.

In Uzbek, comparable expressions include “Salom hammaga!”, “Juda zo‘r!”, “Gap yo‘q!”, “Men ham shunday o‘ylayman,” and “Voy, bunaqasi ham bo‘ladimi?”

These examples indicate that social media users frequently employ conversational structures. Sentence fragments and ellipsis are particularly common because users rely heavily on shared contextual knowledge.

For example: “Best video ever!”, “Absolutely brilliant.”, and “Same here.” In Uzbek: “Eng zo‘r video!”, “Juda ajoyib.”, and “Men ham.” Although such expressions may be considered incomplete from a traditional grammatical perspective, they are communicatively sufficient in digital contexts.

Abbreviations and Shortened Forms

Abbreviations are especially prominent in English digital communication. Forms such as “LOL,” “OMG,” “BTW,” “IDK,” “IMO,” “TBH,” and “FYI” have become recognizable components of Internet language.

Their functions are not limited to saving time. They can also index informality and membership in digital communities. For example, “LOL” may indicate amusement, soften criticism, or signal that a statement should not be interpreted too seriously.

Uzbek social media discourse also contains abbreviated forms, although the system is less standardized. Users may shorten words in informal typing, omit vowels, use initials, or combine Uzbek words with internationally recognizable abbreviations.

For example: “Salom, qales?”, “Nmaga?”, and “Rahmat, zo’r ekan :)” Such forms are strongly context-dependent. Their interpretation depends on familiarity between users and on the conventions of online interaction.

Slang and Neologisms

Digital communication encourages lexical creativity. New words and expressions appear rapidly and can spread across linguistic communities. English has developed a particularly extensive digital vocabulary, including terms such as “viral,” “influencer,” “troll,” “clickbait,” “meme,” “unfollow,” “like,” and “DM.”

Uzbek social media users frequently adopt English technological vocabulary while adapting it to Uzbek grammatical and conversational patterns. For example: “postni ko’rdingizmi?”, “like bosdim”, “comment yozdim”, “story qo’ydim”, and “follow qilib qo’ying.”

These constructions demonstrate lexical borrowing and grammatical integration. English-origin digital terms are incorporated into Uzbek sentences and may receive Uzbek grammatical or derivational treatment.

Code-Switching

Code-switching is another important characteristic of Uzbek social media communication. Uzbek users may alternate between Uzbek, English, and Russian depending on topic, audience, communicative purpose, and identity.

For instance: “Bugungi lesson juda interesting bo’ldi.” “Bu outfit juda nice ekan.” “Meetingdan keyin gaplashamiz.”

Such expressions combine Uzbek grammatical structures with English lexical items. Russian may also appear in informal digital interaction.

English social media discourse can likewise demonstrate code-switching, particularly in multilingual communities. However, the sociolinguistic motivations may differ. In Uzbek contexts, code-switching can be associated with modernization, education, professional identity, technological literacy, or youth culture.

Consequently, code-switching should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of insufficient language competence. It may function as a deliberate discourse strategy through which speakers construct particular identities and address particular audiences.

Pragmatic Features of Social Media Discourse. Social media messages frequently perform identifiable speech acts. Users do not simply communicate information; they perform social actions.

Common speech acts include requesting, informing, complimenting, criticizing, thanking, apologizing, advising, agreeing, disagreeing, inviting, and complaining.

For example, the English comment “Could you please explain this part?” performs a request while simultaneously employing a politeness strategy.

An Uzbek equivalent might be “Iltimos, shu qismini tushuntirib bera olasizmi?” Both expressions perform the same communicative function, but their linguistic realization is shaped by the respective language systems and cultural expectations.

A direct form such as “Explain this!” is pragmatically stronger and may appear impolite depending on the context. In contrast, “Could you explain this, please?” reduces the force of the request through indirectness and politeness.

Uzbek social media users similarly manipulate directness: “Shuni tushuntiring” versus “Iltimos, shuni tushuntirib bera olasizmi?” The second form contains an explicit politeness marker and an indirect request structure.

Pragmatic Markers

Pragmatic markers help users organize discourse and express attitudes toward propositions or interlocutors.

English examples include “well,” “actually,” “you know,” “I mean,” “so,” “honestly,” and “anyway.”

For example: “Well, I think you are right.” “Actually, I disagree.” “Honestly, this is amazing.”

In Uzbek, comparable functions may be performed by expressions such as “aslida,” “to‘g‘risi,” “menimcha,” “xullas,” “aytgancha,” “demak,” and “rostini aytsam.”

For example: “To‘g‘risi, men bunga qo‘shilmayman.” “Menimcha, bu juda yaxshi fikr.” “Rostini aytsam, video menga yoqdi.”

These markers help speakers express stance, organize information, introduce disagreement, and manage interpersonal relations.

Evaluation and Emotional Expression

Evaluation represents one of the central functions of social media discourse. Users constantly evaluate content through positive or negative language.

Positive evaluation in English may involve “amazing,” “awesome,” “brilliant,” “beautiful,” “incredible,” and “perfect.” In Uzbek: “ajoyib,” “zo‘r,” “a‘lo,” “chiroyli,” “super,” and “gap yo‘q.”

Negative evaluation may involve “terrible,” “boring,” “disappointing,” and “ridiculous.” Uzbek equivalents may include “yomon,” “zerikarli,” “hafsalani pir qildi,” “dabdala,” or “bunaqasi bo‘lmaydi.”

Evaluation is frequently intensified through repetition, capitalization, or punctuation: “SOOOOO GOOD!!!” and “Juda zooooooooor!!!” These forms demonstrate that emotional meaning is constructed through the interaction of lexical and typographic resources.

Comparative Analysis of English and Uzbek Social Media Discourse

The comparison demonstrates several important similarities.

First, both English and Uzbek social media discourse are highly interactive. Users respond to previous comments, mention other participants, ask questions, express agreement, and challenge opinions.

Second, both languages demonstrate increasing informality. Traditional distinctions between written and spoken language become less rigid in online communication.

Third, both English and Uzbek users employ multimodal resources. Emojis, hashtags, capitalization, repetition, and punctuation contribute to meaning-making.

Fourth, evaluative language is central in both linguistic environments. Users frequently express approval, disagreement, admiration, criticism, and emotional involvement.

Fifth, code-switching and lexical borrowing are increasingly important. English digital vocabulary has entered Uzbek social media discourse, particularly in areas connected with technology, education, entertainment, business, and popular culture.

At the same time, several differences can be identified.

One significant difference concerns the sociocultural realization of politeness. Uzbek communication traditionally places considerable importance on respect, social relationships, age, status, and forms of address. These cultural factors can influence the ways requests, disagreement, and criticism are expressed online.

English social media communication, particularly in informal contexts, often demonstrates greater tolerance for directness and reduced forms of address. Nevertheless, English users also employ extensive politeness strategies depending on the relationship between participants.

Another difference concerns code-switching. In Uzbek digital discourse, English and Russian lexical elements may coexist with Uzbek in the same sentence. This reflects Uzbekistan's multilingual sociolinguistic environment and the strong influence of global digital vocabulary.

A further difference concerns the relationship between linguistic formality and social hierarchy. Uzbek users may preserve respectful linguistic forms even in relatively informal digital environments, especially when communicating with older people, teachers, public figures, or individuals of higher social status.

These differences demonstrate that globalization and technological convergence do not eliminate linguistic diversity. Instead, they create shared digital practices that are locally adapted.

Discussion. The findings of the comparative analysis support the view that social media discourse represents a hybrid communicative form. It incorporates characteristics of speech, writing, visual communication, and interactive performance.

Herring's (2004) Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis provides a useful framework because it treats online language as socially meaningful behavior rather than as isolated textual material. The present comparison further indicates that digital discourse must be interpreted within linguistic and cultural contexts.

Zappavigna's (2011, 2012) concept of ambient affiliation is particularly relevant to social media because users often construct relationships through shared evaluation. A comment such as "Absolutely love this!" is not simply an evaluation of content; it can also position the writer as a member of a community that shares a particular attitude.

The findings also support the importance of multimodality. Emojis, hashtags, punctuation, capitalization, and images frequently contribute to meanings that cannot be fully recovered from words alone. Recent research similarly conceptualizes social media discourse as a multimodal phenomenon in which linguistic and visual resources operate together (Simungala et al., 2025).

From a pragmatic perspective, digital discourse demonstrates that communicative intentions are frequently expressed indirectly. Users rely on shared knowledge, contextual information, irony, emojis, and interactional history. Consequently, pragmatic competence is particularly important for interpreting online messages.

The comparison between English and Uzbek also illustrates the interaction between globalization and localization. Global platforms provide similar technological affordances, but users employ them through culturally specific linguistic practices. Uzbek users may integrate English technological vocabulary into Uzbek sentences, while maintaining culturally meaningful forms of politeness and interpersonal positioning.

This observation has implications for linguistic research and language education. Learners of English need to understand not only grammatical rules but also digital pragmatic

conventions, including abbreviations, pragmatic markers, politeness strategies, emoji meanings, and informal interactional patterns.

At the same time, teachers should distinguish between appropriate digital language and formal academic or professional language. Social media discourse is context-dependent, and forms that are acceptable in an online comment may be inappropriate in academic writing.

Conclusion. Social media discourse has become an important form of contemporary communication and represents a significant field of linguistic and pragmatic research. The present comparative study has demonstrated that English and Uzbek social media discourse share a number of global characteristics, including informality, conversationalization, lexical creativity, abbreviations, evaluative language, interactivity, and multimodality.

At the linguistic level, both English and Uzbek users employ colloquial vocabulary, shortened forms, slang, borrowed words, repetition, non-standard punctuation, and expressive orthography. Uzbek digital communication additionally demonstrates extensive integration of English and Russian lexical items, particularly in technological, educational, professional, and youth-oriented contexts.

At the pragmatic level, social media users in both languages perform a wide range of speech acts, including requests, compliments, criticisms, agreements, disagreements, apologies, and expressions of gratitude. Pragmatic markers and evaluative expressions play an important role in organizing interaction and expressing interpersonal stance.

The study also demonstrates that emojis, hashtags, capitalization, punctuation, and other visual or typographic elements should not be treated as merely decorative features. They contribute directly to meaning-making and can express emotions, strengthen or soften statements, indicate irony, and establish affiliation.

Despite these shared characteristics, English and Uzbek social media discourse demonstrate culturally specific differences. The realization of politeness, forms of address, code-switching, and identity construction reflects broader sociolinguistic and cultural patterns. In Uzbek digital communication, social status, age, interpersonal distance, and respect may continue to influence linguistic choices even in highly informal online contexts.

The comparative analysis therefore supports the view that digitalization produces neither complete linguistic homogenization nor complete linguistic fragmentation. Instead, social media creates a shared technological environment in which global communicative practices are adapted to local linguistic and cultural systems.

Further research should involve larger multilingual corpora collected from specific platforms such as YouTube, Telegram, Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. Quantitative corpus

analysis could provide additional evidence concerning the frequency and distribution of pragmatic markers, speech acts, code-switching, emojis, and evaluative expressions. Such research would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how English and Uzbek continue to develop under the influence of digital communication.

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