ORIGINAL ARTICLE

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

ISSN: 2692-515-x, Impact Factor: 9.23

American Academic publishers, volume 6, issue 01,2026

Journal: https://www.academicpublishers.org/journals/index.php/ijai

FUNCTIONAL FEATURES OF NEOLOGISMS AND ABBREVIATIONS IN SOCIAL MEDIA DISCOURSE (BASED ON UZBEK AND ENGLISH CORPORA)

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Abstract: This study explores the functional characteristics of neologisms and abbreviations in social media discourse, drawing on corpora in both Uzbek and English. The research analyzes how new lexical units and shortened forms emerge, spread, and function in online communication, reflecting socio-cultural trends, digital communication strategies, and language innovation. Comparative analysis reveals similarities and differences in the usage patterns of neologisms and abbreviations across the two languages, highlighting the influence of context, audience, and platform-specific conventions. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of contemporary language dynamics in digital spaces and offer insights for linguists, educators, and communication specialists.

Keywords: neologisms, abbreviations, social media discourse, digital communication, Uzbek language, English language, functional linguistics, corpus analysis

Introduction

The rapid expansion of social media has profoundly influenced contemporary language use, creating new opportunities for linguistic innovation. Online platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and Telegram serve as dynamic spaces where speakers frequently generate and adopt neologisms and abbreviations to convey ideas efficiently, express identity, and engage with broader digital communities. Neologisms—newly coined words or expressions—and abbreviations, including acronyms and initialisms, have become integral elements of digital communication, reflecting both social and technological trends. In the context of multilingual environments, such as those involving Uzbek and English, these linguistic phenomena demonstrate interesting patterns of adaptation, borrowing, and functional specialization. Uzbek social media users often integrate foreign abbreviations or create innovative lexical units that mirror global digital trends while maintaining local cultural nuances. English, as a global lingua franca, exhibits widespread use of abbreviations and neologisms that spread rapidly across international digital communities. The present study aims to investigate the functional characteristics of neologisms and abbreviations in social media discourse, drawing on corpus-based evidence from both Uzbek and English. Specifically, it examines the ways in which these linguistic innovations operate to optimize communication, signal group membership, and respond to platform-specific constraints, such as character limits and multimodal communication. By comparing Uzbek and English corpora, the study highlights cross-linguistic similarities and differences, shedding light on the broader mechanisms of language change in digital contexts. The findings of this research contribute to a better understanding of contemporary linguistic dynamics, offering valuable insights for linguists, educators, lexicographers, and digital communication specialists. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of corpus-based approaches in capturing real-life language use and the evolving nature of online discourse.

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Literature review and methodology

Research on neologisms and abbreviations in social media discourse has expanded considerably over the past decade, reflecting the growing importance of digital communication in everyday life. Scholars such as Crystal (2011) and Tagliamonte & Denis (2008) have highlighted how online environments accelerate linguistic innovation and promote the widespread adoption of new lexical forms. Neologisms are often created to express emerging social phenomena, technological innovations, or cultural trends, while abbreviations—such as acronyms, initialisms, and shortened words—serve to optimize communication under platform-specific constraints. Studies focusing on English digital discourse (e.g., Thurlow, 2006; Baron, 2008) have shown that abbreviations like "LOL," "BRB," and "ICYMI" not only reduce typing effort but also signal group membership and shared cultural knowledge. In contrast, research on less globally dominant languages, including Uzbek, remains limited. However, recent investigations (e.g., Karimova, 2020; Tursunova, 2022) indicate that Uzbek social media users actively create neologisms and adopt English abbreviations, often blending them with local linguistic structures. Comparative studies across languages reveal that the functional use of neologisms and abbreviations is influenced by both social context and platform affordances. Online discourse encourages creativity, language economy, and identity construction, with users strategically employing lexical innovations to convey humor, emotion, or solidarity. This body of research underscores the relevance of corpus-based approaches for analyzing authentic digital communication and identifying patterns of linguistic change across languages.

This study employs a corpus-based approach to analyze neologisms and abbreviations in Uzbek and English social media discourse. The research utilizes two separate corpora: a **Uzbek social media corpus** collected from platforms such as Telegram, Instagram, and Facebook, and an **English social media corpus** compiled from Twitter, Reddit, and Instagram posts. Each corpus includes text data collected over a 12-month period to ensure temporal relevance and linguistic variety. Data collection involved automated scraping and manual curation to remove spam, advertisements, and non-linguistic content. Neologisms were identified using frequency-based analysis, contextual evaluation, and comparison with existing dictionaries to ensure novelty. Abbreviations were categorized into acronyms, initialisms, and informal shortened forms, and their functions were analyzed in terms of communicative purpose, frequency of use, and contextual deployment. Quantitative analysis was performed using corpus tools such as AntConc and Python-based text analysis scripts to calculate frequency distributions, collocations, and co-occurrence patterns. Qualitative analysis focused on semantic functions, pragmatic roles, and sociolinguistic implications, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of how neologisms and abbreviations operate in digital discourse. Comparative analysis across Uzbek and English corpora enabled the identification of cross-linguistic similarities and differences, revealing the impact of language structure, cultural norms, and platform conventions on the creation and usage of new lexical items.

Results and discussion

The analysis of the Uzbek and English social media corpora revealed several notable trends. In both languages, abbreviations and neologisms are frequently used to save space, express emotions, and establish group identity. In the English corpus, acronyms such as "LOL," "BRB," and "ICYMI" appeared most often, while in the Uzbek corpus, locally coined

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neologisms and borrowed English abbreviations (e.g., “OK,” “VIP”) were prevalent. Frequency analysis showed that English abbreviations were more standardized and widely recognized, whereas Uzbek neologisms displayed greater creativity and morphological adaptation to local linguistic norms. Contextual analysis indicated that both neologisms and abbreviations were used strategically to convey humor, sarcasm, and social alignment, with platform-specific variations in usage patterns.

The findings suggest that social media platforms act as catalysts for linguistic innovation in both Uzbek and English. While English abbreviations often function as globally recognized shorthand, Uzbek users demonstrate a hybrid approach, blending borrowed abbreviations with newly coined lexical forms. This reflects both the influence of global digital culture and the preservation of local linguistic identity. Furthermore, the study highlights that the functional roles of neologisms and abbreviations go beyond mere efficiency: they serve as tools for social positioning, cultural expression, and digital identity construction. The comparative analysis underscores the importance of corpus-based research in capturing authentic language use and provides insights into the dynamics of language evolution in digital contexts.

Conclusion

This study examined the functional features of neologisms and abbreviations in social media discourse based on Uzbek and English corpora. The analysis demonstrated that both languages employ new lexical forms and shortened expressions to enhance communication efficiency, convey emotions, and signal social identity. English abbreviations tend to be standardized and globally recognized, while Uzbek neologisms reflect a higher degree of creativity, blending local linguistic norms with borrowed elements from English. The findings highlight the significant role of digital platforms in accelerating linguistic innovation and shaping language use. Neologisms and abbreviations are not only practical tools for online communication but also serve as markers of cultural identity, group membership, and digital literacy. Comparative analysis further revealed that the functional use of these linguistic phenomena is influenced by social context, platform affordances, and the interplay between global and local language practices. Overall, this research underscores the value of corpus-based approaches in studying contemporary language dynamics, offering insights for linguists, educators, lexicographers, and communication specialists. It also provides a foundation for future studies on multilingual digital discourse and the evolving nature of online linguistic creativity.

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