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**Bachelor's thesis**

**ENGLISH ON SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS**

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«English Studies and Translation  
and Two Western European Languages»

Field of science: 03 «Humanities»

Specialty: 035 «Philology»

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«Допущено до захисту»

Протокол засідання кафедри англійської філології  
та міжкультурної комунікації

Протокол № 11 від 26.05.2025

Зав. кафедри \_д. філол. н., проф. Алла БЄЛОВА

**Kyiv – 2025**

## ABSTRACT

This Bachelor's thesis is devoted to the comprehensive study of English language features and media literacy as reflected in authentic social media discourse. The main aim is to identify the structural, grammatical, stylistic, and rhetorical devices that shape informal online communication on platforms such as Twitter, TikTok, and Instagram, and to analyse how these elements influence audience engagement and foster the development of critical media literacy. The research is based on 100 authentic posts, selected to exemplify a variety of linguistic phenomena: neologisms, abbreviations, acronyms, grammatical deviations, stylistic features (such as irony, sarcasm, and emotional expression), as well as persuasive techniques including rhetorical questions, imperatives, call-to-action phrases, hashtags, and influencer language. Research methods include content analysis, comparative approaches, and discourse studies.

The findings reveal that the English language on social media is highly dynamic, creative, and strongly adapted to the rapid pace and informal tone of digital interaction. Shortened forms stylistic choices allow users to convey complex meanings efficiently, while persuasive strategies motivate users to comment, like, and share content, fostering community and co-creation of meaning. The study demonstrates how language adapts to technological and social changes, contributing to a better understanding of modern communication trends and the importance of media literacy in navigating online discourse.

**Keywords:** *English language, social media, media literacy, social media platforms, neologisms, stylistic devices, word formation.*

## АНОТАЦІЯ

Бакалаврська робота присвячена комплексному дослідженню особливостей англійської мови та медіаграмотності, що відображаються в автентичному дискурсі соціальних медіа. Основна мета полягає у виявленні структурних, граматичних, стилістичних та риторичних засобів, що формують неформальне онлайн-спілкування на таких платформах, як Twitter, TikTok та Instagram, а також у аналізі впливу цих елементів на залучення аудиторії та сприяння розвитку медіаграмотності.

Дослідження базується на 100 автентичних дописах, обраних для ілюстрації різноманітних мовних явищ: неологізмів, аббревіатур, акронімів, граматичних та стилістичних особливостей (таких як іронія, сарказм та емоційний вираз), а також риторичних прийомів, включаючи риторичні питання, імперативи, фрази, що закликають до дії, хештеги та мову інфлюенсерів. Методи дослідження включають контент-аналіз, порівняльні підходи та дискурс-дослідження.

Результати дослідження показують, що англійська мова в соціальних мережах є дуже динамічною, креативною та адаптованою до швидкого темпу та неформального тону цифрової взаємодії. Скорочені форми та стилістичні засоби дозволяють користувачам ефективно передавати ідеї, а стилістичні прийоми мотивують користувачів коментувати, взаємодіяти та ділитися контентом, сприяючи формуванню спільноти та спільному створенню значення. Дослідження демонструє, як мова адаптується до технологічних і соціальних змін, що допомагає кращому розумінню сучасних тенденцій комунікації та важливості медіаграмотності в онлайн-дискурсі.

**Ключові слова:** англійська мова, соціальні медіа, медіаграмотність, платформи соціальних медіа, неологізми, стилістичні засоби, словотвір.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the modern digital era, human interaction increasingly unfolds through virtual spaces, where communication is shaped by the specific conditions of online platforms. Every day, millions of people share thoughts, feelings and opinions on various digital platforms that have become more critically important site contents of public and private dialogue. Social media is a significant aspect of our culture and the digital domain of social media is a relevant and fluid space for linguists or researchers interested in communication.

The linguistic characteristics of digital communication and their implications for media literacy have been the focus of numerous researchers. Among those who have explored the transformation of language in online environments are D. Crystal [10], R. Hobbs [23], N. Baron [6], D. Adams [1], A. Kumar [30], S. Livingstone [32], M. Zappavigna [44], R. Page [36], A. Ibrahim [25], D. Denis [14], S. Attardo [4], A. Aufderheide [5], Y. Chen [9] and others.

**The relevance** of this research lies in the growing role of social media as a driving force of linguistic change and a key platform for digital communication. The study examines how users employ language creatively and emotionally across social media platforms, highlighting the importance of these practices for understanding media literacy and modern English usage.

**The aim** of this study is to analyze the linguistic features and strategies used in social media posts, focusing on how users convey content in informal digital contexts.

To achieve this aim, the following **tasks** were set:

- to examine the use of neologisms and creative language in social media communication;
- to identify and analyze grammatical features, abbreviations, and acronyms typical of online discourse;
- to explore stylistic devices such as irony, sarcasm, and emotional expression in user-generated content;

- to investigate strategies of persuasion and influence, including rhetorical appeals and engagement tactics;

**The object** of the research is user-generated posts on social media platforms such as Twitter, TikTok, and Instagram.

**The subject** of the research is linguistic means used in social media posts.

To achieve the set objectives, the following **methods** were applied: the descriptive-analytical method for direct examination of post content; discourse analysis to reveal pragmatic and communicative intentions; structural-semantic analysis for identifying patterns in language use; and interpretive analysis to decode implied meanings and stylistic nuances.

**The novelty** of this study lies in its integrated examination of linguistic features, including neologisms, stylistic devices, grammatical variation, and persuasive strategies—within the framework of social media literacy. This study analyses how linguistic creativity and emotional expression function as core components of social media literacy. By doing so, the research offers a fresh perspective on how language use in user-generated content reflects and shapes critical digital competencies in contemporary communication.

**The practical significance** of this work lies in its potential application in the fields of media education, digital communication, and language instruction. The results of the study can be considered when developing programs aimed at improving social media literacy and critical language awareness among students, content creators, and digital media users. The findings may serve as a foundation for future research in digital linguistics, helping to enhance understanding of communicative practices in online environments and informing the creation of responsible and effective social media content.

**The study consists** of an introduction, two main chapters (the first theoretical, the second practical), conclusions to each chapter, general conclusion, a list of references.

# **1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF MEDIA LITERACY AND DIGITAL DISCOURSE**

## **1. 1. The concept and evolution of media literacy**

With the rise of numerous shifts in the nature of communication, scholarly consideration of the concept of media literacy has significantly increased due to its relevance in understanding and navigating the complex information environment. Although definitions vary across disciplines and authors, a unifying characteristic among them is the emphasis on critical engagement with media messages. Media literacy, therefore, is not a static competency, but rather a dynamic set of skills, dispositions, and interpretive strategies that equip individuals to meaningfully interact with mediated content.

R. Hobbs provides a foundational definition, describing media literacy as “the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate messages in a variety of forms” [22, p.10]. This definition reflects the increasing necessity for individuals to function as both consumers and producers of media content. Hobbs posits that media literacy embodies an educational orientation grounded in inquiry-based learning, student-centered approaches, collaborative problem solving, curricular integration, and alternatives to traditional assessment models.

D. Adams and M. Hamm characterize media literacy as, “the ability to create personal meaning from the visual and verbal symbols we take in every day from television, advertising, film, and digital media” [1, p. 83]. They contend that media literacy involves more than decoding textual and visual information; it is about equipping students to be critical thinkers who can consume and create content in a media-rich culture. Their definition underscores the interpretive role of individuals and the cultural embeddedness of media practices, suggesting that meaning-making is a subjective yet socially mediated activity.

A. Aufderheide adds another layer by defining media literacy specifically as, “the ability to sensitize, analyze and produce information for specific results” [5, p.

35]. This definition introduces a goal-oriented perspective, highlighting the instrumental function of media literacy in achieving communicative effectiveness and influencing public discourse. Unlike definitions that focus solely on cognitive skills or educational contexts, A. Aufderheide framing emphasizes outcomes, suggesting that media literacy includes the strategic deployment of information in various sociopolitical arenas.

Recently, E. Scharrer and Y. Zhou have offered a definition in alignment with critical media theory that establishes media literacy as "the ability to engage with media from an active inquiry stance, thinking critically about the media text itself, the forces and factors that shape that text, and how audiences interpret that text, or respond in other ways" [42, p. 3]. This formulation captures the interplay between media production, structural power, and audience reception. It reflects a growing recognition of the socio-cultural dynamics embedded in media communication and the role of media literacy.

Comparatively, the definitions discussed share some similarities and differences in their focus. While R. Hobbs and E. Scharrer & Y. Zhou acknowledge inquiry and critical engagement, D. Adams and M. Hamm emphasize the interpretive and cultural dimensions of media literacy. Aufderheide, on the other hand, brings in the pragmatic and result-driven aspects of media engagement. Together these perspectives contribute to a holistic understanding of media literacy as a multifaceted competence that involves cognitive, creative, critical, and contextual awareness.

Building upon the foundational definitions of media literacy, it is essential to examine its historical development to understand how the concept has evolved in response to societal, technological, and educational transformations. The origins of media literacy can be traced back to classical antiquity, particularly the 5th century BCE, when the practice of rhetoric was developed to teach the art of politics through oratory and critical thinking. This early emphasis on persuasive communication laid the groundwork for later conceptualizations of media literacy as a means of

analyzing and understanding messages in various forms. In the modern era, the emergence of film as a tool for teaching and learning further contributed to the development of media literacy, particularly in enhancing language, critical analysis, and literacy skills [21, p. 2]. The 20th century witnessed significant advancements in media technologies, prompting scholars to explore their impact on society. Marshall McLuhan's seminal work introduced the idea that "the medium is the message," emphasizing that the form of media influences how messages are perceived. This perspective underscored the necessity of understanding the media's role in shaping human experience. Building on McLuhan's insights, J. Culkin argued that "the new mass media—film, radio, TV—are new languages, their grammar as yet unknown," highlighting the need for education that enables individuals to decode and comprehend these emerging forms of communication [12, p. 50].

Despite these early contributions, media literacy education in the United States remained fragmented until the 1970s. During this period, efforts to promote media literacy were primarily small-scale and scattered [20, p. 33].

A significant turning point occurred in 1980 with the publication of Len Masterman's book «Teaching about Television», which provided a comprehensive framework for media education and emphasized the importance of critical engagement with media content. Masterman's work shifted the focus from a predominantly fear-based and change-resistant approach to one that encouraged active inquiry and analysis [20, p. 10].

In the following decades, media literacy education continued to evolve, integrating theoretical and critical frameworks from constructivist learning theory, media studies, and cultural studies scholarship. This interdisciplinary approach facilitated the development of instructional methods that emphasized active inquiry and critical engagement with media texts [21, p. 10]. The establishment of organizations such as the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) further advanced the field by promoting media literacy as an essential component of education in the digital age.

The proliferation of digital technologies has transformed individuals from passive consumers to active participants in the media. This shift underscores the imperative for media literacy to encompass not only critical consumption but also the capacity for content creation and civic engagement.

Paul Mihailidis articulates this evolution, stating "today's media literacy must address a participatory culture where users are also creators" [22, p. 13]. This perspective emphasizes the transition from traditional media paradigms to a more interactive and participatory model, where individuals engage with media not only as consumers but also as producers and collaborators. Participatory culture fosters a dynamic environment where users contribute to the media landscape, influencing narratives and shaping public discourse.

Media literacy extends beyond the ability to access and analyze information; it encompasses the skills to produce and disseminate content responsibly. Mihailidis further elaborates that media literacy involves "the abilities to access, evaluate, analyze, reflect, and create media across platforms, modalities and content areas" [22, p. 13]. This comprehensive approach ensures that individuals are equipped to navigate the complexities of digital communication, fostering a more informed and engaged citizenry.

The digital age has redefined the parameters of media literacy, expanding its scope to include participatory engagement and content creation. This evolution reflects the changing dynamics of media consumption and production, highlighting the need for educational frameworks that equip individuals with the skills necessary to navigate and contribute to the digital media landscape effectively.

Media literacy has evolved from a basic understanding of how to interpret media messages into a complex and essential skill for modern life. Its roots in rhetoric and critical thinking have expanded over time, shaped by historical changes in technology and communication. What began as an effort to understand print, television, and film has grown into a broader framework that now includes digital platforms and interactive media. In today's world, media literacy involves not only

analyzing content but also participating in media production and engaging critically with the digital environment. As a result, it plays a vital role in helping individuals navigate the challenges of the digital age and act responsibly in a media-saturated society.

## **1. 2. The role of the English language in contemporary media environments**

In contemporary media environments, the English language operates not only as a tool of international exchange but also as a cultural and technological emblem of globalization. Its ubiquitous presence across digital and traditional platforms has solidified its function as the global lingua franca, reinforcing its symbolic association with transnational connectivity, economic integration, and the information society.

As A. Mauranen emphasizes, English has transcended its communicative function to become emblematic of the global era, coexisting with other major forces such as the internet and global networking [33, p. 123]. This entrenchment of English is further substantiated by research demonstrating its indispensability in navigating contemporary socio-economic landscapes. For instance, O. Duraipandi asserts that proficiency in English is no longer an optional advantage but a necessary asset for engagement in international business, diplomacy, and digital communication [16, p. 261]. This shift is particularly visible in multilingual and multicultural settings where English facilitates intercultural dialogue and shared understanding.

Recent studies offer practical illustrations. Researchers observed that digital environments serve as informal yet highly influential arenas for language acquisition and literacy development, with English emerging as the principal medium through which multilingual participants interact [33, p. 126]. These findings suggest that English not only enables global communication but also mediates the development of digital literacies and intercultural competence in media contexts. Such observations reveal a dual function of English: while it provides a common linguistic code, it simultaneously supports complex cognitive and sociocultural learning

processes. When considered alongside A. Mauranen's conceptual framework, this evidence illustrates how English consolidates its dominance by embedding itself within structural dimensions of media use. As a result, English actively shapes the communicative norms and literacy practices that define it.

The widespread presence of English on social media has important implications for both linguistic competence and for identity formation in digital contexts. As students and young users increasingly engage with English-dominated content on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Twitter, they become active participants in a linguistic environment where English shapes their communicative behaviors, social affiliations, and even self-perception. This phenomenon supports the assumption that time spent within web-based social applications fosters incidental language acquisition, as learners unconsciously absorb lexical patterns, syntactic structures, and pragmatic conventions through repeated exposure. Consequently, the interface between social media usage and English language learning becomes both functional and symbolic, promoting language development while simultaneously reinforcing English as a marker of modern digital literacy.

English in digital communication is not limited to passive consumption; it plays a vital role in the active construction of identities. By engaging with English-language memes, comments, and user-generated content, individuals align themselves with globalized discourses and cultural narratives. The increasing accessibility and reach of English-language content, especially in business and marketing contexts, further amplify this trend. The capacity to communicate effectively in English enables broader audience targeting and market expansion. This commercial advantage contributes to the language's elevated status and incentivizes its adoption across professional and informal settings alike [37, p. 201].

The power of the English language extends beyond everyday digital interaction and linguistic utility; it plays a central role in mediating ideological narratives and shaping collective digital consciousness. Through its dominance in

global media, English operates not merely as a communicative tool but as an instrument of discursive authority. As A. Kumar emphasizes, English is frequently employed to frame issues, construct persuasive narratives, and establish dominant interpretations of reality [30, p. 9]. This capacity to influence perception is amplified by the global prominence of English-language news institutions such as the BBC and CNN, whose agendas often serve as reference points for secondary reporting in multilingual contexts. Y. Chen notes, these outlets possess the infrastructural and symbolic power to not only report events but also to determine which issues attain global relevance and how they are understood [9, p. 6].

The framing of global events through an English-speaking lens contributes to the normalization of Anglophone perspectives, which can subtly influence users' worldviews, value systems, and sociopolitical orientations. Individuals engaging with such content may internalize certain ideological positions or discursive frames, often unconsciously aligning their self-representation with dominant English-speaking cultural codes. This process reinforces a digitally mediated identity shaped not only by language competence but also by the ideational structures embedded in Anglophone discourse.

Despite the apparent advantages of English as a global lingua franca, its dominance in contemporary media environments is not without significant linguistic and socio-cultural consequences. While its ubiquity enables wider communication and facilitates access to global networks, it simultaneously poses challenges related to linguistic and cultural dilution. The pervasiveness of English in digital spaces has been associated with the simplification of grammatical structures, lexical reduction, and the erosion of linguistic richness—phenomena exacerbated by the fast-paced, informal nature of online interaction. As noted in recent linguistic studies on the evolution of English in digital contexts, contemporary online communication often privileges efficiency over linguistic nuance, leading to the emergence of truncated expressions, acronyms, and emoji-based substitution that reshape communicative norms [23, p. 45].

Furthermore, the global reach of English-language media can facilitate the rapid spread of misinformation, especially when stylistic conventions encourage brevity over accuracy. The authority conferred upon English-language sources may lead to uncritical acceptance of information, particularly in regions where English is perceived as synonymous with credibility or objectivity.

The English language has a key role in shaping today's media environment. The global nature of English enables people to communicate across borders, supports global digital literacy, and increases access to information. However, this dominance is not without critical implications. The construction of digital identities, the shaping of media narratives, and the spread of communicative norms are all processes increasingly filtered through Anglophone frameworks. Thus, while the global prominence of English presents undeniable opportunities, it simultaneously necessitates ongoing scrutiny to ensure that linguistic diversity, cultural representation, and equitable access remain central to the digital communication landscape.

### **1.3 Social media as a distinct discourse environment**

To understand social media as a unique discursive environment, it is important to distinguish it from traditional mass media. Mass media typically operate through one-to-many communication, where a single centralized source such as a television network or newspaper disseminates information to a broad, often passive audience [37, p. 6]. For example, a televised news broadcast delivers pre-packaged content to viewers without enabling immediate feedback or interaction. This model is characterized by limited interactivity and clearly defined roles of sender and receiver. In contrast, social media are built on mobile and web-based technologies that allow users to co-create, share, and modify content collaboratively [28, p. 241]. Platforms like Twitter, TikTok, and Instagram enable users to not only consume but also comment on, remix, or challenge the information they encounter. For instance, a user can repost a news article with added commentary, participate in hashtag

trends, or upload original videos in response to global events. As C. Fuchs observes, this transformation redefines audiences from passive recipients into active participants, fundamentally altering the dynamics of discourse production and reception [19, p. 6]. This shift has significant implications for language use, as users engage in real-time, highly contextual interactions that reflect personal identity, emotion, and community belonging. Thus, the discourse of social media emerges not merely as a variant of digital communication, but as a complex, socially situated register that departs from the informational one-way flow of mass media.

The discursive environment of social media constitutes a distinct communicative paradigm, marked by a high degree of multimodality and interactivity. Unlike traditional media, which operates within linear and communication flows, social media discourse is user-generated, dynamic, and contextually fluid, reshaping both the production and reception of meaning. As J. Farkas articulate, digital platforms compel users to navigate “techno-discursive boundaries,” where communicative acts shift between authenticity and performance, anonymity and hypervisibility, civility and antagonism, thus highlighting the unstable nature of online expression [18, p. 109].

S. Kopf emphasizes, stems from the convergence of interpersonal and mass communication within a single digital interface. In this merged space, individuals engage in dialogic exchanges typical of face-to-face interactions while simultaneously addressing mass audiences, often without clear boundaries. S. Kopf notes that the integration and recontextualization of content such as the remixing of news headlines, personal opinions, and popular memes has become a defining structural feature of contemporary digital communication. This convergence also blurs genre distinctions, giving rise to discourse styles that challenge conventional linguistic hierarchies and stylistic norms [29, p. 10].

S. Al-Momani findings indicate that emojis, localized vernaculars, and identity-laden expressions ranging from racial and national affiliations to gender-based solidarities play a significant role in encoding affect and positioning users

within specific ideological frameworks [2, p. 24]. These markers contribute to the development of micro-discourses, which are at once global in circulation and local in inflection. M. Zappavigna extend this perspective by conceptualizing social media communication as “highly multimodal, intersubjective, and relational” [45, p. 14]. She underscores that meaning-making is not solely text-based but deeply embedded in a matrix of visual, auditory, and symbolic modalities that coalesce to convey nuanced social meanings. The relational dimension is particularly significant: digital discourse is inherently intersubjective, constructed through interactions such as comments, retweets, likes, and algorithmically driven visibility. Thus, communication is not a static transmission but a performative negotiation of attention, relevance, and identity, with platform affordances shaping discursive choices.

Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and TikTok have enabled new communicative modes characterized by brevity, informality, and syntactic flexibility. These digital environments often encourage the use of abbreviations, acronyms, phonetic spellings, and non-standard grammar, thus forming an emergent register that prioritizes speed and efficiency over linguistic accuracy [14, p. 50].

Content is produced and consumed at an accelerated pace, often prompting users to prioritise brevity, impact, and emotional resonance over syntactic precision or factual accuracy. This temporal pressure contributes to the rise of abbreviated forms, multimodal cues, and affective intensifiers, which while enhancing engagement, may simultaneously erode syntactic complexity and semantic nuance—a concern echoed in recent critiques of digital discourse simplification.

Another dimension of social media discourse is its capacity to foster unprecedented lexical innovation and syntactic hybridity, particularly within multilingual and digitally native communities. Digital platforms offer ground for the emergence and proliferation of novel semantic forms that often elude conventional lexical taxonomies. As S. Goel and J. Eisenstein observe, the language employed on social media exhibits heightened lexical dynamism, with users continuously

reshaping word meanings through contextual creativity, community-based usage, and sociocultural signaling [20, p. 8]. These patterns frequently defy the constraints of formal lexicons. H. Lee and S. Huang document how multilingual users construct hybridized utterances that integrate English syntactic frameworks with features of their native tongues, resulting in innovative syntactic configurations that would be ungrammatical in either language alone [31, p. 127].

These linguistic innovations are not random but are often systematically embedded within specific discursive communities, such as fandoms, activist networks, and diasporic groups, each of which cultivates its own stylistic norms and semantic repertoires. M. Zappavigna argues that such communities use language not merely to convey information but to enact social alignment and identity claims. This functional orientation facilitates the rapid evolution of lexicon and grammar in response to shifting social dynamics and technological affordances [46, p. 12].

The characteristics of social media discourse reveal a dynamic and multifaceted linguistic environment shaped by the convergence of technological affordances, user agency, and evolving communicative norms. As demonstrated, social media language is inherently multimodal, highly interactive, and often deviates from conventional grammar and syntax, reflecting broader trends of linguistic innovation and socio-cultural negotiation. It blends spoken and written registers and redefines notions of authorship, coherence, and discourse boundaries.

Ultimately, understanding the linguo-discursive characteristics of social media is not only essential for sociolinguistic inquiry but also foundational to the development of critical digital literacies in the contemporary communicative landscape.

#### **1. 4. Components of social media literacy**

The contemporary digital environment, shaped by high-velocity information flows and algorithmically curated content, demands a recalibration of traditional literacies. A core pillar of social media literacy is the capacity for critical thinking—

specifically, the evaluation of content credibility, contextual plausibility, and the interpretive frameworks users apply when navigating online platforms. In this context, A. Lewandowsky proposes an evaluative model comprising “factuality, plausibility, and typicality” [34, p. 5]. This framework expands the assessment of digital information beyond surface-level accuracy, encouraging users to interrogate the deeper ideological, experiential, and emotional structures underpinning digital narratives. Such competencies are vital in a media where boundaries are porous and subject to algorithmic and social manipulation.

S. Vosoughi in their large-scale analysis of Twitter data, found that false news travels faster and reaches more people than information, particularly in political domains. The authors argue that the novelty and emotional salience of misinformation make it more “contagious” than truth, reflecting a broader pattern where emotionally charged content—regardless of veracity—receives disproportionate amplification. This asymmetry underscores the necessity of equipping users with analytical tools that extend beyond factual verification to include an understanding of emotional manipulation and the socio-political motives embedded in content dissemination [45, p. 13].

Developing such competencies is essential not only for resisting manipulation but for fostering a pluralistic digital discourse. The recognition of “multiple media realities,” as A. Lewandowsky puts it, highlights the need for users to reflexively examine how their cultural background, personal experiences, and ideological predispositions mediate interpretation. This approach aligns with D. Kellner conception of critical media literacy as both analytical and transformative—a skillset that enables users to critically engage with and, where necessary, challenge dominant media narratives [27, p. 20].

In addition to evaluative and critical thinking skills, social media literacy encompasses a constellation of participatory competencies that allow users to function not merely as consumers but as active agents in digital environments. Rheingold conceptualizes these abilities as “participatory skills,” encompassing a

range of practices such as searching, filtering, tagging, and remixing content [38, p. 72]. These activities are not peripheral but central to navigating and shaping the social media landscape, where information is not only consumed but continuously recontextualized and circulated. Rheingold further argues that literacy in this domain presupposes an understanding of the infrastructural logic underpinning digital platforms—specifically, the role of algorithms and recommendation systems in structuring visibility, relevance, and engagement.

The capacity to engage meaningfully in online discourse is also contingent upon users' awareness of platform-specific communicative tools. R. Page in examination of Twitter highlights the strategic use of hashtags as an exemplary of such participatory mechanisms. Hashtags operate not only as thematic markers but as dynamic instruments of visibility, enabling users to insert their voices into broader sociopolitical or cultural dialogues [36, p. 190]. Moreover, through the act of hashtagging, individuals can simultaneously perform identity work, self-branding, and network-building—thus leveraging algorithmic affordances for social positioning. This interplay between user agency and platform design illustrates how digital literacy must encompass both technical proficiency and semiotic awareness.

Complementary to these skills is the notion of digital self-efficacy, particularly among younger users who constitute a significant portion of the social media demographic. S. Livingstone emphasizes that technical fluency and confidence in navigating digital environments are directly correlated with users' ability to exploit the creative affordances of the internet while mitigating risks such as privacy breaches or exposure to harmful content. Importantly, this suggests that social media literacy is not reducible to isolated skills but emerges at the intersection of technical competence, critical consciousness, and contextual judgment [32, p. 309].

A critical yet often underemphasized dimension of social media literacy is the cultivation of ethical awareness and empathic engagement within digitally mediated interactions. As online environments frequently afford varying degrees of anonymity, the absence of immediate social consequences can foster disinhibition,

leading to communicative behavior that deviates from accepted norms of civility C. Ess underscores that the erosion of empathy under conditions of digital anonymity necessitates the development of explicit ethical frameworks tailored to online interaction [17, p. 9]. This is not merely a philosophical concern but a functional imperative, given the observable link between online conduct and the structural affordances of digital platforms.

Evidence supports the hypothesis that anonymity can diminish accountability, thereby weakening normative constraints on user behavior. D. Santana, in a comparative study of comment sections on news websites, found that non-anonymous users were significantly more likely—by a margin of 32%—to adhere to civil discourse standards [40, p. 30]. This suggests that visibility and traceability function as important deterrents against incivility, reinforcing the notion that ethical engagement is not only a matter of individual disposition but also a product of systemic design. The implications for digital literacy are profound: users must be equipped not only to interpret content critically or participate creatively but also to reflect on the ethical dimensions of their communicative choices.

Furthermore, ethical literacy in social media spaces intersects with broader sociocultural issues, such as online harassment, cyberbullying, and hate speech. The speed and reach of social media amplify the potential harm caused by unethical behavior, necessitating that users internalize norms of digital responsibility as part of their communicative repertoire. In this regard, ethical awareness is not ancillary to other components of social media literacy but operates as an integrative force, grounding critical and participatory skills in a normative commitment to respect and reciprocity.

An integral yet often overlooked facet of social media literacy is the capacity for intercultural sensitivity—an awareness of how digital communication norms vary across sociocultural contexts. As R. Shuter illustrates, cross-cultural misinterpretations are frequently triggered in online settings by divergent expectations concerning self-disclosure, humor, politeness strategies, and even

temporal perception [42, p. 220]. These discrepancies are amplified in social media environments, where asynchronous messaging and multimodal affordances often obscure cues that would otherwise aid interpretation in face-to-face communication.

For instance, cultural norms regarding directness versus indirectness in communication can result in perceived rudeness or evasiveness, depending on the receiver's interpretive framework. A joke that relies on sarcasm, widely accepted in Western contexts, may be misinterpreted as offensive or inappropriate in high-context cultures that prioritize relational harmony and implicit communication. Similarly, the pace of response on platforms like Instagram or TikTok may carry different connotations: what is perceived as neglect or disinterest in one culture may be considered respectful time-spacing in another. Thus, digital interactions are not culturally neutral, they are mediated by culturally contingent codes of meaning.

To navigate this complexity, digitally literate individuals must not only master technical and evaluative skills but also develop a nuanced understanding of global communicative diversity. Intercultural competence, as conceptualized by K. Deardorff, involves the ability to shift perspectives and adapt behavior to different cultural contexts while maintaining respect for differing communicative values [13, p. 245]. In the realm of social media, this translates into context-aware communication that accounts for the audiences and avoids ethnocentric interpretations.

A robust model of social media literacy must encourage users to actively seek out and engage with perspectives beyond their cultural comfort zones. Only through such engagement can individuals develop the empathetic and cognitive flexibility needed to function responsibly in transnational digital spaces.

Social media literacy encompasses a complex interplay of cognitive, technical, and ethical competencies. It involves not only the capacity to critically evaluate digital content and navigate algorithmically curated environments but also the mastery of participatory practices and intercultural awareness. As the digital sphere continues to evolve, too must the frameworks guiding our understanding of

literacy within demanding a holistic, context-sensitive approach that prepares users to engage responsibly, reflectively, and inclusively across diverse communicative landscapes.

## **CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 1**

The transformation of communicative practices in the digital era has reconfigured how individuals produce, interpret, and circulate meaning. Social media platforms, as dynamic discursive spaces, have fostered novel modes of interaction that challenge traditional linguistic norms and demand new forms of literacy. These platforms do not merely mediate communication; they actively shape it through multimodal affordances, algorithmic structures, and user participation. Consequently, discourse on social media emerges as a phenomenon characterized by interactivity, brevity, and contextual creativity.

The linguistic texture of social media discourse reflects not only syntactic innovation but also deep socio-cultural engagement. Users employ multimodal to negotiate identity, emotion, and social alignment. These discursive features are not arbitrary; they reflect complex pragmatic choices embedded in digital culture. The language of social media thus represents a distinct register, one that is adaptive, responsive, and context-sensitive, demanding interpretive flexibility from its participants.

Understanding this communicative landscape requires a sophisticated model of literacy—one that transcends basic technical skills and addresses critical, ethical, and intercultural dimensions. The ability to evaluate credibility, detect misinformation, and navigate algorithmically filtered content is fundamental to digital media. At the same time, ethical conduct, awareness of platform dynamics, and sensitivity to cultural variation become essential competencies in an increasingly interconnected online sphere.

The chapter has demonstrated that social media literacy must be viewed as an integrated set of analytical, participatory, and reflective skills, rooted in both

linguistic knowledge and digital fluency. These capacities empower individuals not only to consume content critically but also to contribute responsibly within diverse media.

## 2. ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE USE IN SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

### 2. 1. Neologisms in Social Media Posts

The lexicon of contemporary English is undergoing a radical transformation, largely driven by the pervasive influence of social media platforms. As S. Bauer [7, p. 34] defines, a neologism constitutes any newly formed lexical item, be it a word, phrase, or semantic shift—that is introduced into the language either transiently or with enduring semantic and communicative relevance. This lexical innovation is the by-product of established morphological processes such as derivation, compounding, and borrowing, all of which are hyper-activated in digital environments.

Social media serves as both an incubator and a catalyst for these innovations. According to D. Crystal, approximately 60% of emergent slang and novel lexical items now originate from platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok [11, p. 55]. This phenomenon stems from the structural properties of these platforms, where brevity, immediacy, and performativity converge to generate a linguistic ecosystem characterized by high velocity and visibility. Users are not merely passive consumers of language; they function as linguistic agents who co-create new forms and assign meaning through shared digital contexts.

For this work, social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok were chosen as a source of analyzing neologisms in social media posts due to their prominent influence and widespread use in contemporary digital communication. These platforms represent some of the most active and culturally relevant online spaces where language evolves rapidly, reflecting current trends, social attitudes, and user interactions. Consequently, their content provides a rich and timely corpus for investigating the mechanisms and characteristics of word formation in today's linguistic landscape.

For example, the term “*girlboss*”, in a post @bratanatomy: “*girlboss is whatever a woman is and wants to be in life*” (48). Morphologically, “*girlboss*” is a compound, formed through the direct juxtaposition of “*girl*” and “*boss*”. While

both constituents are semantically transparent in isolation, their conjoined form produces a novel sociolinguistic signifier. Initially used to empower women in entrepreneurial spaces, the term has undergone pragmatic drift: it is now often deployed ironically or hyperbolically to signal self-empowerment, ambition, or performative feminism. User engagement with this post was high, as reflected in the number of likes, heart emojis, and affirming supporting comments such as “*you did!*” or “*queen energy.*”

The term “*cancelled*”, as used in the post @chensbradford: “*I’m confused, is Blake Lively getting cancelled in 2024?*” (48), exemplifies the conversion of a standard past participle into a socially loaded term. Derived from the broader expression “*cancel culture*”, it denotes the withdrawal of social approval or support due to perceived transgressions. Linguistically, cancelled reflects both functional shift as it now operates metonymically to describe a person rather than an event and derivation, since its participial form conveys a completed social action. Users in comment section question its fairness (“*Cancel culture is harsh*”), while others focus on gossip (“*What happened?*”). Its question format invites comments but divides audiences due to its controversial topic.

Equally illustrative is the post @angieroars: “*Me coming with receipts after they have told their vision of events*” (46). The noun “*receipts*”, originally denoting proof of purchase, is here used in a metaphorical sense to signify evidentiary artifacts, such as screenshots or chat logs, employed in digital disputes. This is an instance of semantic extension, whereby a pre-existing lexical item acquires a figurative meaning within a new discursive domain. Pragmatically, the pluralization of “*receipt*” as “*receipts*” adds a juridical undertone to interpersonal conflicts, highlighting the legalistic and evidentiary nature of contemporary online disputes. Users see its link to proving points online (“*Screenshots are evidence!*”), while others enjoy the humor (“*This is me!*”). Its relatability makes it shareable on platforms. It’s moderately popular, more so than “*cancelled*,” due to its broad appeal in online disputes.

In the post @jozi.mp4: “*Sorry for ghosting after our date*” (47), the verb “*ghosting*” serves as a prototypical example of derivational morphology through conversion and affixation. Derived from the noun “*ghost*”, the verb encapsulates the act of abruptly ceasing communication with another person without explanation. Its metaphorical underpinning comparing the absence of communication to the invisibility of a “*ghost*” demonstrates the imaginative mechanisms underlying social media neologisms. Users tie it to changing social norms (“*Ghosting is normal now*”), while others relate personally (“*I’ve been ghosted!*”), sharing personal stories of abandonment or emotional hurt, indicating deeper investment. Emotional focus makes it go viral, making it more popular than “*receipts*” because emotional tone reach more people and reactions.

The expression @coffeeandadvice: “*Better to be cringe in someone else’s mind than caged in your own,*” (47), encapsulates a recontextualization of the term “*cringe*”. Originally denoting a reaction of embarrassment or discomfort, “*cringe*” has undergone semantic inversion within online communities. In this context, it signifies a form of unapologetic self-expression that challenges normative expectations. This shift illustrates the process of semantic reclamation, where a term with negative connotations is appropriated and imbued with positive or empowering meanings. One of the most popular and algorithmically favored neologisms, “*cringe*” has achieved viral status across platforms due to its capacity to express both self-awareness and subtle resistance to judgment culture. The quoted post received exceptional engagement: thousands of likes and affirming comments such as “*this hit hard,*” “*exactly what I needed,*” or simply “*real*”. These responses suggest that the term “*cringe*” operates within a framework of emotional solidarity, offering users a linguistic tool to both critique social expectations and affirm personal authenticity.

“*Slay*”, seen in the caption @peach\_and\_princess: “*Slay the day, girl*” (46), shows another major shift in meaning. It used to mean “*to kill,*” but in digital culture, it now means to perform exceptionally well, especially in terms of appearance,

confidence, or achievement. This is a case of lexical deviation where a word keeps its dramatic feel but takes on a totally new, positive meaning. “*Slay*” is used to celebrate success, beauty, or bold self-expression, and is especially common in fashion, makeup, or performance contexts. The post elicited highly positive engagement, with users responding through enthusiastic affirmations like “*you slayed it!*” and widespread sharing across platforms. Like “*cringe*”, “*slay*” is one of the most popular neologisms in current digital discourse and owes its success to its emotionally clear, empowering connotation and its close alignment with fashion, confidence, and self-performance culture. “*Slay*” invites praise, whereas “*cringe*” invites commentary—making the former more instantly viral and the latter more discursively rich.

In the next example @justtheblendedwells: “*My biggest flex is that I’m not afraid to lose people anymore*” (46), the term “*flex*” in a manner that diverges from its traditional usage. Historically associated with physical strength or ostentatious display, “*flex*” has been semantically broadened in online vernacular to denote any form of personal achievement or attribute that one takes pride in. This usage exemplifies semantic broadening, where the meaning of a word expands to encompass a wider range of contexts. Lexical deviation is the process that creates this neologism, since the meaning has been changed. The post featuring received moderate to high engagement, particularly in the form of supportive and emotionally resonant comments such as “*needed this,*” “*so real,*” and “*strongest flex ever*”. However, it generates fewer reactive emojis and less viral momentum than “*cringe*” or “*ghosting*”, which evoke either humor or relational drama. Its popularity lies in its use as a self-empowerment tool, but it lacks the emotional immediacy and cultural saturation that make “*cringe*” or “*slay*” more explosively viral.

The term “*stan*”, as utilized in the statement @urlosermetrix: “*I’ve been the biggest Taylor Swift stan in my school*” (47) represents a notable example of conversion and semantic shift. Originating from Eminem’s 2000 song “Stan,” which depicted an obsessive fan, the term has been reappropriated within online fandoms

to signify enthusiastic and dedicated supporters. Linguistically, “*stan*” also functions as a blend of “*stalker*” and “*fan*”, capturing the notion of intense admiration bordering on obsession. This transformation from a proper noun to a common noun, and subsequently to a verb and adjective, demonstrates the fluidity of word classes in digital language. The post received positive engagement, particularly from users expressing identification, support, and shared admiration. Comments often included affirmations like “*same,*” “*Swifties forever,*” or emojis symbolizing unity and enthusiasm.

The term “*simp*” @alt\_3rnat1ve: “*If being the biggest simp ever was a reward*” (47) exemplifies lexical clipping with marked sociolinguistic implications. The term is deployed humorously, yet it encodes significant gendered and emotional connotations. Originating as a clipped form of “*simpleton*”, “*simp*” has undergone a semantic shift: from signifying someone of low intelligence to characterising individuals typically men who exhibit exaggerated or excessive affection toward someone they admire, often with minimal reciprocation. “*Simp*” prompted a more humorous and self-mocking tone. Reactions under the post ranged from playful exaggeration to meme responses, with users engaging in light irony and performative relatability. “*Stan*” elicited community affirmation and admiration, whereas “*simp*” prompted comedic relatability. The contrast highlights two modes of digital engagement: “*stan*” thrives in fan-driven solidarity, while “*simp*” invites interaction through performative vulnerability and humor.

“*Doomscroll*” @healthiermi: “*It's time to break free from the doomscroll*” (48) exemplifies a blend word formation process, combining “*doom*”—connoting an impending sense of disaster with “*scrolling*”, the digital action of moving through content. This neologism succinctly encapsulates the compulsive behavior of endlessly consuming negative news on social platforms, highlighting both the emotional toll and the habitual nature of such interactions. Users commented post with phrases like “*me every night,*” “*why is this so accurate,*” or simply “*real*”. This suggests a shared recognition of digital anxiety and overconsumption of

negative content, positioning “doomscroll” as a term that channels collective emotional fatigue. Similarly, the term “gatekeep” @verified.red: “I’m the person who likes to gatekeep their favorite food spots” (46) illustrates a compound verb formation through the combination of the noun “gate” and the verb “keep”. Traditionally, “gatekeeping” referred to the act of controlling physical or metaphorical access, with the “gate” symbolizing an entry point and “keep” meaning to hold or maintain. In contemporary social media vernacular, “gatekeep” has undergone semantic broadening and conversion, now applied more generally to describe individuals who restrict or monopolize cultural or social knowledge here, metaphorically referring to “favorite food spots”. Audience reactions included playful banter, agreement (“as they should”), and inside jokes. Compared to emotionally open neologisms like “simp” or “cringe”, both “doomscroll” and “gatekeep” resonate due to their relevance to digital habits, yet differ in tone—one vulnerable, the other self-aware and comedic.

The term “baddie”, used in the post @urf4vb4b: “Girls love baddie style” (47), is formed through affixation and blending. It originates from the adjective “bad”, but instead of keeping its negative meaning, “baddie” has taken on a positive, empowering sense. It now describes a confident, stylish, and attractive woman who controls her image and projects strength. This change in meaning is an example of semantic inversion where a word that once had a negative meaning is redefined in a positive way. The post received strong user engagement, particularly among young female audiences. Comments included supportive phrases like “this is so real” or “baddie energy,” and affirming identity-based replies. Its reception parallels that of “slay”, as both function as positive affirmations of personal empowerment and visual appeal.

The word “lowkey”, @love\_\_\_\_\_bug: “Lowkey too obsessed with being on good terms with everyone I’ve ever met” (48), shows another kind of language shift. Originally from music, where it meant something quiet or subtle, “lowkey” has moved into everyday speech to describe something done quietly, secretly, or with

less intensity. Its formation involves compounding and lexical shift. It acts like a softener or hedge in sentences, letting the speaker express emotions or opinions while downplaying them at the same time. For example, saying “*lowkey obsessed*” suggests the feeling is real but not overwhelming or that the speaker doesn’t want to admit how strong it is. Audience reactions to this post were notably strong, with users commenting “*this is so real,*” “*literally me,*” and posting emojis that convey quiet emotional intensity.

The phrase “*bed rotting*”, in the tweet @zahr44xo: “*There’s nothing more satisfying than bed rotting*” (48), is a compound formed by joining “*bed*”—a place associated with rest or sleep and “*rotting*”, which traditionally refers to decay or neglect. The term humorously exaggerates the idea of spending excessive time in bed doing nothing watching TikTok, scrolling endlessly, or avoiding responsibilities. While it sounds negative, users often frame bed rotting as an act of emotional care or rebellion against hustle culture. “*Bed rotting*” received widespread engagement, with users commenting in agreement (“*literally me,*” “*this is self-care*”) and replying with emojis that reflect exhaustion or comfort. Compared to “*lowkey*”, which softens the tone of confessions and circulates more steadily in personal, text-based reflections, “*bed rotting*” is more declarative and comedic, inviting collective validation rather than introspection and often performs better in visual meme contexts due to its striking imagery and comic potential.

“*Rizz*”, in the caption @sudanibaddie: “*When his rizz is so good that I’m blushing*” (47), shows a case of lexical deviation and cultural appropriation. “*Rizz*” originated in African American Vernacular English (AAVE), where it referred to physical appeal or charisma. Over time, the meaning evolved to describe someone’s ability to flirt or charm others effortlessly. Now, “*rizz*” is widely used to talk about romantic success or magnetism, especially among young men. For example, someone with “*unspoken rizz*” is believed to attract others without even trying. The post received high engagement, with users responding in a playful and enthusiastic tone—comments included “*he got that rizz,*” “*felt that*” signaling both relatability

and entertainment. Compared to “*baddie*”, which centers on personal style and self-empowerment, “*rizz*” shifts the focus to interpersonal magnetism and charm receiving more popularity.

“*De-influencing*”, as seen in the post @khloekuriatnyk: “*De-influencing you as a mom with a normal home*” (47), marks a direct challenge to consumerism. This neologism, formed through compounding (*de-* + *influencing*), flips the traditional influencer script. Instead of promoting products, content creators actively discourage purchases often pointing out overhyped, wasteful, or harmful items. User reactions to the post were supportive but relatively niche, with comments like “*thank you for this,*” “*finally someone said it,*” and tags to like-minded users. While the engagement was sincere and thoughtful, its reach was more limited compared to emotionally charged or humorous neologisms.

Another widely used neologism in online discourse is “*glow up*” @glowwversa: “*Glow up tip for girls – sleep well*” (46). This term is formed by compounding the words “*glow*” meaning to shine or appear radiant and “*up*”, which suggests improvement or elevation. A “*glow up*” usually refers to a noticeable transformation in someone’s appearance, confidence, or overall lifestyle. Most often, it is used in a positive sense, highlighting beauty, health, or self-esteem that has improved over time. Users responded with celebratory comments (“*yes queen,*” “*you did that!*”) and personal affirmations.

Neologisms in digital communication, particularly on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter, reflect a dynamic intersection between linguistic innovation and cultural expression. As demonstrated through examples new lexical items often arise from users’ need to articulate evolving social realities, identities, and aesthetic norms. These neologisms are primarily generated through mechanisms such as compounding, affixation, and semantic shift, aligning with A. Ibrahim’s cross-cultural analysis, which found that “word formation is the most common type of neologism, followed by lexical deviation and borrowing” [25, p. 5]. This trend underscores not only the linguistic creativity of online communities but also the

functional role of neologisms in shaping and reflecting contemporary discourse. Thus, digital media serves as both a catalyst and a repository for modern lexical innovation, further diversifying the evolving lexicon of English.

## **2. 2. Abbreviations, Acronyms and Grammatical Features in Social Media Posts**

In today's digital communication, abbreviations are a key element of online language, especially on social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok. These shortened forms help users express ideas quickly and fit within character limits. Abbreviations are also part of the playful and creative nature of internet language. As D. Crystal defines, an abbreviation is "a reduced form of a word or phrase, often consisting of initial letters, used chiefly in writing to represent the complete form" [10, p. 55].

Some abbreviations are formed with the help of initialisms, which are shortened forms created by taking the first letters of words in a phrase. These forms are especially common in digital communication due to their brevity and ease of use in fast-paced online environments.

For example, in the post @jurassicsouls: "*I need more horror movies tbh*" (48), "*TBH*"—short for "*to be honest.*" The abbreviation appears at the end of the sentence as a personal comment. It plays a pragmatic role, softening the statement and presenting it as a sincere or casual opinion rather than a firm declaration. User comments include "*Same here, any good ones?*", "*Try 'Hereditary'!*" or friend tags like "*@spookyluvr this is you*". Although the number of likes is moderate, the comments are conversational and recommendation-driven, demonstrating that "*TBH*" fosters brief but meaningful dialogue rather than viral spread.

Another widely used initialism is "*IDK*"—short for "*I don't know.*" The user in the post @problemetik: "*I automatically say idk when I'm too lazy to talk*" (48) highlights the frequency of using this form to avoid giving full responses. Linguistically, "*IDK*" functions both as an expression of uncertainty and as a tool

for mitigating conversational responsibility. “IDK” attracts a larger volume of quick, relatable reactions such as “Mood”, “I do this all the time omg,” and memes or reaction gifs.

The expression “OMG” (“Oh my God”) is another common initialism, especially in emotional contexts. In the post @lynneBP\_294: “OMG! Too cute!” (48), it acts as an emotional intensifier, showing excitement or surprise. While its original use had a religious connotation, in contemporary social media discourse, “OMG” often signals general enthusiasm, amusement, or disbelief demonstrating a semantic shift towards a broader, more informal usage. Post generates high likes and enthusiastic, emoji-filled comments such as “OMG STOP”, “So adorable”, and strings of hearts which makes usage of “OMG” more popular than “IDK” or “TBH”. This confirms that emotionally charged initialisms are prime triggers for virality due to their ability to convey excitement in a compact, easily shareable form.

The expression “FYI” (*for your information*) is used to introduce a clarification, announcement, or additional comment. In the post @yslammami: “fyi... it gets better” (48), the speaker uses “FYI” at the beginning of a sentence to mark the information as non-essential yet relevant. Comments like “Thanks, I needed this today”, “Such an important reminder,” or tags like “@selflovejourney read this!” show that while likes may be lower, the interaction reveals deliberate sharing and supportive micro-communities — a sign of reflective media literacy at work.

Another example is “IRL” (*in real life*). In the post @yalligatorgar: “Everyone I have met on this app so far irl is AI” (48), the abbreviation is employed to distinguish between digital and physical interactions. “IRL” is significant not only as an abbreviation, but as a linguistic tool that expresses the blurred boundary between online personas and physical reality. The post prompts witty or philosophical replies from users.

“ICYMI” (*in case you missed it*) serves a referential and pragmatic function, often used to reintroduce or emphasize information that the audience may have overlooked. In the post @mark\_slapinski: “Danielle Smith had some strong words

for Canadian prime minister Mark Carney.” (48), the speaker uses the abbreviation as a pre-emptive discourse strategy—drawing attention to the statement and inviting re-evaluation or renewed focus. This initialism has gained popularity particularly in news and commentary posts, where information is rapidly updated and frequently recycled. Audience replies include factual clarifications (“*She actually said this last week too*”), mild debates (“*She’s not wrong though...*”), or shares with “*Good catch, I missed that!*” Compared to “*OMG,*” “*ICYMI*” attracts fewer reactions but reveals an audience using the initialism to revisit or update information, which is a key element of digital news literacy.

In the post @nero: “*Money isn’t real, btw, and hasn’t been for decades*” (48), “*BTW*” (*by the way*) softening the impact of the statement while also suggesting informality and detachment. This abbreviation, though originally used to introduce a side comment, has evolved in online contexts to express ironic detachment, often marking the speaker’s tone as casual, humorous, or intentionally underemphasized. While the like count is often high due to the post’s playful cynicism, the comment culture leans towards meme-like exchanges, revealing how some initialisms sustain informal social bonding rather than serious critique.

“*RN*” in the post @iknowwhatumeann: “*All I need rn is vacation*” (47). The abbreviation “*RN*” (*right now*) operates as an adverbial modifier of time, stressing immediacy and urgency. Its clipped form allows users to express current emotional states or desires without extensive elaboration. The post achieves high likes and playful comments like “*Sameeee rn*”, “*Book it rn, don’t wait,*” and “*Take me with you*”. Compared to previous examples, “*RN*” popular because it condenses an immediate emotional state into a simple, widely relatable form that maximises shareability and algorithmic boost.

In addition to initialisms, another widely used process of abbreviation on social media is clipping — the reduction of a longer word by omitting one of its parts, typically without changing the word class or core meaning.

For instance, in the post @sofianaspinoula: “*Normalise giving out false info just to see who talk too much*” (47), the term “*info*”, a clipped form of the word “*information*” is used with a clear satirical intent. This instance demonstrates how clippings are not only space-saving but also carry a tone of casualness or playfulness. Comments include “*mood,*” “*So true, people gossip too much,*” and friend tags. Likes are moderate; the post’s satirical tone invites playful agreement.

“*Pic ideas for your next vacation*” @emmaburnze, (46): “*pic*” or its plural form “*pics*”, clipped from “*picture(s)*”, reveals how this abbreviation has become fully conventionalized. Syntactically, “*pics*” retains its grammatical role as a countable plural noun, and its use is nearly indistinguishable from the full form in meaning. Compared to “*info,*” “*pics*” posts achieve greater reach because they attach practical, shareable inspiration to the clipped word, merging linguistic economy with visual allure.

The abbreviation “*probs*”, a shortened form of “*probably*” or sometimes “*problems*” depending on context, appears in the post @milamoloka: “*I should probs not take selfies anyway...*” (48). In this sentence, “*probs*” clearly functions as an adverb, standing in for probably. This is a case of back clipping with the addition of an -s for phonological approximation, aligning the clipped form more closely with the casual speech patterns of young digital users. Users’ reactions are high because “*probs*” echoes spoken youth vernacular, fostering relatable, humorous self-deprecation. Unlike “*info*” or “*pics,*” “*probs*” does not add informative value but amplifies a colloquial, self-mocking tone that resonates with younger users.

“*Vid*”, clipped from “*video*”, used in the post @whimsicalizzy: “*I spent hours creating the perfect vid*” (47). Here, “*vid*” operates as a noun, identical in syntactic role to the full form. The reduction here is driven by the typical need for conciseness in informal communication. Similarly, in the post @awakeningpeople: “*My sis and I will always be each other’s best friends*” (46), the word “*sis*” is a fore-clipped noun, omitting the final syllable of “*sister*”. Another abbreviation “*bro*” clipped from “*brother*”: “*Me sharing my secrets with that one bro who never judges*

*me*” @artorllaquotes (46). As with “*sis*”, this form reflects informality. Used often among male-identifying individuals or in gender-neutral friendly contexts, bro has evolved into a broader sociolinguistic marker of friendship.

In contrast, the form “*def*” @stranger\_things: “*Friends don’t lie but boyfriends def do*” (48), is an example of clipping, where the word “*definitely*” is reduced to its stressed first syllable. The clipped form retains adverbial function, modifying the verb do while introducing certainty in a tone that is both emphatic and casual. Users’ reactions are high because the form complements punchy, tweet-length revelations that blend casual slang with relational commentary. Compared to “*probs*,” “*def*” achieves similar relatability but often carries more certainty, giving posts a sharper rhetorical impact.

“*Msg*”, short for “*message*”, in the post @memeoleando: “*Re-reading the msg I sent last night*” (47). This is a consonant-based clipping that omits vowels for brevity, a common strategy in texting and instant messaging cultures. Abbreviation demonstrates graphological economy, where orthographic simplification serves practical and stylistic purposes. The post’s relatability resonates with users familiar with impulsive texting with comments like “*Same, cringe lol*,” or “*I delete my msgs the next morning lmao*.”

A distinct type of abbreviation commonly found in digital communication involves the integration of numerals to substitute for syllables, sounds, or entire words. These forms, often referred to as numeronyms, are created through a combination of letters and numbers based on phonetic similarity, orthographic convenience, and the pursuit of brevity in informal contexts.

For example, the abbreviation *G2G*, used in the post @good2gobar: “*Are you G2G for all of your hikes this summer?*” (48), stands for “*good to go*”. This construction replaces the word “*to*” with the numeral “*2*”, reflecting its phonological equivalence. The repetition of the “*G*” at the beginning and end maintains recognizability of the original phrase. “*G2G*” functions idiomatically to express readiness or preparation and retains its role as a verb phrase within the

sentence. Reaction and retweets are moderate: the term works smoothly for audiences already familiar with common chat shortcuts, but might puzzle casual readers. Thus, “G2G” reflects the insider nature of some numeronyms — clear to frequent users, less transparent to the uninitiated.

In a similar way, “B4” substitutes the full word “before” by replacing the syllable for with the numeral “4”, which is pronounced identically. In the post @dfwcasto: “*life b4 18 was peaceful...*” (48), “B4” operates as a temporal preposition, keeping its grammatical category while adopting a form that is shorter, visually striking, and more typical of digital registers. Audience reactions are high: this numeronym feels intuitive and has been standard in texting culture for decades, making it instantly readable across generations of digital users. Compared to “G2G,” “B4” enjoys broader recognition due to its appearance in early SMS language and meme nostalgia.

“2DAY”, shows another variation of this pattern. In “*last day of school 2day*”, @kwusteeze (48), the abbreviation substitutes the syllable “to” with the numeral “2”, again based on phonological overlap. “2DAY” functions as a noun, just as the full form today would, with no shift in syntactic role. Unlike “G2G,” “2DAY” is almost self-explanatory, thanks to clear context and widespread casual usage.

“4ever”, as seen in the caption @lorenzaabate: “*4ever a summer girl*” (46), represents the full form “*forever*”. The numeral “4” substitutes for the syllable for, maintaining its phonological identity. This strategy exemplifies a syllabic numeronym, where the number functions as a complete syllabic unit, preserving the prosodic flow of the word. Reaction from users is very high because the form merges emotive tone with aesthetic minimalism, fitting social media preference for catchy captions. Compared to “2DAY” or “B4,” “4ever” tends to be more stylised, used deliberately for cuteness or branding rather than pure brevity.

Similarly, the abbreviation “W8” @vampln: “w8 until the end of the game” (48), replaces the syllable “ait” in “wait” with the numeral “8”, which phonetically mimics the target syllable. This abbreviation exemplifies the process of numerical

homophony, where a number takes the place of an entire syllable due to sound similarity. Users' reaction and comments are moderate to high: "W8" is an older numeronym that remains easily understood but is slightly less common today compared to "4ever" or "2DAY," sometimes appearing playful or deliberately retro.

Besides abbreviations, social media discourse also incorporates a significant number of acronyms, which, although often conflated with initialisms, are linguistically distinct. "An acronym is a word formed from the initial letters of a sequence of words, pronounced as a single word rather than as a series of letters" [10, p. 35]. In acronyms, the resulting abbreviation typically takes on the role and behavior of a standard lexical item: it is spoken as a word and often undergoes morphological or syntactic integration into sentences as if it were not an abbreviation at all.

A notable example is "LOL", meaning "laughing out loud". In the tweet @jbulltard1: "Elon is unfollowing all the Trump people on Twitter lol" (48). Here, "LOL" functions as a discourse marker — a device used to comment on or soften the preceding statement. Rather than denoting literal laughter, "LOL" often conveys tone, sarcasm, or emotional distance. "LOL" is fully lexicalised, pronounced as a single syllable, and functions independently as an interjection. The post generates high engagement because its use is so embedded in casual online talk. Users respond with similar laughter markers "LOL he's wild," "lol Twitter stays messy," showing mutual understanding of its pragmatic nuance.

The acronym "FOMO" (*Fear of Missing Out*) is similarly integrated into casual digital speech and writing. In the example @.elliebarker: "How do I stop having FOMO from things I don't even wanna go to" (47), it is used as a noun, suggesting a psychological or emotional state. What is notable here is how the acronym substitutes for a complex noun phrase. Compared to "LOL", "FOMO" is more specific in meaning and less popular in usage but equally well-integrated, signifying a cultural concept that readers instantly recognize.

“YOLO” (*You Only Live Once*) functions as both a linguistic shortcut and a slogan-like expression. It encapsulates an entire worldview centered around spontaneity, risk-taking, and living in the present moment. In the example @teriqphillips: “*Idk who needs to hear this but YOLO, so live with memories instead of regrets*” (48), “YOLO” acts as a pragmatic marker of advice, expressing encouragement rooted in a cultural mindset that values experience over caution. It often triggers humor or motivational reactions, keeping engagement high but context-dependent.

Similarly, in the next post @allgarbled: “*Lmao has survived, and even thrived, over the years, but its cousin rofl has faded into indignity*” (48). “ROFL” (*Rolling On the Floor Laughing*) and “LMAO” (*Laughing My Ass Off*) both derive from longer idiomatic expressions that signal strong amusement. These acronyms highlight the tendency of digital users to exaggerate reactions through hyperbolic shorthand. The comparison between “LMAO” and “ROFL” provides meta-commentary on the life cycle of acronyms in online usage. “LMAO” remains popular due to its versatility and phonetic friendliness, while “ROFL” feels outdated, showing how user preference updates with platform culture.

The acronym “GOAT” (*Greatest of All Time*), as seen in the tweet @nash\_flash12: “*The best ‘Avatar’ character ever the GOAT, Toph Beifong*” (48), functions as a lexical item with evaluative meaning. “GOAT” has become a substantive term used to denote excellence or iconic status. Unlike “LOL” or “YOLO,” it does not indicate mood but declares iconic status. Users respond with agreement (“*GOAT for real!!*”, “*No debate*”), showing how some acronyms acquire stand-alone lexical status, functioning like slang adjectives or superlatives.

The use of “POV” (*Point of View*), such as in “*POV: when you forget your face is too expressive*”, @lilli\_vance (46), highlights a narrative framing technique often adopted in audiovisual and meme culture. In digital communication, “POV” introduces a situational perspective, aligning the audience with a specific viewpoint, whether humorous or dramatized. User engagement is high because “POV” captions

define meme templates and short skits, making it not just a word but a narrative tool. Meanwhile, “*IMO*” (*In My Opinion*) adds a subjective modal marker to online statements. In “*Just finished ‘LOST’ and it’s the greatest TV show of all time imo*”, @kronoszer, (48), the speaker signals personal judgment while softening potential disagreement.

In addition to lexical innovations such as abbreviations and acronyms, social media discourse also reflects distinct grammatical features that deviate from traditional written norms. These features are often shaped by the constraints of online platforms—limited character counts, the need for immediacy, and the desire to convey emotion and personality.

One of the most frequent grammatical phenomena in social media is elliptical construction, where full grammatical structures are omitted for brevity or stylistic effect. For instance, “*Gonna cry because of this book*”, @theangerbook (47). The sentence omits the subject “*I am*”, producing a fragment that is nonetheless easily understood by the reader. “*Can’t believe my camera caught this*”, @sonymusicnl (46), here subject “*I*” is omitted. Comments under such posts typically mirror the same spoken tone, with replies like “*Same!*” or “*Literally me rn*”, showing how ellipsis aligns with community habits of short, relatable reactions.

Another grammatical feature is the avoidance of capitalization: “*i love this song*”, @surfthrash (47); “*i can’t believe it’s over*”, @tiredofubye (47). In both examples, the lowercase “*i*” defies standard grammatical conventions. Reaction from users on such posts tend to be high, showing that informality and a perceived rawness resonate with audiences who see lowercase style as more “real” and unfiltered.

Next is the omission of standard punctuation marks, especially apostrophes in contractions. For example, @sydolii: “*Let me tell you something, I dont care*” (48) and “*Lets go and dance!*”, @10kai\_nft (48). In both instances, the contractions “*don’t*” and “*let’s*” are written without apostrophes, resulting in “*dont*” and “*lets.*” While these omissions are technically incorrect in formal written English, they are

commonplace in digital discourse and often do not hinder comprehension. Such posts often receive playful, casual replies that match the tone, users echo the style back: “*same dont care lol*” or “*lets do it!!*”. This mimicry in comments highlights how punctuation omissions create an inclusive, relaxed interaction style that reduces social distance between poster and reader.

Often in social media the intentional use of nonstandard spelling, which often mirrors phonetic pronunciation or serves to establish tone, humor, identity, or informality. These creative spellings are not the result of typographical error but are instead purposeful modifications that reflect the evolving norms of digital communication @lochieerossee: “*Life is so fun, I love being a gurl.*” (46); “*Good night friends, luv you all*”, @sweetcarolinatv (48). In the first instance, “*gurl*” is a deliberate alteration of “*girl*”, frequently used in pop culture and online communities to signal playfulness, femininity, or to convey a non-traditional or subcultural identity. Similarly, “*luv*” in the second example replaces “*love*” with a phonetically approximate form. Engagement metrics like likes and shares are high, especially in communities where unique spelling signifies in-group belonging or pop-culture awareness.

A grammatical trend in social media language is the clipping of auxiliary verbs and the use of informal or contracted grammatical structures. These constructions reflect the oral-like nature of online communication, where brevity, rhythm, and casual tone often outweigh grammatical precision @sgfg.sam: “*I wanna watch a movie*” (47); “*Everything around me gotta grow or go*”, @livewithnoregrt (48). In both examples, we observe the shortening of modal or auxiliary verbs: “*wanna*” is a clipped form of “*want to*” and “*gotta*” represents “*got to*”. Posts using these clippings often attract affirming comments like “*same vibe*”, “*facts*”, or “*this so true*”, reflecting that readers appreciate the easy-going, speech-like rhythm.

We can see a double negative occurrence in social media often resulting in nonstandard grammar. In traditional English grammar, double negatives are considered incorrect or redundant because they may cancel each other out. However,

in informal, spoken, and especially social media English, they are often used intentionally for emphasis, rhythm, or stylistic voice: “*I ain’t got no time for finishing my painting*”, @cinemai (48). Both “*ain’t*” (a nonstandard contraction of “*am not*” or “*have not*”) and “*no*” are negative. While standard grammar would require either “*I don’t have any time*” or “*I ain’t got any time,*” this construction is used here to intensify the speaker’s point—that they truly have zero time. Audience reaction and shares remain high because the broken grammar aligns with familiar spoken dialects and adds an authentic voice.

Social media users often deviate from standard subject–verb agreement rules either intentionally for stylistic effect or unintentionally as part of colloquial expression. One of the most common patterns is using a base verb without adding the “-s” ending in the third person singular. For example, @syzgele: “*She don’t drink, she don’t party, she stays home*” (48). In standard English, the correct form would be: “*She doesn’t drink, she doesn’t party, she stays home.*” However, “*she don’t*” reflects a form commonly used in spoken and informal varieties of English.

Abbreviations and acronyms play a key role in shaping online communication. They allow users to express ideas quickly, creatively, and informally, reflecting the fast-paced and trend-driven nature of social media. As noted by F. Dilla, these linguistic shortcuts have become a defining feature of digital interaction, supporting both efficiency and social identity in online discourse [15, p. 15]. Non-standard grammatical features are also highly prevalent in social media posts. Rather than being signs of grammatical inaccuracy, these features represent a distinct form of digital literacy that reflects identity, emotional tone, and social belonging in online spaces. Together, lexical and grammatical innovations form a dynamic and evolving register that defines how language functions in contemporary digital environments.

### 2. 3. Stylistic Devices in Social Media Posts: Irony, Sarcasm, and Emotional Expression

Stylistic devices such as irony, sarcasm, and emotional expression play a central role in shaping the tone and communicative intent of social media posts, allowing users to convey complex attitudes, critique, or humor beyond the literal meaning of their words. Irony, as a stylistic phenomenon, holds a distinctive position in digital communication. Irony is a common stylistic feature in social media communication, often used to express emotions or opinions indirectly. It works by intentionally saying something that appears to contradict what the speaker really means.

According to Grice's (1975) theory of conversational maxims, irony involves the purposeful violation of these norms such as truthfulness or relevance to create a deeper or opposite meaning [11, p. 50]. As S. Attardo explains, irony is not meant to mislead, but to make the audience read between the lines and understand the intended message behind the literal words [4, p. 794].

A post @ollkorrekt0: "*Jealous that my phone can just die for a little while*" (48) is a clear example of this use of irony. The speaker pretends to envy a phone's ability to shut down, while in fact expressing a personal wish to escape from stress or responsibility. The statement is humorous. Audience comments on such posts typically amplify the joke, with replies like "*mood*", "*same tbh*", or "*wish I could do that too*". High likes and shares indicate that followers find this relatable irony both funny and emotionally resonant.

In another case, @.am8er999: "*Of course I can cook. What kind of tea would you like?*" (47). At first glance, it sounds like a confident statement. However, the second sentence makes it clear that the speaker is joking—boiling tea is hardly cooking. This contrast creates a humorous effect by overstating ability while actually admitting to a lack of cooking skills. In this way, irony is used to mask insecurity or inexperience with playful exaggeration.

Another example appears in a tweet @dsOfficer405: “*Just when you think things can’t get any worse... you get an email from the chief. What a dream!*” (48). On the surface, the phrase “*What a dream!*” connotes positivity or aspiration. However, when juxtaposed with the preceding clause, which describes an unwanted escalation of a negative situation, the expression acquires a clearly ironic function. Followers tend to reply with supportive or empathetic comments: “*Ugh been there*”, “*Hang in there!*” or “*Relatable*”, demonstrating that sarcastic irony fosters solidarity in shared frustrations.

The complex interplay between tone and meaning in ironic statements is further exemplified by a post @dextermorgan.blood: “*You may hate me but you don’t hate me more than I hate myself*” (46). At first glance, this statement appears self-deprecating, but its ironic tension lies in the overstatement of internalized contempt as a response to perceived external judgment. Such performative irony aligns with S. Attardo’s view that irony often serves a metacommunicative function signaling both emotional detachment and deeper vulnerability beneath the surface [4, p. 796]. Followers respond with a blend of humor and empathy: “*Same energy*”, “*Mood but are you okay tho?*”, and supportive emojis. High engagement shows that such ironic confessions blur the line between joke and genuine emotion — a stylistic hallmark of modern meme culture.

“*Nothing like a surprise rainstorm when you forgot your umbrella. Perfect day!*”, @bluck182 (48). Here, the positive affirmation “*Perfect day!*” starkly contrasts with the unpleasantness of being caught in the rain unprepared. The incongruity between the literal meaning and the situational context clearly indicates that the speaker’s true attitude is one of annoyance or exasperation. Comments under these posts often include humorous agreement: “*Classic Monday*”, “*Story of my life*”, or simply laughing emojis, indicating a communal recognition of everyday inconveniences.

“*Oh perfect, my favorite show got canceled. Just when I was getting emotionally invested...*”, @marie\_fangirl\_ (48). The phrase “*Oh perfect*” carries a

stark contrast to the underlying disappointment, highlighting the user's frustration through an exaggerated expression of positivity. This dissonance draws attention to the emotional investment in the show and the sudden, undesired outcome, reinforcing the ironic tone. Audience reaction to this kind of post is typically high: comments often include commiseration, recommendations for new shows or shared frustration about network decisions. Likes and shares multiply because many followers identify with the relatable disappointment and appreciate the sarcastic twist, which makes the grievance entertaining rather than merely bitter.

Similarly, with the post @davidkau: "*Loving this Monday morning traffic! Nothing like spending an hour to move three blocks*" (48). Here, the overly enthusiastic statement about "*loving*" the traffic sharply contradicts the negative experience of severe congestion. The use of hyperbolic praise for an unpleasant situation employs irony as a coping mechanism, allowing the user to express dissatisfaction humorously rather than straightforwardly complaining.

While irony in social media communication often manifests as a subtle deviation from literal meaning to invoke humor or critique, it also forms the foundational mechanism upon which sarcasm builds. Sarcasm can be viewed as a marked subtype of verbal irony—distinct in its evaluative force and interpersonal implications. As S. Attardo defines, sarcasm is "a form of verbal irony used to convey the opposite of what is actually spoken, especially in order to criticize or insult someone, show irritation, or amuse" [4, p. 794]

This rhetorical strategy can be observed in this post @sigmapatbateman: "*Yeah, your opinion was super helpful, thanks for that*" (47), where the syntactic structure resembles polite gratitude, yet the tonal incongruity and evaluative context clearly subvert its surface-level meaning. The exaggerated emphasis on "*super helpful*" signals the speaker's dissatisfaction or even frustration. Instead of genuine appreciation, the utterance functions as a veiled reproach. Such sarcasm often triggers agreement in the comments ("*LMAO so true*"), supportive insults at the target ("*Who asked them anyway?*"), and shares among users who relate to dealing

with unwanted advice. Likes accumulate as followers enjoy the indirect but pointed way of expressing annoyance.

Another example: *"Oh, of course you're late again. Shocking"*, @bbycabs (48), which exemplifies a sarcastic formulation through hyperbolic contradiction. The initial *"of course"* signals expectation, while the emphatic *"shocking"* is deployed to sarcastically negate any element of surprise. Here, sarcasm not only underscores the speaker's annoyance but also functions as a social reprimand. Users' engagement is high because sarcasm invites playful re-enactment and shared complaints.

*"No, really Netflix, take your time making another season of this show. It's not like we're all waiting or anything"*, @schattensays7 (47). Here, the speaker utilizes exaggerated politeness and a superficial tone of patience to veil underlying frustration. The lexical markers *"No, really"* and *"It's not like we're all waiting"* strongly indicate the opposite of their literal content. Users comment with relatable frustration (*"They always do this!!"*), fan theories to pass the wait, or humorous threats (*"I'm aging waiting for season 5"*). Shares spread the collective grievance, boosting visibility through shared sarcasm.

A more subtle, yet equally cutting, instance of sarcasm is embedded in the post @dextermorgan.blood: *"Just because you haven't found the right person yet doesn't mean you will."* (46). At first glance, this statement might resemble straightforward cynicism or pessimism. However, placed in the social media context often saturated with romantic optimism and performative encouragement it adopts a subversive tone. User comments show mixed tones: some laugh at the unexpected negativity (*"Too real"*), while others playfully complain (*"Let me cry in peace"*). Likes and saves signal appreciation for the bold, darkly humorous twist.

*"Wow, thanks for explaining that extremely basic concept no one asked about"*, @sgrant631 (47). This utterance exemplifies sarcasm through the use of exaggerated gratitude to disguise a clear intent to belittle or mock. The speaker does not express actual appreciation; instead, they highlight the redundancy or

condescension of the addressed comment. In a similar way, another user remarks: “*Oh, fantastic. Another meeting that could've been an email*”, @jonkalis (48). Here, positive lexical choices like “*Oh, fantastic*” are used to introduce a complaint rather than praise. The structure feigns enthusiasm while clearly lamenting an inefficient workplace norm. By stating the obvious with a falsely upbeat tone, the speaker underscores frustration through contrast.

While sarcasm often masks emotion through veiled critique or mockery, many social media users also express their feelings more overtly, employing stylistic choices to convey genuine emotional intensity and immediacy.

A case in point is the tweet @plazaswife: “*IM CRYING MY CAT IS SO CUTE*” (48). The statement encapsulates an intense emotional reaction, most likely a mix of affection and joy. The syntactic structure is marked by the absence of punctuation and the use of capital letters throughout, both of which function as paralinguistic cues indicating heightened emotional arousal. The lexical choice “*CRYING,*” although not literal, functions idiomatically as an indicator of overwhelming sentiment. The post received high engagement: followers respond with supportive cooing (“*omg show us pictures!!*”) or share pet photos in return. Likes and retweets surge because cuteness and raw delight are universally relatable.

Similarly, the post @gws katt: “*I'm actually soooo excited for the movie trailer tomorrow!!*” (48) demonstrates a different but equally potent emotional engagement. This expression leverages several stylistic markers: the use of the intensifier “*soooo,*” achieved through letter repetition, introduces an elongation commonly used to dramatize speech in written form. The affective loading of the utterance is further enhanced by the double exclamation marks, which amplify the speaker’s enthusiasm.

Another example @xzoyakhanx: “*My TikTok account got suspended ARE YOU KIDDING ME??*” (48) deploys full capitalization and multiple question marks to visually emulate the tone of disbelief and frustration. This multimodal intensification combining lexical content with graphical exaggeration signals a form

of digital shouting, a common method of conveying strong emotion in the absence of vocal intonation. Followers reacted with sympathy (“*What did you do??*”) and shared their own similar frustrations (“*Same thing happened to me!*”). Engagement is driven by collective grievance and moral support, with comments often offering advice or venting together.

Similarly, “*what do you mean my favorite celebrity couple broke up?!?!*”, @wa5urenaide (48) reflects emotional upheaval using both syntactic form and punctuation. The absence of initial capitalization contrasts with the dramatic use of multiple exclamation and question marks, creating a tone that blends shock with emotional vulnerability. Comments under this post include mutual gasps (“*No way???*”), memes reacting to the breakup, or speculative gossip. Likes and shares demonstrate how overt emotional outbursts attract communal empathy and shared drama.

The use of stylistic devices such as irony, sarcasm, and emotional expression plays a key role in how users communicate on social media. Together, these elements reflect the creative and emotional nature of online communication. They help users share not only information but also attitude, mood, and personality in a limited space. As social media continues to shape how people interact, understanding these stylistic tools becomes essential to studying digital language and communication in modern society

#### **2. 4. Strategies of Persuasion and Influence in Social Media Discourse**

In an environment characterized by rapid information exchange and diverse audiences, persuaders employ various rhetorical appeals to shape opinions, drive engagement, and motivate action. Among these, the classical appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos remain fundamental, serving distinct roles in constructing persuasive messages [41, p. 25] Ethos, or the appeal to credibility, establishes the trustworthiness and authority of the communicator, which is essential in environments often saturated with misinformation. Logos, the appeal to logic, uses

evidence and reasoned arguments to persuade audiences based on facts and rationality. Meanwhile, pathos leverages emotional appeal, a particularly potent tool in social media contexts, where emotional resonance can significantly enhance user engagement and prompt immediate responses [42, p. 27].

For example, posts that invoke pathos often call upon the audience's empathy or compassion to encourage specific actions. A tweet urging @ttexastrav: "*If anyone wants to help donate money or even share this post so that anyone else can see it and help people*" (48), uses emotional appeal to foster a sense of communal responsibility and motivate both financial support and message dissemination. Similarly, a post stating @saasdogs: "*If you care about stray animals, please share this post. Every like helps save a life*" (47) effectively appeals to the audience's concern for vulnerable animals, simplifying the call to action and emphasizing that small gestures can yield meaningful impact. These posts are widely liked and reposted because they provide a simple, immediate way for users to participate in a socially valued action, reinforcing a positive self-image and community belonging. Users frequently respond with comments expressing empathy, encouragement, or solidarity for instance, "*Shared! Hope this helps*".

An example of ethos appears in the post @thebitingtruth: "*I'm a dietitian – here are things I recommend to all when it comes to nutrition...*" (46). The user introduces themselves as a certified professional, which immediately positions the message within a framework of expertise. The reference to their occupation is not merely informative, it functions rhetorically to establish credibility and to frame their upcoming advice as trustworthy. Users in comment section pose follow-up questions ("*What do you think about intermittent fasting?*"), tag friends who might benefit, or save the content for future reference. Such reactions confirm that an explicit display of expertise encourages credibility and invites sustained engagement beyond passive reading.

Similarly, the post @cnn: "*Epidemiologist Dr. Larry Brilliant says that diseases are accelerated by holidays and gatherings...*" (48). This message refers to

an expert in public health and indirectly supporting the statement with epidemiological evidence. In this case, the ethos appeal is constructed through the invocation of an authoritative figure — a renowned epidemiologist. The choice of quoting a doctor not only lends scientific weight.

An example of logos in the post: “*Studies show chronic insomnia can raise your risk of cardiovascular disease by 45%.*”, @drkristieleong (48). This message employs logos by presenting specific, quantifiable statistic from scientific research. The precise figure (“45%”) lends weight to the claim and appeals to the audience’s capacity for rational assessment. By grounding the statement in a scientific study, the post aims to convince readers through logical inference—linking a health condition to a measurable increased risk, thereby encouraging awareness or behavior change. “*Research proves 90% of businesses do not know their customers’ top buying criteria.*”, @bizigal22 (48). This example harnesses logos by citing a percentage derived from research, implying a widespread problem substantiated by data. The use of the term “*proves*” emphasizes the strength and reliability of the evidence, aiming to persuade business professionals by appealing to their logical evaluation of market knowledge gaps. The numeric specificity invites users to consider the claim seriously. Users relate the information to their own circumstances, ask for data sources, share the statistics within niche communities like health forums or professional groups. The clear, specific data points increase the perceived reliability and utility of the message, stimulating discussions and encouraging users to repost the information to inform others.

Another significant strategy of persuasion in social media discourse is the use of call-to-action statements, often realized through imperative sentences. These directives serve to directly engage the audience by prompting immediate responses or specific behaviors, thereby harnessing the persuasive power of linguistic commands.

The post @asidianmorris: “*Sign the petition NOW! Don’t let this injustice continue!*” (48) exemplifies the direct and urgent tone characteristic of imperative

calls-to-action. The use of capital letters in “NOW” intensifies the sense of immediacy and importance, while the second sentence explicitly warns of consequences if the action is not taken, increasing the motivational force. Such language activates the reader’s sense of responsibility and urgency, fostering active engagement. Similarly: “Retweet to spread awareness! This could save lives so please spread!”, @jungmoonie (48). This post combines an imperative directive (“Retweet”) with an emotional appeal to the potential positive outcome (“This could save lives”), thereby integrating logos and pathos with the imperative mood. The repetition of “spread” reinforces the call and maintains focus on the intended action. Posts achieved high levels of interaction because they offer audiences a clear and immediate role in addressing a perceived problem. Typical responses include direct compliance for instance, retweets and shares as well as supportive comments like “Done! Hope more people see this!” or “Just signed and shared”.

In addition to imperative sentences, hashtags serve as a potent persuasive device within social media discourse, facilitating message amplification and community building around specific causes or ideas.

For instance, @Undp: “To protect people and planet, together we can #SaveOurOcean” (48) employs the hashtag #SaveOurOcean to encapsulate the environmental cause succinctly. This not only raises awareness but also invites users to join a collective effort, leveraging the inclusive pronoun “together” to enhance a sense of shared responsibility and solidarity. The hashtag acts as a cognitive shortcut, linking diverse contributions under a unified theme. Another example “Our planet needs us! #ClimatActionNow”, @abilutangwa (48) integrates the hashtag #ClimatActionNow to create urgency and immediacy in addressing climate issues. This hashtag functions as both a slogan and a digital banner that mobilizes users around environmental activism. The exclamatory tone and inclusive language reinforce the emotional appeal, enhancing the post’s persuasive effect. Users echo the hashtag in their replies or repost the message with additional commentary, amplifying its reach across networks.

Another strategy in social media persuasion is the distinctive language style and engagement tactics employed by influencers. These users often adopt a conversational and direct tone, which fosters a sense of familiarity and trustworthiness, positioning them as relatable yet authoritative figures within their communities.

Consider the post @skunkbabe: *“You guys need to try this new Dior lipstick”* (47). The use of inclusive pronouns such as *“you guys”* creates an informal, approachable atmosphere, as though the influencer is speaking directly to friends. The imperative *“need to try”* acts as a subtle directive, encouraging viewers toward a specific consumer action while implying the product’s value through enthusiastic recommendation. Similarly, the tweet @lexiv\_i: *“Obsessed with my new Zara jeans, girls you need to buy them”* (48) utilizes affective language (*“Obsessed”*) to convey genuine enthusiasm, which enhances the persuasive appeal via emotional engagement. The direct address to *“girls”* further targets a specific audience, fostering community identification. This blend of personal testimony and imperative appeals exemplifies how influencers leverage social bonds to drive consumer behavior. Comments feature expressions of excitement (*“Adding to cart rn!!”*), requests for more information (*“Which shade did you get?”*), or user-generated endorsements (*“I have these too and they’re amazing!”*). Likes and shares accumulate rapidly because followers perceive these posts as genuine personal tips rather than overt sales pitches, blurring the line between friendship and influence.

Rhetorical questions serve as a powerful persuasive device within social media communication, engaging the audience by prompting reflection rather than expecting direct answers. This technique encourages followers to consider the implicit message or critique embedded in the question, thereby fostering alignment with the speaker’s viewpoint without overt assertion.

The tweet @brian\_kennedy: *“Isn’t it obvious to see who is benefiting from the corruption?”* (48) employs a rhetorical question that implies a self-evident answer, thus positioning the audience to recognize the perceived injustice and share in the

speaker's skepticism. The phrasing invites critical evaluation while simultaneously expressing a sense of collective awareness and frustration. Likewise, the post @cwebbonline: "*How many times we have to say this, but the government is not a business and shouldn't be run like one?*" (48) uses repetition combined with a rhetorical question to emphasize a contested viewpoint. The question challenges prevailing assumptions, encouraging readers to reconsider the appropriateness of certain governance models. Posts often attract agreement-laden comments ("*Exactly!*", "*Finally someone said it!*") and extended threads where users discuss or elaborate on the implied criticism making such post more popular.

Persuasion on social media is achieved through a variety of strategies, including appeals to ethos, pathos, and logos, as well as the use of imperative calls-to-action, hashtags, influencer engagement tactics, and rhetorical questions. These methods work together to shape attitudes, motivate behaviors, and increase user interaction. Importantly, visual and narrative elements that trigger emotional responses significantly enhance persuasive impact, often without users consciously realizing their influence. Understanding these techniques is essential for critically engaging with social media content and recognizing the underlying mechanisms of influence in digital discourse.

## **CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 2**

The chapter examined neologisms, highlighting how users generate innovative lexical items to reflect modern realities, online culture, and emerging technologies. These coinages are often context-driven and widely disseminated through viral content, memes, and trending discussions, illustrating the participatory nature of language development in online spaces.

Also explored abbreviations, acronyms, and grammatical features, focusing on how linguistic deviation from standard norms serve communicative efficiency and stylistic effect. The widespread use of clipped forms (e.g., "idk," "tbh") and creative grammatical constructs (such as intentional lowercase, missing

punctuation, or repeated letters) reflects an informal, expressive register tailored to rapid digital interaction.

Stylistic devices such as irony, sarcasm, and emotional expression were analysed as essential tools for shaping tone and conveying attitude. These rhetorical strategies not only enhance user identity and relatability but also function as mechanisms for social commentary, satire, or emotional appeal. Emotional intensity—often amplified through orthographic variation and hyperbolic language—emerged as a hallmark of engagement-driven content.

Chapters include strategies of persuasion and influence, using classical rhetorical concepts of ethos (credibility), pathos (emotion), and logos (logic), as well as tactics such as call-to-action phrases, hashtags, influencer discourse, and rhetorical questions. These elements demonstrate how users consciously or subconsciously shape audience response, foster alignment, and encourage social or behavioural action through carefully crafted messages.

The analysis reveals that social media language is far from arbitrary or superficial. Rather, it is a sophisticated and adaptive system, shaped by social context, platform affordances, and users' rhetorical goals. Understanding these patterns provides critical insight into how language functions in digital society—as a tool of connection, expression, and influence.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has been devoted to the comprehensive study of English language features and social media literacy as reflected in authentic social media discourse. The primary aim was to explore how linguistic creativity, grammatical and stylistic choices, and persuasive strategies shape and are shaped by the communicative norms of online platforms.

The theoretical part of the research outlined the key principles of media literacy in the context of a digital information society. It emphasized the importance of developing critical thinking, ethical awareness, and linguistic competence when engaging with vast amounts of user-generated content. Social media, being a highly interactive and rapidly evolving environment, has become an arena where informal English undergoes constant innovation, driven by the community's need for brevity, expressiveness, and identity construction.

The practical part of the research presented an extensive linguistic analysis of social media posts, which were grouped according to various phenomena observed in digital discourse. These included neologisms, abbreviations and acronyms, grammatical deviations, stylistic devices like irony, sarcasm, and overt emotional expression, as well as persuasive techniques ranging from classical rhetorical appeals to modern influencer language and call-to-action statements.

In total, 100 authentic posts were analysed and categorised into thematic sections. Neologisms were found to be highly productive, showcasing how online users coin new words to describe social trends, attitudes, and cultural phenomena in a playful yet impactful way. Abbreviations and acronyms demonstrated the digital community's preference for brevity and their ability to pack emotional or pragmatic nuance into compressed forms.

The research further revealed that grammatical deviations, including missing punctuation, intentional lowercase use, and creative spellings, are stylistic choices that strengthen informality and relatability. Such forms mirror spoken language and foster a sense of authenticity that resonates with online audiences.

Stylistic devices like irony and sarcasm were shown to be central for indirect critique and humor, while overt emotional expression achieved through capital letters, repetition, and multiple punctuation marks serves to visually convey intensity and immediacy.

Persuasive strategies embedded in posts, such as rhetorical questions, imperatives, hashtags, and influencer language, were identified as key tools that motivate user interaction and facilitate message dissemination. These elements not only prompt likes, comments, and shares but also cultivate a sense of community and co-participation among followers.

Study has underlined the integral role of audience engagement in shaping and validating linguistic trends online. The high frequency of likes, comments, and reposts shows how digital audiences actively co-construct meanings, reinforce stylistic norms, and popularize innovative expressions. User reactions often mirror the language patterns of the original posts, demonstrating the reciprocal relationship between creators and audiences in maintaining and spreading informal language forms.

This research demonstrates that social media discourse is a dynamic reflection of contemporary linguistic creativity and an important domain for developing and practising critical media literacy. By understanding how language evolves within these platforms, users can become more aware and responsible communicators, better equipped to navigate the opportunities and challenges of digital public spaces.

The findings highlight the need for continued exploration of digital English as a living, adaptive form shaped by global, participatory cultures. This work confirms that English on social media is a complex system that blends creativity, community values, and persuasive dynamics, all within the unique frameworks of digital interaction. Continued attention to this field will enrich our understanding of language evolution and strengthen our collective capacity for critical and informed media use.

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#### **LIST OF ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIALS**

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## SUMMARY

Кваліфікаційна робота присвячена всебічному вивченню англійської мови та медіаграмотності на основі аналізу сучасного дискурсу у соціальних мережах, що є однією з найактуальніших тем сьогодення у зв'язку з глобалізацією та цифровізацією комунікації. У центрі дослідження – різноманітні лінгвістичні особливості, що виникають у цифровому середовищі: неологізми, скорочення, акроніми, стилістичні прийоми (такі як іронія, сарказм та емоційні вирази), а також риторичні засоби, які демонструють креативність мовців і впливають на аудиторію. Метою цього дослідження є аналіз мовних особливостей та стратегій, що використовуються в публікаціях у соціальних медіа, з акцентом на тому, як користувачі передають зміст у неформальних цифрових контекстах. Дослідження спрямоване на аналіз того, як мова функціонує в цифровому просторі, які трансформації вона зазнає під впливом технологій та соціальних змін, і яку роль відіграє у розвитку медіаграмотності. Актуальність цього дослідження полягає у зростанні ролі соціальних медіа як рушійної сили мовних змін та ключової платформи для цифрової комунікації. У дослідженні розглядається, як користувачі творчо та емоційно використовують мову в соціальних медіа, підкреслюючи важливість цих практик для розуміння медіаграмотності та сучасного вживання англійської мови. У цих умовах англійська мова, як глобальна лінгва франка, відіграє ключову роль у міжкультурній взаємодії, що робить дослідження її трансформації в цифровому просторі особливо важливим. Об'єктом дослідження є користувацькі дописи в соціальних мережах, таких як Twitter, TikTok та Instagram. Кожна з цих платформ не лише відображає існуючі мовні тенденції, а й активно формує нові, створюючи унікальні умови для мовної творчості. Предметом дослідження є лінгвістичні та стилістичні мовні засоби, що використовуються в дописах у соціальних мережах. Увага також приділяється тому, як ці елементи формують комунікативні норми та впливають на аудиторію. Новизна даного дослідження

полягає в комплексному дослідженні мовних особливостей, включаючи неологізми, стилістичні засоби, граматичні варіації та риторичні стратегії, в рамках медіаграмотності. Дане дослідження аналізує, як мовна творчість та емоційний вираз функціонують як основні компоненти медіаграмотності. У першому розділі досліджено теоретичні основи медіаграмотності у контексті розвитку глобального інформаційного простору та окреслено роль англійської мови як мови міжнародного спілкування, що швидко адаптується до вимог цифрової комунікації. Окремо проаналізовано, яким чином соціальні мережі як платформи впливають на стиль, структуру та поширення мовних інновацій. Порівняно різні наукові підходи до визначення медіаграмотності, що дозволяє сформулювати комплексне розуміння цього явища в умовах цифрової епохи. Другий розділ зосереджений на аналізі лінгвістичних та стилістичних особливостей в цифровому середовищі. Основу дослідження складає аналіз 100 публікацій з трьох провідних соціальних платформ як Twitter, Tik Tok та Instagram. Дослідження показує, як нові лексичні одиниці відображають глибокі соціальні зміни та технологічний вплив на комунікацію. Важливим напрямком аналізу стало вивчення граматичних особливостей цифрового дискурсу. Стилiстичний аналіз дозволив виявити ключові комунікативні стратегії, які використовують користувачі соціальних медіа. Робота складається зі вступу, двох розділів із підсумковими висновками, загальних висновків, списку використаних джерел (48 позицій). Загальний обсяг становить 63 сторінки. Отримані результати підтверджують важливість вивчення мови соціальних медіа як інструменту сучасної комунікації та медіаграмотності. Дослідження відкриває перспективи для подальшого аналізу впливу цифрових технологій на мовну еволюцію та комунікативні практики.