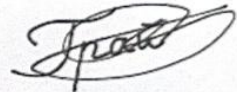


**Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv Educational and Scientific
Institute of Philology
Department of English Philology and Intercultural Communication**

Master's Thesis

Social Media and the Interactional Construction of Self

Hraivoronska Daryna
2nd year student of the
“English Communication Studies and
Translation and Two Western European Languages”
Field of science: 03 “Humanities”
Specialty: 035 “Philology”

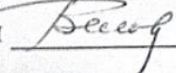


Supervised by
Assoc.Prof. Yevheniia Nikiforova

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АНОТАЦІЯ

Соціальні мережі на сьогодні є найбільш актуальною темою для досліджень. У роботі визначено, що комунікативні відносини користувачів соціальних мереж ґрунтуються на прагматичному (мотиваційному) рівні. Серед прагматичних аспектів комунікації загальновизнано, що до них належать пошук розваг та інформації, а також самопрезентація та самоідентифікація, самореалізація та спроби побудувати кар'єру.

Однак питання онлайн-спілкування, його лінгвістичні аспекти та інтерактивне формування «я» в соціальних мережах залишаються відносно малодослідженими сферами сучасної лінгвістики, саме тому це дослідження є актуальним. Таким чином, мета даної роботи – дослідити соціальні медіа та інтеракційне конструювання «Я».

Таким чином, у даному дослідженні нами було проаналізовано 96 сторінок відомих блогів в соціальних мережах, таких як Інстаграм, Твіттер, Лінкедін. Методом суцільної вибірки було досліджено та описано 202 приклади. Проаналізувавши даний матеріал ми змогли зробити наступні висновки:

Самопрезентація в мережі є свідомим лінгвістичним актом. Користувачі використовують сленг, професійний жаргон та специфічні стилі мовлення для маркування належності до певних субкультур або підкреслення експертності.

Для самопрезентації користувачі соцмереж використовують різноманітні лінгвістичні та парлінгвістичні засоби, такі як скорочення, жаргон, аббревіація, емодзі та ін.

Цифрова персона не є точним відображенням реальної особистості, а є сконструйованим лінгвістичним проєктом, що адаптується під вимоги конкретної платформи. Мовна поведінка користувача значною мірою диктується алгоритмами платформ, які можуть як стимулювати творче самовираження, так і провокувати поляризацію через ехо-камери.

Ключові слова: *соціальні мережі, цифрова персона, самопрезентація, самоідентифікація, онлайн-спілкування, мовна поведінка.*

ABSTRACT

Social media is currently one of the most pressing topics for research. This study establishes that the communicative relationships of social media users are grounded at the pragmatic (motivational) level. Among the pragmatic aspects of communication, it is widely recognised that these include the search for entertainment and information, as well as self-presentation and self-identification, self-actualisation, and attempts to build a career.

However, the issues of online communication, its linguistic aspects, and the interactive construction of the ‘self’ on social media remain relatively under-researched areas of contemporary linguistics, which is precisely why this study is relevant. Thus, this study aims to investigate social media and the interactive construction of the ‘self’.

Consequently, in this study, we analysed 96 pages of well-known blogs on social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Using a comprehensive sampling method, 202 examples were examined and described. Having analysed this material, we were able to draw the following conclusions:

Self-presentation online is a conscious linguistic act. Users employ slang, professional jargon and specific styles of speech to signal their affiliation with particular subcultures or to emphasise their expertise.

For self-presentation, social media users employ a variety of linguistic and paralinguistic tools, such as contractions, slang, abbreviations, emojis, and so on.

A digital persona is not an accurate reflection of a real personality, but rather a constructed linguistic project that adapts to the requirements of a specific platform. A user’s linguistic behaviour is largely dictated by platform algorithms, which can both stimulate creative self-expression and provoke polarisation through echo chambers.

Keywords: *social networks, digital persona, self-presentation, self-identification, online communication, linguistic behaviour.*

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INTRODUCTION

Today, society is shaped by globalisation, which is a process that has had a profound impact on all aspects of life. New things and phenomena require names, creating new lexis, which require interpretation and decoding. Abbreviations become the subject of linguistic research in areas such as economics, politics and the media, reflecting the standardisation of concepts. New abbreviations make communication easier, but they also need to be understood and explained. The lexicon is perpetually undergoing expansion, with new words being added that constitute a significant part of the language.

Social media has transformed communication. It influences how we talk and text, and society and our consciousness as we spend more and more time online absorbing exponential amounts of information. This creates a pressing need for continuous exchange of verbal and nonverbal information, but text remains the basis of all these communication processes.

According to scholars, the study of communication in the online space encompasses semiotics, semantics, stylistics, pragmatics, and discourse analysis, as well as extralinguistic disciplines within the humanities, such as philosophy, sociology, and psychology. In recent years, textual interactions on social media platforms have been analysed using cognitive-pragmatic and linguistic-cultural approaches. Social networks influence the communication process in various ways and are therefore studied based on their structural characteristics. They are analysed from the perspective of their polycode nature within the framework of intertextuality and interdiscursivity.

Social media is currently the most relevant subject for research. The communicative relationships of social media users are grounded at a pragmatic (motivational) level. Among the pragmatic aspects of communication, it is generally accepted that these include the search for entertainment and information, as well as self-presentation and self-identification, self-realisation, and attempts to build a career.

The relevance of the research topic. Communication on social media is now one of the most widespread forms of communication in the world. However, the issue of online communication, its linguistic aspects, and the interactive formation of ‘self’ on social media remains a relatively understudied area of research in contemporary linguistics, which is why this study is relevant.

The study aims to analyse how users of social media identify and present themselves through various linguistic and paralinguistic features.

The subject of this study is the structural-semantic and pragmatic features of linguistic and paralinguistic means that self-identify and self-presentation of users on modern social media.

The object of this study is the process of linguistic self-presentation and social interaction within digital environments, specifically focusing on the verbal and non-verbal strategies used to construct and maintain online identities across social media platforms.

To achieve this objective, the following **tasks** must be completed:

- consider social media as a contemporary phenomenon: history, typology, and key functions, and its significance for linguistics;
- investigate values and identity in the context of linguistic theory;
- determine freedom of construction: offline vs. online social;
- consider linguistic and paralinguistic features of online communication;
- investigate the influence of social media on identity and self-presentation;

In writing this academic paper, we employed the following **research methods**: the method of generalisation allowed for the synthesising of diverse scholarly perspectives into a cohesive theoretical base for studying self-presentation in social media; critical analysis of the literature was employed to evaluate existing sociolinguistic theories regarding social media; the selection and processing of lexical material was carried for identifying representative instances of digital self-presentation in social media discourse, categorising these units based on their structural and functional characteristics and, performing a semantic interpretation of

emoji-augmented constructions; the analysis of word meaning in its definitional sense was used to establish the normative semantic boundaries of the studied lexical units.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in defining the concept of internet communication, its linguistic properties, and its influence on the transformation of linguistic means in modern English. Furthermore, a comprehensive analysis was conducted of the interactive formation of the ‘self’ in social media communication.

Research material. This study is based on a wide range of digital communication artefacts, including content created by users on major social media platforms (such as X/Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn), discussions on digital forums, and the linguistic outputs of systems designed to moderate content algorithmically. In this study, we analysed 96 pages of well-known blogs on social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Using a comprehensive sampling method, 202 examples were examined and described. Having analysed this material

This study's **theoretical significance** lies in its contribution to the evolving field of digital sociolinguistics, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding how language shapes identity in virtual environments.

The practical significance of this study lies in the development of actionable strategies for navigating digital discourse, improving media literacy, and fostering ethical online communication. The findings provide a foundation for educators, content creators, and platform moderators to understand the linguistic triggers of both community-building and digital conflict.

Structure of the paper. The paper consists of an introduction, three chapters, chapter conclusions, general conclusions, and a list of references. The references comprise 184 sources, 96 of which are sources of illustrative material. The work has 98 pages, and the main text has 79 pages. 96 pages of well-known blogs on social media platforms were analyzed. Using a comprehensive sampling method, 202 examples were examined and described

1. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA'S IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S VALUES AND IDENTITY

1.1. Social media as a contemporary phenomenon: history, typology, and key functions, and its significance for linguistics

In the age of information technology, social media has become one of the most defining phenomena of modern society, radically transforming how billions of people communicate, interact, and express themselves. Their impact on the social, cultural, and psychological spheres is so significant that without a deep understanding of these platforms' nature, it is impossible to study the processes of value formation and identity development adequately. In today's world, digital platforms for social interaction are deeply integrated into people's daily lives. Services such as Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), Snapchat, and others serve as the primary medium for communication, data exchange, and the expression of personal views and emotions. They form unique virtual spaces in which young people find a sense of belonging to a global community, whilst also broadening their horizons for self-expression and social engagement.

The history of social media dates back long before the emergence of modern platforms. It can be traced back to early forms of online communication that emerged in the 1970s with the advent of email and bulletin board systems (BBS). However, the concept of a 'social network' as an online platform for building and maintaining social connections really took off in the late 1990s [Boyd 2007, p. 212].

The website Six Degrees (1997) is considered one of the earliest precursors to social networks, allowing users to create profiles and build lists of friends. Although this project did not gain widespread popularity, it laid the foundations for subsequent developments. The early 2000s saw the emergence of platforms such as Friendster (2002), MySpace (2003), and LinkedIn (2003), which already offered advanced features for communication, content sharing, and professional networking [Kirkpatrick 2010].

The real boom in social networking began in the mid-2000s with the launch of Facebook (2004), which was initially aimed at a student audience but quickly spread worldwide, offering an intuitive interface and a wide range of interaction options. Next came Twitter (2006), with its focus on short messages; YouTube (2005) as a platform for video content; and, later, the visually oriented Instagram (2010) and Pinterest (2010), and, finally, short-form video platforms such as TikTok (2016), which have gained particular popularity among the younger generation. Each of these platforms has brought its own unique features, shaping a diverse landscape of digital communication [Dijck 2013].

Initially, social networks offered basic features for creating profiles and exchanging messages, but their functionality was limited by today's standards. Their role was predominantly social and recreational, with little significant impact on society and culture as a whole [Dovzhenko 2013, p. 233].

Subsequently, with the emergence of new platforms, perceptions of social networks began to change. They became an effective tool for engaging in dialogue, sharing experiences, and shaping one's identity in the online environment. This led to a rethinking of social media's role as a platform for active interaction and a virtual reflection of real-world social connections.

Over the past decade, with technological advancements and changing consumer habits, it has become clear that social media platforms are evolving into more complex ecosystems, incorporating a wide range of features and capabilities. They are no longer merely spaces for online dialogue, but also platforms for entertainment, education, advertising, and business. This trend highlights the role of social media in today's information society and its impact on all areas of human life.

The modern world of social media is incredibly diverse, and these platforms can be categorised by various criteria that reflect their functional purpose and target audiences. A. Kaplan & M. Haenlein purpose:

1. General-purpose (universal). Designed for a wide range of users and various types of communication (Facebook).

2. Professional, aimed at forming and maintaining professional connections, job hunting, and sharing experiences (LinkedIn).

3. Content-oriented (or visual). These focus on the publication and sharing of a specific type of content – photographs (Instagram).

4. Niche/thematic. These bring people together based on shared interests, hobbies, and cultural preferences (for example, Goodreads for readers).

5. Messaging apps with social networking features, which enable messaging but also allow users to create groups and channels and share multimedia (WhatsApp) [Kaplan 2010 p. 60].

By connection type:

1. Open: these allow connections to be established with any user.

2. Closed/private. These, in turn, restrict communication to specific groups or to those invited.

By content type:

1. Text-based (X, formerly Twitter)

2. Photo- and video-oriented (TikTok).

3. Audio-oriented (Clubhouse) [Boyd 2014, p. 213].

Understanding this typology enables a better analysis of the specific impact each platform has on users, as different content formats and interaction mechanisms shape distinct patterns of behaviour and information perception. Social networks perform several important functions that influence users' lives:

1. The communicative function. This is one of the main functions. As social networks allow users to stay in touch with friends and family, make new acquaintances, and communicate in interest groups, this significantly broadens their social circle, making it accessible and efficient, often breaking down geographical barriers [Kujath 2011, p. 165].

2. Informational function. Social networks have become an important source of information, ranging from news and events to educational and entertainment content. They allow users to keep up to date with the latest developments and obtain

information from a wide range of sources, including the media, bloggers, civil society organisations, and individual users [Mangold 2009, p. 360].

3. The function of self-presentation and identity formation. Nowadays, the wide variety of choices and the availability of platforms provide a space to construct and showcase one's own 'self'. Users create profiles and post content that reflects their interests, values, and lifestyle. This allows them to experiment with their identity and receive feedback from their audience, which is important for self-affirmation, particularly during adolescence and young adulthood [Tuten 2018].

4. The socialisation function. Social networks act as an important agent of socialisation, complementing or even partially replacing traditional institutions (such as the family). Through interaction with peers, participation in communities, and the adoption of norms and values prevalent in certain online groups, young people form their views, beliefs, and social skills.

5. Entertainment function. Social networks are a source of diverse entertainment content – from short videos and memes to games and interactive formats. This function is a major draw for people seeking relaxation and a distraction-free experience.

6. Mobilisation (civic) function. Social media can be used to organise public events, volunteer initiatives and political campaigns. They serve as a platform for expressing civic views, shaping public opinion, and rallying people around shared ideas.

7. Economic function. Social networks are increasingly being used for marketing, sales, e-commerce, personal branding, and earning income (influencers, bloggers) [Tuten 2018].

Understanding these functions is key to further analysing how social media use influences the formation of values and identity. This section lays the conceptual foundation for studying the complex processes of media influence, which we will explore in the following parts of this work.

In general, the main functions of social networks include:

- communicative;
- informational;
- socialising;
- self-actualising;
- identity-forming;
- identity-building; and
- entertainment [Danko 2012, pp. 179–184].

The fact that social networks have become deeply embedded in our daily lives can affect it both positively and negatively.

Furthermore, social media provides convenient access to information and resources for personal development. Thanks to the wide range of content regularly shared on social media, users can access educational materials, courses, books, informative articles, and other resources that contribute to their personal and professional growth.

Negative aspect is the risk of developing an addiction to social media, which can lead to a loss of control over one's own time and a decline in other aspects of life. Users may spend hours viewing content and interacting with other users, neglecting real-life social contacts and important responsibilities.

In a society in transition, where new value systems – both personal and social – are only just taking shape, it can be said that a certain proportion of Ukrainian youth are unable to clearly formulate their own spiritual and philosophical views based on universal human values. The conflicting nature of values in the current socio-cultural context leads young people to lose the ability to resist negative trends taking shape and gaining momentum within the youth leisure sector [Kryzhanovska 2019, p. 150].

Many young people become dependent on this form of virtual communication, spending a significant portion of their time on it and neglecting their studies and other important aspects of life.

Risks to confidentiality and privacy are also a significant concern. Many young social media users are unaware of the full extent of the potential consequences of

sharing personal information online. Excessive disclosure of personal data can lead to cyber threats or privacy breaches, which may affect their safety and well-being.

Furthermore, the use of social media can affect real-life social relationships. People may spend more time online rather than interacting in person, which can alter the nature of their interpersonal relationships.

Finally, young people are at risk of exposure to unwanted information on social media. They may become targets of influence and manipulation through advertising, fake news, or other forms of disinformation, which can affect their beliefs and behaviour.

These risks must be taken seriously when studying the actors within the communicative space of social media. Reflecting on these issues can help identify strategies or recommendations to mitigate the negative consequences of social media use among young people.

Thus, social media represent an important form of communicative space that influences the way we communicate and perceive information. They open up new opportunities for interaction and the exchange of ideas, but also require attention to ethical usage and the resolution of various problems arising from their use. To maximise the benefits of social media and minimise the risks, active user participation, the development of ethical standards, and effective regulation by the authorities and organisations responsible for their operation are essential.

1.2. Values and Identity in the Context of Linguistic Theory

Identity refers to attributes. It also refers to convictions. And personality traits. And outward manifestations. And expressions. These all define a person or a group. The significance of identity is addressed by the concept of possessing an identity, which can engender a sense of affiliation with a particular place or concept, a factor that appears to be pivotal for one's sense of self-assurance and overall well-being. Language, especially speech, reveals a person's identity, whether on an individual or group level. In sociology, on the other hand, identity reflects self-awareness and

awareness of others. This chapter aims to provide a clear overview of the different types of identity in linguistics and sociology. The main objective is therefore to present a variety of detailed perspectives on identity in these scientific fields for individuals interested in one or both of these areas. We also try to show the connection between language and identity and the role of identity in the study of society. The sphere of identity has been exposed through various linguistic and sociological dimensions in present and earlier research.

Language is a tool that enables us to communicate with each other, and it does this by drawing on the different social settings we encounter. For this reason, language plays a key role in shaping our daily social realities. It enables us to express our feelings. It enables us to express our emotions. It enables us to express our thoughts. It enables us to express our ideas. Conversely, language offers a modicum of assistance in a variety of situations, such as purchasing goods at a supermarket, securing employment, initiating a telephone call, extending an invitation to an individual, purchasing tickets to show support for our preferred football team, and so forth. Language, in essence, is a systematically constructed phenomenon designed for the sole purpose of facilitating communication. Therefore, to understand how language influences the notions mentioned above, it is important to first examine how linguists perceive and define human language.

B. Bloch and J. Trager say that "A language is a set of random sounds that a group of people uses to talk to each other". They emphasise that human society is unthinkable without language [Bloch 1942, p. 5]. The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, as stated in the 2022 edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, tells us that language should be regarded as a societal occurrence because it is a systematised framework that can be considered simultaneously (based on a specific point in time) and diachronically (based on its alterations over time). In his book *An Introduction to the Study of Language*, the American linguist Leonard Bloomfield says that "Language has been developed by people sharing messages, and everyone who has learned to use language has learned it by sharing messages" [Bloomfield 1983, p. 17].

As was stated by R. Wardhaugh and J. Fuller, when communication is taking place between two or more people, the system they use can be referred to as a language [Wardhaugh 2014, p. 3]. Thus, it would appear that all the aforementioned linguists concur on one particular point, namely that language is a social phenomenon that occurs in societies and functions as a medium of communication for its members.

Everyone has a unique identity, but a person's identity is greatly influenced by the language they speak. Therefore, the language used by a speaker may help to identify their identity. However, the language used by the speaker is heavily dependent on the specific situation, the intended purpose, or the context in which it is being used. In his book *Concise Encyclopedia of Sociolinguistics*, R. Mesthrie argues that, according to Chambers, humans are constantly motivated by a desire to preserve their social identity. People need to demonstrate their belonging to a community or territory [Mesthrie 2001, p. 165].

The fundamental rationale behind the aforementioned necessity is predicated on the aspiration of self-definition on the part of individuals. The latter is generally administered through the medium of speech, with the manner of expression being akin to that employed by the members of the society residing within the same territorial jurisdiction.

It should be pointed out that researchers have mainly concentrated on group identity in most linguistic investigations of identity, rather than on individual identity. In the context of globalisation, regional identity is assuming an increasingly significant role [Coulmas 1998, p. 71]. E. Lanza and D. Svendsen posit that "Language may assume significance for identity in circumstances where a collective senses a diminution of its identity due to political or social factors" [Lanza 2007, p. 293].

Social identity is another concept. It refers to one's sense of who they belong to. This sense of belonging is in terms of social groups. In the encounter between language and social identity, one must not overlook the endeavour of the American linguist William Labov, who sought to scrutinise the articulation of specific phonetic

phenomena among the populace of New York City, meticulously categorised based on their social standing, in three distinct departmental emporia [54]. The focus of his research was to ascertain how variations in pronunciation can serve as a social class indicator. Back in 1966, Labov carried out an intriguing experiment in New York City. The aim was to demonstrate that the pronunciation of post-vocalic [r] differed based on social groups in the city. The results were presented in an easy-to-understand and efficient manner. He inquired of several individuals in various emporia as to the location of a particular item, which he was aware was available for purchase on the fourth storey. He then made to say something else, but pretended not to have heard the answer and repeated, "Excuse me?" He got a second, more careful pronunciation when people repeated their answers. Thus, each individual was allowed to articulate the phoneme /r/ on four occasions: on two occasions in the fourth and on two further occasions on the floor. Some interesting patterns were revealed by this ingenious technique for carrying out a survey quickly and anonymously. J. Holmes' research revealed that, in general, the more upscale the store, the greater the prevalence of post-vocalic [r] [Holmes 2012, p. 147]. It appears that speech, and by extension language, is linked to social status. This is because rhoticity is seen as a reliable measure of social standing.

Clarification of ethnicity is also necessary when relating it to language, in addition to what has been said. It is pointed out by C. Fought that ethnicity is considered to be a socially constructed category by most linguists [Fought 2006, p. 4]. Allan Bell's book, provides one of the most appealing definitions of ethnicity. In 2013, on page 173, Bell stated that ethnicity is linked to a group of people who share similar sociocultural characteristics. These characteristics can include a sense of belonging to a particular place, a shared ancestry, a common history, religion, cultural practices, ways of communicating, and language. Nevertheless, race, including skin colour, is also a factor in determining the ethnicity of a particular speaker. Moreover, scholars used to think that ethnicity was a biological concept related to race.

J. Holmes claims that a community generally consists of numerous distinct groups [Holmes 2013, p. 186]. However, when a group of speakers exhibits shared linguistic characteristics, they are considered to be part of the same group within that community. The ethnicity of a speaker is often reflected in the language they use, as listeners can usually identify the ethnicity of a speaker based on the language they use [Holmes, 2013, p. 186]. The United States' ethnically diverse population makes it a useful example in terms of ethnic identity. R. Wardhaugh points out something interesting. He says that speakers who use Afro-American Vernacular English (AAVE) differ from Italian or Jewish speakers. The difference is in terms of ethnic groups [Wardhaugh 2015, p. 50].

Another concept that should be emphasised when discussing identity from a linguistic standpoint is gender identity. As F. Bell explains in *The Guidebook to Sociolinguistics*, gender is seen more as something that is created or acted out than as something that is biologically defined [Bell 2013, p. 307]. C. West and D. Zimmerman have made a statement. They have said that gender should not be studied as the source of linguistic behaviour. Instead, they believe that gender should be studied as the product of our language performances [West 1997]. Interestingly, many sociolinguistic studies have focused on gender through the language repertoire, attitudes, and behaviours of specific ethnic groups.

According to Patricia Causey Nichols's Ph.D. dissertation, as underlined by R. Mesthrie, *Linguistic Change in Gullah*, she studied women in a rural African-American community. The study focused on sex, age, and mobility. Women in the community used more features of the local creole variety. Men did not use as many features. R. Mesthrie also points out the findings of Dubois and Horvath in a series of studies on Cajuns in Louisiana. The finding related to an increase in Cajun among younger speakers, in relation to ethnic pride. There was also a strong differentiation by gender, with the appearance of significant use of Cajun features by young men [Mesthrie 2011, pp. 246-247].

According to R. Wardhaugh and J. Fuller, the idea that gender is fixed and always the same is wrong. They say that gender is always changing. This means that people are not fixed in society. Instead, people choose to see themselves differently, or others choose to see them differently. One way is through language use [Wardhaugh 2014, p. 328].

For centuries, the political significance of nationhood and independence has been a major global concern. The emergence of a single national language has often played a pivotal role in establishing a national identity and achieving independence from colonial powers. B. Spolsky's work also corroborates this, highlighting how the pursuit of national identity through nationalism positively influenced language management in the nineteenth century. It was a conviction shared by both the French Revolution and the German Romantic movement that the optimal solution for safeguarding national identity was the establishment of a single, unified language [Spolsky 2004, p. 57].

The preceding synopsis of identity has furnished a rudimentary comprehension of the concept, insofar as, in addition to the fact that identity pertains to the manner in which an individual self-identifies as a constituent of a specified collective, linguistic expression assumes a pivotal function in the evolution of the aforementioned process. Among other things, people identify themselves through language. The specific type of identity one possesses is shaped by the way in which they use language. It is a linguistic instrument employed to depict the distinctions or commonalities amongst the constituents of a given society. Language has a big impact on how we define identity labels like status, ethnicity, gender, and nationalism.

The way we choose to express ourselves verbally varies from person to person, and this is how we present ourselves to the world. The way we choose to express ourselves to the world is determined by three factors: the language style we adopt, the dialect we choose, and the actual language we use. The ability to express the same idea in more than one way while achieving specific social goals is known as style in speech. Style shifting is the term given to the shift from one style of speech to another.

This is often a response to social conditions, with one of these conditions being linked to identity. It was underlined by that a single style is not possessed by speakers of a language [Wardhaugh 2006, p. 19]. Rather, a variety of different linguistic styles are controlled and used by each person; thus, in all situations, no one speaks in the same way.

Researchers have been given the opportunity to study language styles and identities thanks to European nation-building, particularly in south-eastern Europe. P. Auer highlights the significant role played by the creation of Croatian and Bosnian as distinct national languages in establishing their identity [Auer 2007, p. 2].

In areas where two languages are spoken, it is common for people to mix and switch between the two styles. This is seen as a natural way of expressing their bilingual identity. R. Mesthrie and R. Bhatt say that in places where many different languages are spoken, people often switch between different styles, using local dialects and/or languages [Mesthrie 2008, p. 149–150].

Another way to reveal one's identity is to focus on the dialect used by a speaker. Dialect is defined as a distinct form of speech that is associated with a specific geographical area or social group. In his recent research, the division of dialect into the following types is proposed by J. Hernández-Campoy: social dialect, regional dialect, urban dialect, and class dialect [Hernández-Campoy 2016, p. 36]. R. Wardhaugh propounds the thesis that a dialect is a linguistic variety that is eschewed by polite society on account of its frequently comparable nature to nonstandard, even substandard, language [Wardhaugh 2006, p. 28].

J. Holmes adds that features such as education, where people live, and their jobs can be used to identify different social groups. These groups can be distinguished from each other based on how they speak, the words they use, and the rules of language they follow. The identification of which social group an individual belongs to is the purpose of social dialect. The term 'regional dialect' refers to a specific form of a language that is spoken in a particular geographical area. This

geographical aspect is important because it indicates the identity of the speakers, who may have a strong sense of connection to their specific region [Holmes 2012, p. 156].

P. Trudgill claims that regional varieties have a serious impact on language, especially when distance and barriers play a key role. Geographical barriers such as mountains, swamps, or rivers are often found along with regional dialect boundaries [Trudgill 2000, p. 24].

This research suggests that language is a significant component of our social world, playing a crucial role in shaping and influencing social dynamics. A considerable number of linguists regard language as an indispensable instrument that facilitates our social interactions. The way we express ourselves has become a key part of who we are each day. To illustrate, the medium of spoken language fosters the establishment of diverse identities, encompassing regional, social, ethnic, gender, and national distinctions. From a linguistic perspective, identity can be constructed in various ways, such as through group labelling, naming, the vocative case, pronouns, and language use, including style shifting and dialect. In social studies, however, identity has various meanings.

Sociologists have concluded that identity is shaped by certain conditions that influence one's self-image and how others perceive one. Social identity is one of the most well-known identities in social studies. It refers to a person's self-awareness. It also refers to the knowledge of belonging to a certain group.

1.3. Freedom of construction: offline vs. online social

Unsurprisingly, the technological foundation on which our society is now built has led to a shift in the way we interact online, providing new opportunities for self-expression and maintaining social relationships. In the online world, social media platforms are the main way that people represent themselves. These platforms have removed the limitations and social cues that exist in face-to-face interactions. This gives users the ability to interact with others across time and space by presenting a curated version of themselves.

We have unprecedented freedom in identity construction through our social media platforms. This freedom means that we can create an online identity that is not necessarily the same as what is called our 'actual self' according to the self-discrepancy theory [Hu 2015, p. 467].

Online profiles allow people to create an online persona that is as real or as fake as they choose. We have hitherto lacked a medium through which to articulate an alternative version of our identity, one which is not subject to the requirement of authentication. The portrayal of the "actual", "ought" or "ideal" [Zhao 2008, p. 1819] is not bound by reality, where we are inhibited by physical conditions, but is instead found online.

Van Dijck says that because these sites have become so important in society, the desire for a variety of different online personalities has only grown. We are free to act as we wish and explore the different elements that make up our identities. So, what does this sense of freedom mean for the construction of the self? [van Dijck 2015, p. 24].

As we discussed earlier, when we look at how people form their identities, language is very important. This includes spoken language and signed language. Social media profiles allow individuals to utilise language in multiple formats, providing a wider range of expression.

Users can now portray their identity both linguistically and visually through text, images, videos, and content, no longer constrained by their physical face-to-face reality. V. Dijck's "multiple, composite self" can be portrayed in various iterations within these contexts because they allow for freedom [van Dijck 2015, p. 200].

This is in contrast to the usual physical constraints that would otherwise need to be considered. A major difference between online and offline interactions is the loss of physical cues, particularly those inherent in body language and verbal tone.

According to the well-known psychologist A. Mehrabian, people understand 55% of what is said through body language and 38% through verbal tone. Because

we are no longer able to rely on these vital cues, we now mostly communicate through the remaining 7% of offline communication cues [Mehrabian].

There is no question that our online interactions are based on a completely different foundation from offline communication. This fundamental difference is key.

They also found that social media lets people change how other people see them. L. Bareket-Bojmel et al. emphasise that the methods employed for self-presentation on the internet, with a view to curating our online persona, are inextricably linked to the feedback process that is exacerbated on such social platforms. Especially when people do things that make them feel bad or good about themselves (depending on how they see themselves), there can be a cycle of behaviour and changes in who they think they are [Bareket-Bojmel, p. 791].

The way people communicate online is very different from how they communicate offline. This is because people feel more confident online and are less worried about what other people think. As a result, the way they express themselves is very different from how they would behave in the real world.

If these worlds become a part of who we are and affect how we form our identities, will we become versions of 'self' that are dictated by these social media companies? While this is an intriguing and momentous topic that necessitates further exploration, the ramifications of such an inquiry are too extensive for this paper and should be pursued at a subsequent juncture.

The above illustrates how the fundamental structure of our online interactions differs from that of offline interactions. Consequently, the construction of future identities will involve individuals basing their identities on and internalising a different world than ever before.

The advent of novel forms of literacy, coupled with the rise of multimedia communication tools, has profoundly altered the manner, pace, and form of linguistic interactions. Furthermore, the growth in the number of social media platforms has made it easier, more affordable and less restricted (in terms of geography and time) to communicate. The surge of digital and electronic assets has undoubtedly had an

impact on our linguistic identity. As B. Norton persuasively observed, identity is "the manner in which an individual comprehends his or her relationship to the world, the manner in which that relationship is established across time and space, and the manner in which the individual perceives possibilities for the future" [Norton 2013, p. 5]. The digital age has given us new ways to communicate and socialise in both online and offline spaces. Thanks to the flexibility of digital communication, we can now have multiple identities and interact with people in different ways and at different times.

The move from local to global domains of social interaction has resulted in greater mobility, leading to the emergence of a "networked individualism" where individuals are interconnected yet, ironically, are subject to constraints such as scheduling, monitoring, surveillance, and regulation [Darvin 2016, p. 526].

The digital world is growing explosively. This means that language users need an additional level of literacy. This is called digital literacy. Digital literacy refers to "the ability to use information and communication technologies. It refers to the ability to find information. It refers to the ability to evaluate information. It refers to the ability to create information. And it refers to the ability to communicate information. This requires both cognitive and technical skills" [Visser 2012, para. 2]. Some investigations have shown that individuals who speak different languages adopt different personas when communicating with others on various internet social networks [Thorne, Sauro & Smith 2015]. Darvin observes that individuals have the capacity to embody multiple identities in digital and online spaces, such as blogger, photographer, gamer, or designer, and to chronicle and showcase their lives through diverse means [Darvin 2016, p. 529].

The way in which people can communicate with a wide range of audiences both quickly and extensively, along with the diversity of these audiences, has had a significant impact on our perception of ourselves and others, due to digital communication. By means of virtual meeting places, persons may initiate a public dialogue and participate in one, and in either scenario, the effects of personal

predilection and communicative deeds are mediated by digital media [Spengler 2015; Spilioti 2015]. Moreover, these contextual functions have offered a rich learning environment for language learners, allowing them to delve into diverse topics that pique their interest. This engagement involves the adoption of new identities within these settings [Darvin 2016]. Taking on different identities in various forms and for different purposes is something that the digital world has made possible through multimodal environments. These readjustments have resulted in more flexibility. They have also resulted in more complexity of linguistic identity. This is because linguistic identity is a multifaceted variable.

Conclusions to Chapter 1

To summarise the discussion of the theoretical foundations of social media's influence on personality development, the phenomenon of self-presentation one of the most profound transformations in modern society and requires a comprehensive understanding.

The first section outlined the evolutionary path of these platforms – from humble beginnings to global ecosystems permeating all spheres of life. Their diverse typology was outlined, reflecting a wide range of purposes and formats. Key functions – communication, information, entertainment, self-presentation, socialisation, community-building, and economic – highlight their multifaceted impact on the individual. Social networks emerge not merely as tools, but as environments that actively shape social interaction and information flows.

Thus, the first chapter lays a solid theoretical foundation for the subsequent research. It demonstrates that social media are not merely a technological achievement, but a profound socio-cultural phenomenon that is actively reshaping the landscape of personality development. Their influence is complex and multifaceted, requiring ongoing analysis from the perspectives of sociology, psychology, and media studies, particularly given the younger generation's vulnerability and adaptability.

It can thus be concluded that language employed on social media platforms exerts a profound influence on communication, identity, and culture in the digital age. The tool under discussion is a dynamic instrument for self-expression, relationship-building, and discourse.

It has been shown to enable individuals to connect and interact across diverse contexts. The extensive use of informal, abbreviated, or coded language has been shown to enhance communication efficiency. However, this phenomenon can also lead to the spread of misinformation and misunderstandings. Moreover, the language employed on social media is indicative of and amplifies prevailing social trends, attitudes, and ideologies.

This process fosters the development of communities characterised by a shared linguistic norm and cultural identity. It is evident that as these platforms continue to evolve, there will be a concomitant evolution in how language is used, reflecting shifts in technology and society. It is imperative to analyse the repercussions of these alterations on social dynamics, both within the digital domain and in the broader societal context. This examination must ensure that language maintains its capacity to empower and foster connectivity, rather than fostering division.

2. LINGUISTIC AND PARALINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

2.1. Linguistic Features of Online Communication

It is important to note that the world of virtual interaction with computers has its own language and form of communication. At the lexical level, this manifests itself in the distinct use of different groups of neutral and stylistically colored vocabulary. It is necessary to consider the lexical characteristics of communication on social media in English.

The vocabulary is frequently used in communication on social media in English, as it aims to influence the recipient's emotional state or prompt them to make a desired decision. Depending on the type of electronic message and the sender's pragmatic intentions, the modality expressed in an online message can be positive, for example, the use of words characterized by the evaluative operator "good": *confidence; thank you; to reach; absolute; harmonic; with great pleasure* [Heryati] etc.) and negative, for example, the use of words characterized by a value-laden operator «bad» [Zaitseva 2012, c. 11]: *not guarantee; difficulties; the problem; to postpone* [Jocelyn K. Gleij] etc.

Messages with a negative tone often use euphemisms to convey restraint, expressing the speaker's dissatisfaction or negative attitude toward a particular phenomenon. For example, phrases that express dissatisfaction or indignation can be replaced with euphemisms [Zaitseva 2012, c. 14]: «*it is different from what I have expected*» [Erin Meyer], «*I consider it very surprising*» [Adam Grant] etc.

Expressive and emotional language, more typical of a conversational literary style, is also evident in social media. Examples of such intensifiers include [Zaitseva 2012, c. 13]: *so many, so few, again and again* [Chris Anderson], *very much, extremely, with great pleasure, indeed* [MasterClass] etc.

Intensifiers are stylistically marked elements that draw the recipient's attention to the necessary information, lending the statement a high degree of emotional impact.

The use of linguistic etiquette in social media communication is determined by the specific nature of the epistolary genre itself, which in the modern world has transformed into an online format. On the one hand, it is a form of long-distance communication conducted in writing. However, thanks to the high speed of message transmission, the physical distance between participants is reduced, and communication takes the form of a dialogue. Analysis of empirical data shows that, depending on the overall tone of the text, linguistic etiquette is applied differently during communication on social media in English.

The vocabulary used is that of the colloquial/informal register: *I hope things are getting well with you, thanks for, sort out, it sounds like you've been working really hard* [Brené Brown] etc. Direct questions and imperative constructions are also quite commonly used: *Are you free next Friday 20 August at 11 am?* [Laura Vanderkam], *Do you have a suitable course ...?* [Victoria Turk], *Let me know the time and dates* [Miss Manners].

In addition, they are used to perform complex communicative speech acts, such as requests, which in a certain sense contradict the principle of politeness in communication [Stolyarova 2005, p. 10].

When discussing the linguistic and pragmatic characteristics of communication on social media, it is worth noting that authors of emails and messages adhere to the KISS principle (Keep It Short and Simple), using abbreviations and elliptical constructions, bringing written language closer to spoken language, and achieving interactivity in communication. A distinctive feature of epistolary style is epistolaryisms: unique words, phrases, and syntactic constructions that reflect the linguistic individuality of the style [Chemerkina 2007, p. 60].

At the same time, when communicating on social media, there is a noticeable variation in the forms of linguistic etiquette, ranging from formal *Dear Mr. X; Best regards* [Business Insider] and so on, ranging from colloquial to informal and even familiar *Hello; If you do not mind; [Debrett's] How are you?; Please understand; Thanks* [Judy Steiner-Williams] etc. [Vazhnik 2007, p. 12]. Thus, the stylistic

affiliation of English-language communication on social media with the informal register is evident in the choice of colloquial forms of address and polite closings: *Dear Sue, Sue, Hi, Sue, Hello* [Stolyarova 2005, c. 10]. For example: *Comment: "Hi, Sue! Love the new coffee machine! Where did you get those mugs? ✨"* [The British Council]; *Best wishes, Take care, See you soon* [Oxford University Press].

Another characteristic feature of communication on social media is the use of colloquial elements, as evidenced by the fairly widespread use of verbs with prepositions: *sent off, find out* [English with Lucy] etc. and abbreviations: *pcs.*, which corresponds to «*pieces*» [Gary Vaynerchuk], *pls.* – «*please*» [Internetly], *Please reply asap* – «*as soon as possible*» [Ann Handley], *fwd (forward)* [Matt Navarra], *I've, she's* [Katrina Niemi]. And abbreviations such as *tnks & rgs* – «*thanks and regards*» [Victoria Turk], *u* – «*you*» [Gretchen McCulloch], *2* – «*Too*» [Gretchen McCulloch], *4* – «*for*» [Gretchen McCulloch] are rightly considered slang, as they are not standard in email correspondence [Vazhnik 2007, p. 25].

In written language, as in spoken communication, interjections are frequently used to add emotional intensity to the text; for example: *Wow, what a film!* [Rotten Tomatoes].

In interactive online communication, you can chat with several people at the same time, which makes typing speed extremely important for providing appropriate and quick responses. For this reason, abbreviations are often used for common words. For example:

BTW (from *by the way*) [Gretchen McCulloch], *I'll be there w/* (from *with*) *my friend* [Gretchen McCulloch], *Cu* (from *see you*) *@* (from *at*) *the park* [Gretchen McCulloch], *TIA* (from *thanks in advance*)! [Ann Handley].

This example clearly illustrates our point: the speed of printing is driving language to shift from alphabetic writing to ideographic writing (where a single symbol represents an entire word or concept).

The need to quickly type a reply to another person may explain the large number of abbreviated words and endings, as well as the abbreviations of verb forms

and shortened forms of auxiliary verbs. For example: *I'm gonna* (from *going to*) [Gretchen McCulloch], *call 'em* (from *them*) [Emmy J. Favilla], *'cause* (from *because*) [Gretchen McCulloch], *they're waitin'* [Gretchen McCulloch] (from *waiting for us*).

Such forms as *wanna*, *gonna*, *'cause* [Gretchen McCulloch], demonstrate that online communication is blurring the line between grammar and phonetics. We “type with sounds.” This allows us not only to type faster but also to convey the social register of the conversation more accurately – to show that the conversation is friendly and casual.

Interactive communication is characterized by frequent spelling errors and hyphenated words, which, however, are often attributed not to the illiteracy of the participants but to pressing the wrong key.

In linguistics, this phenomenon is often referred to as “mechanical slips” or “fat-finger syndrome.” It occurs because the speed of thought and the pace of dialogue significantly outpace the motor skills of the fingers, especially when using touchscreens. For example: *I'll meet u at thestation nextweek. Sry, I'm typing onthego* [Gretchen McCulloch]. (I'll meet you at the station next week. Sorry, I'm typing on the go).

In this example, we see errors that do not indicate a lack of language proficiency but are the result of technical and time constraints:

Word smushing, also known as “lack of whitespace”: *thestation, nextweek, onthego* [Gretchen McCulloch] – the omission of spaces between words. When typing quickly, the finger “misses” the Space bar or simply doesn't have time to press it, which is a typical marker of synchronous communication, where a 2-second pause for editing can be perceived as interrupting the conversation.

Typos caused by adjacent keys, known as “Typo” or “Key Proximity,” occur when one letter is often replaced by an adjacent one, for example: “*teh*” instead of “*the*” or “*maby*” instead of “*maybe*” [Gretchen McCulloch]. Although the words in

the examples are recognizable, this type of misspelling is the most common form of “speed-related error.”

Abbreviation as a compensatory mechanism: the use of “*Sry*” (*sorry*) and “*u*” (*you*) [Gretchen McCulloch] in this case serves as a compensatory mechanism. A person consciously shortens certain words to use the time saved to type more complex constructions or to send a message before the context of the conversation changes.

In addition, internet slang includes colloquial expressions, onomatopoeic words, emoticons, and abbreviations. Onomatopoeic words: the names of certain numbers and letters sound like words and can be written more quickly. For example: *Any1* (from *anyone*), *w8ing* (from *waiting*), *4* (from *for*), *u* (from *you*), *B4* (from *before*), *2night* (from *tonight*), *It'll b gr8* (from *it will be great*) [Gretchen McCulloch].

The language of abbreviations is less straightforward due to its conventions; some abbreviations are specific to certain communities. Some of these abbreviations have become almost universal, such as: *DK* – *Do Not Know* [Gretchen McCulloch], *IC* – *I See* [Gretchen McCulloch]. Other expressions owe their origins to computer networks: *lol* = *laughing out loud* [Gretchen McCulloch]; *asl* = *age* [Gretchen McCulloch], *sex*, *location* (a standard form of online introduction) [Gretchen McCulloch].

The encyclopedic dictionary «The Jargon File», compiled by Eric Raymond, is considered the “bible” of hacker culture and computer slang. It documents not just abbreviations, but an entire linguistic system that emerged under conditions of limited time and resources (for example, when messages were transmitted via slow terminals). Here is an excerpt from the dictionary: *AFK* – *Away From Keyboard* [Raymond]; *b4* – *before* [Raymond] ; *BTW* – *By The Way* [Raymond]; *FOAF* – *Friend Of A Friend* [Raymond]; *IMHO* – *In My Humble Opinion* [Raymond]; *LOL* – *laughing out loud* [Raymond]; *OTOH* – *On The Other Hand* [Raymond]; *RTFM* – *Read The F***ing Manual* [Raymond]; *TANSTAAFL* – *There Ain't No Such Thing As A Free Lunch* [Raymond]; *WYSIWYG* – *What You See Is What You Get* [Raymond].

In addition to abbreviations, a distinctive lexical feature of online communication is truncation, which includes words formed by shortening a word. Unlike abbreviations (which use the first letters), truncation retains part of the word, usually the stressed syllable, making it easy to identify the original lexeme. For example:

Pic (from “picture”) – an image, photo, or screenshot sent in a message [Merriam-Webster]; *Info* (from “information”) – any data, details, or clarification regarding the topic of conversation [Merriam-Webster]; *Fav or Fave* (from favorite) – a term for something you like (a post, a track, a person) [Merriam-Webster]; *Sus* (from suspicious) – a description of someone suspicious or a strange situation (often in gaming chats) [Merriam-Webster]; *Defo or Def* (from definitely) – an expression of complete agreement or confirmation of a fact [Merriam-Webster]; *Sec* (from second) – a request to wait a moment (most often in the phrase “wait a sec”) [Merriam-Webster]; *Cuz or 'cause* (from because) – a conjunction used to quickly explain a reason [Urban Dictionary]; *Sis or Bro* (from sister or brother) – an informal way to address a close friend or like-minded person [Urban Dictionary]; *Intro* (from introduction) – the introductory part of a text, video, or presentation of someone new to the group [Merriam-Webster]; *Ad* (from advertisement) – any advertisement or sponsored content [Merriam-Webster]; *Doc* (from document) – a text file or official document in digital format [Merriam-Webster].

These examples illustrate the morphological adaptation of the English language. Interestingly, in online communication, these truncated forms often take on the characteristics of independent words: they can have a plural form (*apps*, *pics* [Gretchen McCulloch] or even form new verbs (*to fav a tweet* [Know Your Meme]). This supports the argument that the speed of communication does not simply “corrupt” the language, but creates a new, more efficient lexical system.

Another effective model of word formation in online discourse is “word blending” or blending. For example:

Appoholic (*application* + *alcoholic*) – a person who is addicted to constantly downloading mobile apps that they use once or twice and then never again [Macmillan Dictionary]. This term is most often used to describe children who own tablets and cell phones;

Brofie – a type of selfie taken with friends [Macmillan Dictionary];

Cinderfella (*Cinderella* + *fellow*) – a young person who has to be home by midnight, or else face serious consequences [Techopedia].

In addition to the various ways in which new vocabulary is formed and appears daily in online communication, it is important to note the phenomenon of erative, that is, the deliberate violation of linguistic norms. This group of lexical formations in online discourse includes grammatically incorrect spellings of words that are nonetheless immediately understandable to native speakers.

These spelling simplifications are the result of attempts to save time. Since communication takes place online, participants often disregard grammatical rules, resulting in the emergence of new words that eventually become widely used. Sometimes these words are formed as a result of various mistakes, and sometimes they are formed intentionally, for example: *dat* – instead of that; *teh* – instead of the; *picsher* – instead of picture; *lawl* – instead of lol [Gretchen McCulloch]; *bruh*, *broseph* – instead of brother; *cuz* – instead of because; *gud* – instead of good; *butiful* – instead of beautiful; *geez* – instead of Jesus; *bai* – instead of bye [Urban Dictionary].

Ultimately, the internet has also proven to be productive in terms of the speed and number of “neologisms” created – that is, words that denote new concepts and objects. For example:

Comfort zone – a psychological zone created by a person, beyond which they are afraid to venture, meaning they are afraid to try something new and unfamiliar [Merriam-Webster];

Digital detox – time a person devotes to the real, rather than the virtual, world, avoiding the use of various gadgets, such as a phone or computer [Merriam-Webster];

Easy like – this is how friends are referred to on social media who always “like” photos, posts, and comments, possibly without even reading them, and regardless of whether they like them or not [Macmillan Dictionary];

iFinger – a finger kept clean so you can continue using your smartphone or tablet without smudging the screen [Macmillan Dictionary].

In general, the vocabulary of online discourse is extremely rich in new lexical formations, such as neologisms, compound words, abbreviations, acronyms, and onomatopoeia. Next, we will examine the lexical characteristics of online letters and messages, using material from literary works and examples of messages and comments taken from open-access sources.

2.2. Paralinguistic Features of Online Communication

In virtual spaces, people compensate for the inability to use paralinguistic cues (such as tone of voice, volume, gestures, and facial expressions) by employing special constructions and other auxiliary means. This is facilitated by the similarity between online communication and spoken language, particularly its tendency toward democratization and the simplification of linguistic structures.

One such mechanism is a type of punctuation that conveys intonation rather than adhering to the language's rules. For example, a comma followed by three dots may indicate a slow speaking pace. The number of dots can be increased to denote longer pauses. A dash is often used to highlight important information and draw the reader's attention to it. In virtual communication, the emotional content of the text, which in spoken communication is expressed primarily through intonation, is usually conveyed using punctuation marks.

Voice intonation is usually conveyed through the use of capital letters in the text. However, in some cases, capital letters can emphasize information that is important to the recipient.

Methods for compensating for paralinguistic sound signals are typically grouped into a system of paralinguistic phonation techniques that reinforce

semantically significant information and provide personal details about the speaker. Since participants in online communication do not always have the opportunity to exchange voice messages in real time, supragraphic paralinguistic features (i.e., font variation) are used to express expressiveness at the phonetic level and to highlight certain elements. However, the textual scope of this technique is quite limited: font highlighting typically applies to text segments ranging in size from a single word to a paragraph.

Thus, to compensate for tone of voice and emphasize certain parts of a statement in virtual communication on social media, people use what is known as “caps” (from the English “Caps Lock” – the function that locks the keyboard into uppercase mode; writing a phrase or part of it in all caps, which is widely interpreted online as raising one’s voice): «*DO NOT TYPE IN ALL CAPS. It is equivalent to screaming at someone. Use caps for headings, titles and to EMPHASIZE certain words*» [Deneke 2007, c. 112].

To highlight individual words and phrases, in addition to capital letters, the following are used: spacing (separating letters with spaces), asterisks (*), boldface, italics, different font types and colors, and underlining [Швачко 2019, p. 61], for example:

1) *u always know what i want. altho it was just a simple things u do but i really appreciate it : ’)* [Gretchen McCulloch].

2) *family say he have the same smile with me i need something GOOD to happen, right now. to make me smile and stay HAPPY again.* [Gretchen McCulloch].

3) *The weekend was absolutely f a n t a s t i c.* [Gretchen McCulloch].

4) *Totally LOVE this photo!* [Gretchen McCulloch].

5) *How serendipitous for your friend to call at the exact _right_ moment!* [Gretchen McCulloch].

6) *Perfect face shape to wear a style that *in my opinion* isn’t easy to wear.* [Gretchen McCulloch].

At the same time, to make a statement more expressive, the same letter is repeated, and this can be supplemented with emojis, for example:

1) *Ooooh, now isn't he something?))))* [Gretchen McCulloch].

2) *Woowooooow, YES! They do look like those mad science guys.* [Gretchen McCulloch]

3) *yay there have a autumn fooodood fair!* [Urban Dictionary]

4) *anyways, it is HALOOOOOOOWEEN! hoooooo yayoh yes! summy, i loveeeeeeee it!* [Gretchen McCulloch]

5) *tiramisuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu! o yea i am a tiramisu lover :)* [Gretchen McCulloch]

6) *working 2-11 pm. ughhhh!* [Gretchen McCulloch]

Visual information, such as facial expressions and gestures, can be conveyed by inserting symbols – including emojis and traditional combinations of graphic symbols – or through metatext. Currently, most platforms allow users to add emojis, images, audio, and video files to their messages. However, not all users find this feature convenient, so traditional methods of compensating for the absence of paralinguistic cues in text remain popular.

In general, paralinguistic and verbal resources are used together in electronic texts, forming a unified whole. Computer technologies have expanded the potential functionality of linguistic resources in virtual spaces, giving recipients the freedom to choose how information is presented and allowing them to present it most understandably, thereby establishing positive virtual communication.

While some paralinguistic elements function as independent carriers of information, providing sufficient detail to convey the text's meaning (e.g., illustrations, photographs, and diagrams), others are used in conjunction with verbal elements to add semantic nuances to the text's meaning (e.g., font variation and punctuation repetition).

By influencing the recipient's emotional state, paralinguistic resources enhance the communicative effectiveness of the text type under study, expanding the channels

through which information is conveyed and facilitating its assimilation. The subject actively participates in the author's perception of the world, their communicative space, and their system of thought, and thus in the system of the perceived text. At the same time, the speaker controls the decoding process, emphasizing certain aspects to influence the listener's perception and understanding of the text.

The study of emoticons, also known as "smileys," is important because they are a fundamental form of visual communication on the Internet, particularly in correspondence and electronic messages.

Smileys are icons composed of punctuation marks, letters, and numbers that represent various emotions. If you look at a "smiley" with its head turned 90 degrees, it resembles a face formed by numbers, letters, punctuation marks, and other keyboard symbols [Posokhova 2013, p. 211-215].

Today, smileys are arguably the best way to convey feelings and emotions in virtual communication. These funny little faces inserted into text eliminate the need to write long messages about one's feelings – a single emoji can describe an entire event. Now emojis can be found in emails, on websites, in icons, on calendars, and on any other surface where they can be drawn.

Emojis serve as illocutionary markers – they indicate how written text should be interpreted (as a joke, sarcasm, or a serious request).

"Great job 😊" – sincere praise.

"Great job 🙄" – sarcasm (the "upside-down face" emoji often reverses the meaning of the phrase) [Gretchen McCulloch].

Their main functions in an English-speaking context are as follows:

1. Mitigation

In English-speaking culture, directness can come across as rude. An emoji helps make a request or comment less aggressive. For example: *"Send me the report now"*. (Sounds like an order). Transformation: *"Send me the report now :)"* (Sounds like a friendly reminder) [Gretchen McCulloch].

2. Marking sarcasm and irony

This is critically important in the English-speaking world, where irony is the foundation of humor.

The Upside-Down Face (🙄) – Used when something goes wrong or when someone is being sarcastic. For example: “*Just spilled coffee on my white shirt. Great start to the day* 🙄” [Gretchen McCulloch]

The Nail Polish (💅) – Conveys an “*I don’t care*” attitude or emphasizes one’s own superiority/confidence (sassiness). For example: “*I’m just doing me* 💅” [Gretchen McCulloch].

In modern English-language communication on social media, the meanings of many emojis have shifted (Semantic Shift).

The Skull (💀) – in English slang, this doesn’t mean death, but rather that something is incredibly funny. For example:

“*I’m dead from laughing.*” [Gretchen McCulloch]

“*That video was so out of control* 🤪” [Gretchen McCulloch]

The Loudly Crying Face (😭) – often replaces a regular laugh. It’s used to express strong emotions (both positive and negative).

For example: “*He really said that?* 🤔” [Gretchen McCulloch]

The Sparkles (✨) – used to highlight a word, often with an ironic or magical undertone.

For example: “*I am* ✨ *stressed* ✨.” [Gretchen McCulloch]

Symbol / Emoji	English name	Linguistic meaning
:) / 😊	Smiley face	A friendly tone, basic politeness.
;) / 😏	Winking face	A hint of a joke, flirtation, or “secret” information.
XD / 😄	Face with tears of joy	The typical reaction to something funny (though Gen Z finds it “cringe”).
:/	Skeptical face	Uncertainty, disappointment, or doubt.

Symbol / Emoji	English name	Linguistic meaning
<3 / ❤️	Heart	Love, support, and approval.
👁️👄👁️	Eye Mouth Eye	Shock, surprise, or the feeling of “I’m just watching this absurdity unfold.”

Figure 2.1. Comparison of emojis and their meanings [Gretchen McCulloch]

Emojis can replace entire parts of speech (for example, a verb or a noun), which makes messages even shorter.

This phenomenon in linguistics is called pictographic substitution. When the speed of communication becomes critical, emojis cease to be mere “decorations” and begin to function as full-fledged parts of speech: nouns, verbs, or even entire predicative constructions.

Let’s look at how this works in English-language communication on social media.

1. Emojis as nouns. This is the simplest form of substitution, where an emoji replaces an object or subject.

For example: “*Don’t forget to bring the 🍺*” [Gretchen McCulloch]

Here, the emoji functions as an object. The brain processes the visual image faster than it decodes the letters of the word “beer.”

2. Emojis as verbs. Emojis can denote an action, especially when it comes to movement, feelings, or routine tasks.

For example: “*I ✈️ to London tomorrow*” [Gretchen McCulloch] (instead of fly/am flying)

“*Can we 📞 later?*” (instead of talk on the phone/call) [Gretchen McCulloch]

Here, the emoji becomes the core of the sentence. Interestingly, it often lacks grammatical time markers (such as the -ed or -ing endings), so the tense is determined by the context (tomorrow, later).

3. Rebus construction. This involves combining several emojis to convey an entire message without a single word.

For example: “🍕❤️🍷” (*I love pizza*) [Gretchen McCulloch].

“🏠🏃♂️🚶” (*I’m running home / I’m on my way home*) [Gretchen McCulloch].

This is a return to logographic writing. The sequence of emojis replicates the standard English word order SVO (Subject-Verb-Object).

4. Emojis as adjectives and state indicators. Instead of describing their state with adjectives, users turn to emojis to save time.

For example: “*I’m feeling so 🤢 today.*” (instead of sick/ill) [Gretchen McCulloch]

“*The exam was 🤯.*” (instead of mind-blowing/extremely difficult) [Gretchen McCulloch]

5. Emojis as standalone sentences. A single emoji can replace an entire sentence, depending on the context of the conversation. For example:

Context: A friend asks if you’re going to the party.

Response: “💃” (means: “*Yes, I’m going and I’ll be dancing / I’m so excited*”). [Gretchen McCulloch]

Context: A question about whether the food was delicious.

Response: “😋” (means: “*It was incredibly delicious*”). [Gretchen McCulloch]

Emojis function as “tone checkers” in English-language communication. Since English relies heavily on context and intonation, these symbols have become essential for fast digital communication. They allow users to convey pragmatic meaning, which is often more important than the literal meaning of words.

The use of emojis as parts of speech indicates that English on the internet is becoming synthetically visual. We aren’t just “shortening” words – we’re shifting the language model from linear (letter by letter) to parallel (image + text). This allows us to convey complex concepts instantly, which is ideal for the fast pace of modern life.

Conclusions to Chapter 2

To sum up, the social construction of the self in the digital age is not a static portrait, but a dynamic performance. Social media is no longer merely a communication tool; it has become a platform for identity signalling, where every post, story, or even choice of emoji is a building block in the construction of our virtual ‘self’.

We no longer ‘live our lives’; we rehearse them. The use of filters, specific slang, and visual codes allows us to create an ‘ideal self’ that often exists separately from offline reality. Our self-presentation is heavily focused on social approval. Likes, shares, and comments act as digital mirrors: we adjust our content (and our identity) depending on the feedback we receive from our ‘bubble’.

Thus, in the second section we analyzed 30 pages of well-known blogs on social networks such as Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn. Using the continuous sampling method, 109 examples were investigated and described. After analyzing this material, we were able to draw the following conclusions:

An analysis of lexical characteristics has shown that many new words and established expressions are emerging in the online environment. Neologisms, slang, and euphemisms are widely used, as are productive word-formation methods, including compounding, abbreviations, and acronyms. Abbreviations used in online communication take various forms, including not only letters but also numbers and other symbols.

For a long time, nonverbal cues were unavailable to internet users, resulting in email communication that was largely devoid of emotion. This is because, in the current popular form of interactive communication, participants cannot see each other’s eyes, facial expressions, or gestures – elements that facilitate accurate understanding.

3. SELF CONSTRUCTION IN SOCIAL MEDIA

3.1. Identity construction through social media

As we have seen in different parts of this paper, one important part of who we are that has been affected by us taking technology into our lives is our memory. The way we relate to and identify the 'self' is being altered by the collection and storage of our 'self' outside of the physical body via social media platforms. When examining how people curate their online 'self', we can use the framework of the theory of *hypomnemata* developed by the French philosopher and social theorist Michael Foucault.

According to D. Weisgerber and A. Butler, this theory is based on the idea that the 'practice of collecting, annotating and selecting the information that one hears, reads or thinks is central to the shaping of self'. In consideration of the aforementioned context, social media provides the ideal conduit for the cultivation of one's public persona. People can create a virtual version of themselves by collecting videos, photos, articles, and making friends online. They can then access this information whenever they want [Weisgerber 2016, p. 134].

The process of '*hypomnemata*' – or the external storage of the historical 'self' via social media – is intrinsically linked to the second significant function within identity creation: self-reflection. This "writing of the self" is so widespread in today's world that, as Foucault says, we should have the possibility for self-connection in every moment we spend creating and amassing this online "self" [Weisgerber 2016].

Drawing upon Michel Foucault's concept of '*hypomnemata*' – the material records used for the external storage of the self – this section analyzes how social media functions as a modern technology of "self-writing" (*écriture de soi*). In the digital landscape, identity is not merely performed for an audience; it is interactively constructed through linguistic mechanisms of self-reflection and connection.

The process of "self-connection" in digital posts is frequently marked by the use of mental state verbs. These linguistic markers demonstrate the user's real-time

engagement with their own internal history. For example: *"Looking back at these photos, **I realize** how much my perspective has shifted. **I feel** more aligned with my values now"* [Yasmine Cheyenne].

The use of mental verbs (*realize, feel*) combined with the present participle phrase (*looking back*) creates a narrative of internal evolution. By objectifying their thoughts into text, the user utilizes the platform as a mirror, fulfilling the Foucaultian idea of establishing a relationship with the self through the act of writing.

Since the "self" in this context is inherently historical, users employ temporal oppositions to document the trajectory of their identity. For example: *"**Then:** lost and searching. **Now:** found and building. This profile is my evolution"* [Case Kenny]

The use of elliptical constructions centered on temporal adverbs (*then* vs. *now*) creates a binary opposition that fixes the "historical self" in a digital archive. This is a literal manifestation of 'hypomnemata': the user distances themselves from their past identity by turning it into a retrievable digital record, allowing for continuous self-reflection.

A unique feature of modern digital 'hypomnemata' is the externalization of internal dialogue. This is often expressed through rhetorical questions and specific communicative formulas. For example: *"Why did I wait so long to start? **Note to self:** the best time is always now"* [Michell C. Clark].

The formulaic expression *"Note to self"* directly invokes the genre of personal notebooks or diaries. Despite the public nature of the platform, the discourse is linguistically directed inward (*auto-addressivity*). The rhetorical question serves as a tool for self-correction and connection, illustrating how the act of "amassing the online self" facilitates a constant dialogue with the individual's own consciousness.

Nevertheless, in the same way as with the studies carried out by Wegner and Ward, the legitimacy of Foucault's hypothesis is influenced by the revolutionary atmosphere of our societal sphere.

So, even though the social web provides way more info than what Foucault said, his idea was based on the fact that you had to actually take time to write and

collect ideas. As was mentioned above, however, new thoughts, ideas, and innovations are constantly and consistently bombarding us via our devices, allowing very little time for self-reflection. The frenzied environment in which we operate has been highlighted by Lovink, with it being described as a state of stupor that is being plunged into by social media platforms. New applications and products are constantly being introduced that make yesterday's flavour of the day seem obsolete [Lovink 2012].

Foucault propounds the notion that the capacity for introspection, intrinsic to the process of self-reflection, is indispensable to the evolution of the 'self'. In this era of incessant entertainment, incessant discourse, and incessant distraction, this process becomes obscured as we transition from one task to the next, pursuing efficiency and novel content.

In a state of "incessant distraction," language shifts from internal mental verbs (introspection) to external reactive markers. For example: *Just finished this! What's next? 🚀 #productivity #hustle*". [Gary Vaynerchuk].

The use of the present perfect tense (*Just finished*) combined with a forward-looking interrogative (*What's next?*) signifies a transition-oriented identity. The self is no longer defined by the *experience* of the task, but by the *completion* of it. The lack of introspective modifiers indicates that the "self" is being constructed as a vehicle for efficiency rather than a subject of reflection.

Foucault's "evolution of the self" relies on a diachronic understanding of time. However, incessant discourse often forces the self into a "hyper-present" state. For example: *"Living for this moment. Don't want it to end. #blessed"* [Chiara Ferragni].

The heavy reliance on present continuous forms (*Living*) and deictic markers (*this moment*) anchors the self in a perpetual present. While seemingly reflective, the repetitive nature of such "incessant discourse" serves to obscure the broader historical "self." The focus on immediate "novelty" prevents the self from connecting with its own past or future, creating a "self-connection" gap that Foucault warned against.

Foucault was not the first person to suggest this, as the ability to think about yourself is also important to Nietzsche's ideas about how we create our identities. The ability to self-reflect is an innate quality that gives us self-awareness and the capacity to construct the 'self' through self-assessment and changing behaviours, leading to growth [Katsafanas 2016, p. 11].

Turkle's analysis of online social experiences also had a foundation. This foundation was time for self-reflection [Turkle 2012, p. 40]. This was the most important aspect of our relationships with these technologies. This is as we move forward into full technological immersion.

Ultimately, Plato theorised that the sole 'valuable attentional form is anamnesis – introspection' [Weisgerber 2016].

As this faculty is posited above to be progressively arduous within contemporary society, it provokes the question of how this elementary shift in the formation of the self will ultimately influence society. The ability to self-reflect is a fundamental process that allows for the development of the self. If we are no longer in an environment where this process is possible, then we are removed from it.

Foucault's theory is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, the environment he talks about is disruptive and confusing. Secondly, there is another major issue with it. Ultimately, researchers hypothesized that uponemnemata was a 'personal exercise' which people should 'do by and for themselves'. Nonetheless, the preponderance of research about social media interactivity suggests that the majority of behaviour exhibited on such platforms is active impression management for the benefit of others.

In the end, our natural identity is becoming something that is created from the opinions of a social system that is inherently flawed, rather than the traditional identity that was experienced in the generations before, which was derived from within.

In the examination of society, Jackson combines the research of Marx (1964), Appadurai (1986), Hopkins (1998), Hornborg (2001), and Miller (1991) to emphasise

the "multifaceted ways in which objects become personalised, and individuals become objectified in the course of social life" [Jackson 2002].

According to Appadurai and Miller, digital objects (algorithms, profiles, posts) are no longer mere tools; they are imbued with agency and "personality" within the social system. For example: *"The algorithm **hates** me today; it's **refusing** to show my content to anyone"* [Vanessa Lau].

The use of anthropomorphic verbs (*hates, refusing*) directed at a piece of code is a prime example of personalizing an object. The technical infrastructure is treated as a sentient social actor with moods and intentions. The "self" thus becomes dependent on a relationship with a personalized non-human entity.

In reverse, the individual begins to perceive and describe their own "Self" and life experiences through the metrics of productivity and marketability [Marx, Hopkins]. For example: *"I need to **rebrand** myself to increase my **market value** and **engagement rate**"* [Steven Bartlett].

The application of business terminology (*rebrand, market value, engagement rate*) to the human identity demonstrates self-objectification. The "Self" is no longer a subject of internal experience (Foucault's *within*) but a digital asset to be managed, optimized, and sold. The linguistic focus shifts from internal states to external performance metrics.

Jackson emphasizes that these processes occur simultaneously. The individual becomes an object specifically to satisfy the personalized "whims" of the social system. For example: *"My profile is a **curated collection** of moments designed for **maximum impact**"* [Chris Do].

The phrase *"curated collection"* transforms a person's lived experience into a museum exhibit or a product line. The adjective *"designed"* and the adverbial phrase of purpose *"for maximum impact"* reveal that identity formation is now directed outward – toward the "flawed social system" – rather than inward toward self-reflection.

In our world, where social interaction is becoming the norm, this suggests that the future of our social identities may be in the cloud. As human beings, we are inherently social creatures. We prefer the comfort of online communication and the freedom of expression that it offers. This means that the way in which we construct our 'self' is facilitating the personalisation of our devices and the objectification of each other. It is warned by Y. Keen that if this path is continued, a society will end up in one that is characterised by the "loneliness of the isolated man in the connected crowd" [Kim 2012, p. 244].

We are becoming more disconnected from ourselves, not more connected, as a result of the loss of self-reflection. Although social media provides opportunities for connection and strengthening our sense of self, the benefits of these sites will ultimately be undermined by our misuse of them unless we begin to implement ways to incorporate self-reflection into our online activity. It falls to each one of us to discern the manner in which to engage with technology to reap its advantages without forfeiting that which renders us distinctly human.

The nature of language utilised on social media has undergone a significant metamorphosis, adapting to the dynamic and informal characteristics inherent in online communication.

Individuals and organisations must understand how language influences interactions on social media platforms if their objective is to augment their online presence. Effective communication strategies can substantially influence the success of marketing campaigns, personal branding efforts, and even social and political movements. It is therefore argued that exploring the relationship between language use and user engagement on social media provides valuable insights into optimising communication in these digital spaces.

The language employed on social media is distinct from that of traditional forms of communication. It is characterised by brevity, creativity, and informality. It is common for internet users to employ abbreviations, slang, emojis, GIFs, and memes to convey complex emotions, humour, and ideas concisely.

In the contemporary digital economy, language is treated as a strategic asset. The shift from traditional communication to social media discourse is marked by a move toward communicative efficiency and affective resonance.

As the text suggests, brevity is a defining characteristic of social media. Linguistically, this is achieved through functional compression – the use of shorthand to convey complex emotional states. For example: "*ICYMI: New post is up!* 📢💧" [Mari Smith].

The use of the acronym *ICYMI* (*In Case You Missed It*) and emojis (📢, 💧) functions as a pragmatic shortcut. These markers replace entire clauses (e.g., "*I am sharing this because I want to ensure you are aware of it*" [Zoë Sugg]) with a single visual or lexical token. This optimizes "user engagement" by reducing the cognitive load on the audience while maintaining high "affective" (emotional) impact.

The passage highlights the use of emojis and GIFs to convey "complex emotions." In linguistics, these serve as paralinguistic cues (similar to tone of voice or body language in face-to-face speech). For example: "*Working late again...* 🕒💻💡" [Zoë Sugg].

The emojis here provide context that the text alone lacks. The "sparkles" (💡) might suggest a "hustle" aesthetic or professional pride, whereas a "tired face" emoji would change the meaning to exhaustion. For "personal branding," these cues are essential for constructing a specific "Self" that resonates with a target audience.

"Creativity" in this context often refers to intertextuality – the way one text (a meme or GIF) refers to another. This creates a "shared language" between the organization/individual and their followers. For example, Using a "Distracted Boyfriend" meme template to illustrate a choice between two software products.

This is an informal communicative strategy that leverages cultural capital. By using a meme, the organization signals that it "speaks the language" of the platform. This fosters a sense of community, which is a "valuable insight" for optimizing social and political movements.

The utilisation of linguistic tools has been demonstrated to facilitate the establishment of connections between individuals across cultural and geographic boundaries. The development of a universal shorthand has been shown to enhance relatability and interaction, thereby promoting deeper understanding and communication. Nevertheless, challenges are concomitantly introduced, such as misunderstandings arising from a paucity of context or the exclusion of users unacquainted with particular trends or jargon. Both individuals and organisations must comprehend the impact of language on social media engagement. The strategic utilisation of language has been shown to significantly impact the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. Furthermore, it has been shown to enhance personal branding and even to mobilise support for political and social causes. Conversely, an erroneous choice of tone or vocabulary can result in backlash or disengagement, underscoring the necessity for meticulous communication planning.

The text posits that social media language acts as a "universal shorthand" that facilitates cross-cultural connection. However, from a linguistic perspective, this "shorthand" functions as a double-edged sword, serving as both a bridge and a gatekeeper.

The "universal shorthand" (emojis, hashtags, memes) operates as a form of global semiotics. Because these tools are often visual or based on shared digital culture rather than specific grammatical structures, they enhance "relatability" across geographic boundaries.

Emojis and GIFs function as low-barrier semantic markers. They allow for "deeper understanding" by providing emotional context that transcends traditional language barriers. This is a form of affective labor, where the user strategically employs symbols to build an immediate emotional connection with a global audience.

For example, it is used for "marketing campaigns" and "personal branding". This shorthand creates a "brand persona" that feels accessible and human, regardless of the user's native language.

The text highlights a critical challenge: "misunderstandings arising from a paucity of context." In linguistics, this is known as the high-context vs. low-context dilemma.

Social media is a high-context environment where meaning often relies on "particular trends." If a user or organization lacks the cultural context behind a specific meme or slang term, the communication fails.

For example, it is used when jargon can foster a sense of "in-group" belonging, it simultaneously creates digital exclusion. This "elementary shift" in the formation of the self (from earlier prompts) means that those who cannot speak the "new language" are "removed" from the social discourse.

The necessity for "meticulous communication planning" arises from the volatile nature of the "social system" mentioned in your previous theories. For example:

An "erroneous choice of tone" (e.g., using a serious social cause for a lighthearted marketing trend) can trigger immediate "disengagement."

This is a failure of pragmatic competence. In digital spaces, the "tone" is often determined by the interplay between text, image, and timing. A mismatch between these elements is perceived by the "social system" as inauthentic, leading to the "backlash" mentioned.

The use of language on social media platforms facilitates the construction and projection of user identities. The lexicon individuals employ, whether in captions, hashtags, or responses, can influence how they are perceived by others. The ability to present a curated, idealised version of oneself, or to engage in more authentic, personal expression, depends on how language is used.

In the digital sphere, language does not merely *describe* a pre-existing identity; it *constructs* and *projects* it. The "Self" becomes a linguistic performance, where every lexical choice serves as a signal to the "flawed social system" mentioned in your earlier theories.

As the text suggests, the specific vocabulary (lexicon) used in captions, hashtags, or responses is the primary vehicle for Impression Management.

Every hashtag or caption acts as a social index. For instance, using niche academic jargon or high-level vocabulary indexes a "Scholarly Self," while the use of trending slang or specific emojis indexes a "Culturally Relevant Self". Because the audience has no access to the "natural identity" derived from within, they are forced to reconstruct the user's identity based solely on these linguistic tokens. This reinforces the Objectification of the Self: the individual becomes a collection of hashtags and keywords to be processed by others.

The "ability to present a curated, idealized version of oneself" is a linguistic strategy of positive face-work.

This involves the meticulous selection of adjectives and nouns that align with societal ideals (e.g., *success, happiness, productivity* [Zoë Sugg]). Linguistically, this is characterized by a "positivity bias" and the removal of linguistic markers of doubt or failure. Authentic expression is often marked by vulnerability markers – the use of first-person pronouns ("*I*", "*me*" [Zoë Sugg]), mental state verbs ("*I struggle*," "*I wonder*" [Zoë Sugg]), and informal syntax. However, in the context of the "incessant distraction" you described, even "authenticity" can become a curated linguistic style designed for engagement.

The manner in which subjects are articulated through language can exert a substantial influence on public sentiment. To illustrate this point, the use of specific terminology or hashtags can mobilise support for social causes. Conversely, the same tools can also be employed to shape perceptions of controversial issues. The language used in trending topics, news headlines, and viral memes can influence the collective narrative and prevailing sentiment in the public consciousness.

The "specific terminology" mentioned in your text refers to the linguistic concept of framing. By choosing one word over another, an actor can trigger a specific emotional and cognitive response in the public consciousness.

Consider the difference between the terms "*Global Warming*" vs. "*Climate Crisis*" [Zoë Sugg]. The former is descriptive and neutral, while the latter employs affective vocabulary to mobilize urgency. In social movements, the "articulation of the subject" through such terms acts as a linguistic catalyst for collective action.

These lexical choices establish the prime through which all subsequent information is filtered by the public.

Hashtags do more than organize content; they function as narrative anchors. They provide a unified linguistic banner under which diverse individuals can align their "online presence".

A hashtag like *#BlackLivesMatter* or *#StandWithUkraine* [Zoë Sugg] serves as a condensed symbol. It condenses complex historical, political, and emotional narratives into a single, viral token. This allows for the "mobilization of support" across geographic boundaries by creating a shared linguistic identity for a cause.

While hashtags empower social causes, they also simplify them, often leading to the "brevity" and "paucity of context" discussed earlier.

The text highlights "viral memes" as influencers of prevailing sentiment. In linguistics, memes function as semiotic shorthand.

Memes rely on intertextuality (referencing other cultural texts) to convey meaning rapidly. Because they often use humor or satire, they bypass the critical filters of the "self-reflective" mind. They influence the "collective narrative" by making specific viewpoints feel "natural" or "obvious" through repetition and visual reinforcement.

It is used in controversial issues; memes can be used to marginalize opposing views by framing them as "absurd" or "outdated," effectively shifting the Overton Window (the range of ideas tolerated in public discourse).

The medium of language can reinforce echo chambers, i.e., online environments in which users are exposed mainly to information and ideas that align with their pre-existing beliefs. The manner in which individuals communicate via social media platforms has been observed to frequently promote conformity of

thought and the phenomenon of 'groupthink', whereby the dominant linguistic styles and terminology employed within specific communities can influence how individuals perceive the world and engage in discourse.

An echo chamber is maintained through linguistic homophily – the tendency of individuals to associate and communicate with others who use similar language, jargon, and framing.

In these environments, users employ a highly specific in-group lexicon. By using certain "shibboleths" (keywords or phrases that signal belonging), users reinforce their pre-existing beliefs. Any information expressed in a different linguistic style is often dismissed as "out-group" noise, leading to a state where the "Self" is only reflected back by those who already agree with it. This reinforces the "flawed social system" by preventing exposure to diverse ideas that are necessary for genuine self-evolution and societal growth.

The phenomenon of 'groupthink' is driven by the dominance of linguistic styles. When a specific community adopts a rigid set of terminology, it defines the "Overton Window" of that group, limiting what can be thought and said.

Groupthink is characterized by a high degree of lexical convergence. Members of the community begin to mirror each other's syntax, metaphors, and hashtags. This linguistic mimicry functions as a safety mechanism: deviating from the dominant style risks "disengagement" or "backlash" from the social system.

As the text suggests, this influences how individuals "perceive the world." If the only language available to describe a complex issue is a set of polarized buzzwords, the individual's internal "natural identity" is suppressed in favor of the group's collective narrative.

The drive to "augment online presence" (from your earlier text) forces individuals to conform to the linguistic norms of their chosen echo chamber.

The prevalence of performative agreement. Users often employ language not to express a unique thought, but to signal their alignment with the group's "dominant

linguistic style." This is the ultimate "objectification of the individual" – the person becomes a mouthpiece for the group's narrative.

The language employed on social media is frequently designed to elicit specific emotional responses from the audience, whether these responses are to be humorous, outraged, or solidarity. The utilisation of hashtags, memes, and emotive language can spread rapidly, influencing users' sentiments and behaviours. To illustrate this point, one may consider how persuasive language is employed in advertisements and political campaigns on social media to influence users' opinions and actions.

When language is "designed to elicit specific emotional responses," it functions as a form of affective engineering. This process shifts the goal of communication from the exchange of information to the stimulation of sentiment, reinforcing your earlier point about the "removal" of the self from the process of deep reflection.

The "utilisation of emotive language" involves the selection of high-arousal lexical items. These are words that carry intense emotional weight and are more likely to be shared within the "incessant discourse" of social media.

Instead of using descriptive adjectives, digital discourse favors superlatives and evaluative terms ("*disastrous*," "*unbelievable*," "*heartbreaking*" [Zoë Sugg]). This creates a "sentimental pressure" on the user, forcing them to feel rather than think.

In social causes, language is used to create affective alignment. By using words that signal "us vs. them," the social system forces the individual to choose a side, reinforcing the "echo chambers" mentioned in your previous theories.

Hashtags and memes spread rapidly because they function as semiotic triggers. They condense complex emotional narratives into a single unit that can be processed instantly.

Memes are particularly effective at using satirical framing to elicit humor or outrage. Linguistically, they rely on the "incongruity-resolution" theory, where the surprise of the image-text combination triggers a chemical reward in the brain (dopamine), encouraging the user to "engage" and "share."

This rapid spread is a result of linguistic contagion. When a hashtag like *#Outraged* or *#Solidarity* goes viral, it creates a "feedback loop" where the social system dictates the emotional state of the individual.

The use of persuasive language in advertisements and political campaigns represents the professionalization of digital discourse.

Political campaigns often use imperative moods ("*Fight for your future!*") and inclusive pronouns ("*We*," "*Our*").

This is a calculated attempt to hijack the user's "natural identity." By framing the political or commercial goal as a part of the user's "Self," the system turns the individual into an agent of the campaign's narrative. This is the ultimate example of the objectification of the individual: the human user becomes a vessel for the distribution of strategic emotional content.

The utilisation of harmful language has been demonstrated to engender toxic environments, within which instances of cyberbullying, harassment, and discrimination frequently occur. The provision of anonymity by social media platforms has been demonstrated to have the potential to embolden individuals to utilise harsh or abusive language, which can have a detrimental effect on the mental health and overall well-being of users.

Anonymity allows users to decouple their digital actions from their "natural identity." Without the accountability of a real-world reputation, individuals often employ abusive language they would never use in person. For example:

"You're actually so pathetic, I can't believe you're even allowed to post this. Delete your account and stay offline for everyone's sake" [Constance Hall].

The use of high-intensity negative adjectives (pathetic) and harsh imperatives (Delete your account) demonstrates a complete lack of empathy. Linguistically, this is a direct face-threatening act designed to silence the victim and assert dominance through psychological pressure.

Harmful language in digital spaces often targets specific groups, using discriminatory jargon to create a toxic "us vs. them" environment. For example:

"People like you don't belong in this country. Go back to where you came from. #GetOut" [Jameela Jamil].

This employs exclusionary deictic markers (*"People like you"*) to objectify the individual, stripping them of their unique identity. The hashtag #GetOut functions as a collective call to action, transforming a personal opinion into a systemic movement of discrimination. This aligns with your earlier point about how language influences the "collective narrative."

Systematic harassment uses denigrating metaphors to ruin the target's sense of self-worth, leading to detrimental effects on mental health. For example:

"Every time I see your face on my feed, it ruins my day. You have no talent and your opinions are trash" [Selena Gomez].

By using the metaphor "trash" to describe an individual's thoughts, the attacker reduces a complex human being to an object of waste. This is the ultimate example of self-Objectification from the perspective of the attacker: the victim is no longer a "Subject" to be understood, but an "Object" to be discarded.

The utilisation of language on social media can result in the inclusion or exclusion of individuals, based on their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The use of jargon, colloquial language, or regional dialects can impede comprehension, whilst also shaping online communities and the emergence of subcultures that may prove inaccessible to external observers.

When language is used to "shape online communities," it often involves the creation of a sociolect – a variety of language used by a specific social group. While this fosters a sense of belonging, it simultaneously creates barriers for "external observers".

The use of specialized jargon or colloquialisms acts as a shibboleth. In linguistics, a shibboleth is a custom or phrasing that distinguishes a particular group of people from outsiders. For example:

The use of highly specific "Incel" or "Stanimal" terminology (e.g., *"mogging," "looksmaxxing"*) within niche fitness or social subcultures.

For a member of the subculture, these terms are "inclusive" because they signal shared knowledge and values. However, for an external observer, this language is "exclusive" because it impedes comprehension. This creates a hierarchy of belonging where identity is determined by one's mastery of the group's specific lexicon.

The presence of regional dialects on global social media platforms can lead to linguistic friction. While dialects project a "natural identity" rooted in geography, they can be marginalized by the "dominant linguistic style" of the platform.

When a user utilizes a regional dialect (e.g., African American Vernacular English – AAVE, or a specific Ukrainian regionalism), they are performing an Authentic Self. However, if the broader "social system" views this dialect as "informal" or "incorrect," it can lead to the exclusion of that individual from mainstream discourse.

As subcultures evolve, their language becomes increasingly intertextual and referential, making them "inaccessible" to those who haven't tracked the community's history.

A meme or phrase might evolve through ten different iterations. To an outsider, the current version of the phrase is "semantic noise." To the insider, it is a rich, complex "cultural artifact."

This results in Fragmented Subjectivity. Instead of one cohesive public consciousness, society splits into "linguistic islands." This reinforces the "echo chambers" you mentioned earlier, as users only inhabit spaces where their specific linguistic background is validated.

The language employed by brands and advertisers on social media exerts a considerable influence on consumer behaviour. Brands employ linguistic techniques to establish emotional connections with their target audience, thereby cultivating a distinct brand identity and ultimately persuading users to take specific actions, such as purchasing products or supporting a particular cause. To summarise, the language employed on social media does not merely reflect individual thoughts and opinions; it actively shapes social norms, influences behaviours, and facilitates the construction

of online communities and identities. The tool can facilitate meaningful connections; nevertheless, its use carries the possibility of causing harm [Nuryati 2024].

Brands utilize language to bridge the gap between commercial entities and social companions. By establishing "emotional connections," they cultivate a distinct identity that resonates with the user's curated "online presence". For example:

"We know you've had a long week. You deserve a little 'me-time'. Grab a latte and let the world wait. #TreatYourself" [Starbucks].

The use of the inclusive pronoun *"We"* and the direct address *"You"* creates a simulated intimacy (*parasocial interaction*). The verb *"deserve"* appeals to the user's emotional state rather than a functional need, effectively "shaping the social norm" that consumption is a valid form of self-care.

Persuasive language on social media often employs directive speech acts disguised as community engagement to influence "opinions and actions". For example:

"Don't just watch the change. Be the change. Join our movement for a plastic-free ocean today. Click the link in bio to donate" [4ocean].

The juxtaposition of imperatives (*Don't just watch, Be, Join*) with value-laden abstract nouns (*change, movement*) mobilizes the user. This illustrates Nuryati's point that language "actively shapes social norms" by framing a purchase or a donation as a defining characteristic of the user's "Authentic Self."

As Nuryati concludes, the power of digital language is inherently dualistic. It can facilitate "meaningful connections" or act as a catalyst for "harm" [Nuryati 2024]. For example:

"To everyone struggling with their thesis right now: you are not alone. We're in this together. #AcademicTwitter" [The Thesis Whisperer].

Here, language functions as a "social glue," utilizing markers of solidarity to build a resilient online community. For example:

"If you're not using [Product X], you're falling behind. Don't be the only one left out. #FOMO" [Marketing Mind].

This employs anxiety-inducing lexis (FOMO – Fear of Missing Out) to pressure the user. This type of linguistic manipulation can have a "detrimental effect on mental health" by reinforcing the feeling that the user's identity is incomplete without systemic validation.

In online spaces, language is frequently used to construct and maintain identities. The manner in which individuals articulate themselves across various forums, including social media platforms, can serve as a manifestation of their cultural or personal identities. This phenomenon is further compounded by the utilisation of usernames, which also serve as a means of self-expression and can potentially reveal aspects of one's identity. This can result in a multitude of consequences, including, but not limited to, the promotion of inclusivity or the facilitation of cyberbullying. To illustrate this point, one might consider that the use of formal language could indicate a professional demeanour, whilst the use of casual slang might engender a sense of community within a particular group.

Usernames are the first point of linguistic contact in online spaces. They serve as a "micro-narrative" of the self, providing immediate social or professional framing. For example:

@Dr_Elena_Linguist (Dr. Elena Linguist [Elena Semino] *or* *@Mark_Legal_Consultant* [Mark Stephens CBE].

These utilize lexical markers of status (titles like *Dr.*) and professional keywords. This "transparent" naming strategy establishes a "Credible Self," signaling authority before a single word is spoken.

@Void_Seeker_99 [Void_Seeker_99] *or* *@Tech_Revolutionist* [Tech_Revolutionist].

These use symbolic metaphors to project a personal identity rooted in interests or ideologies rather than real-world status. This allows for a "strategic self-expression" that may deviate from the user's physical life.

The use of a formal register in digital forums functions as a tool for Social Distance and Prestige. For example:

"Regarding the proposed amendments to the linguistic framework, I would argue that the empirical evidence remains inconclusive. We must solicit further peer-reviewed data before reaching a consensus" [Professor Deborah Cameron].

The use of passive voice (*"evidence remains inconclusive"*), Latinate vocabulary (*amendments, consensus, solicit*), and complex syntax index a "Professional Subject." This language serves to establish an elite or academic identity, ensuring the user is perceived with gravity.

Conversely, using slang or non-standard linguistic forms facilitates Social Cohesion and intimacy within specific subcultures. For example:

"Lowkey obsessed with this new update. It's a total vibe, honestly. No cap, the devs really cooked with this one 🍳" [Taylor Lorenz].

This employs neologisms (*lowkey, no cap, cooked*) and emotive paralinguistic cues (emojis). This style functions as a "linguistic handshake," signaling that the user belongs to a specific digital generation or community. It fosters "inclusivity" for those who speak the code while excluding those who do not.

The anonymity afforded by the internet can facilitate uninhibited behaviour that is not typically exhibited in face-to-face interactions. It has been demonstrated that this has the potential to encourage behaviours such as trolling, harassment, and the use of hate speech. The absence of instantaneous accountability has been demonstrated to result in a diminution of social norms or ethical constraints. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as the "online disinhibition effect".

These examples illustrate how the lack of "instantaneous accountability" and the "diminution of social norms" manifest in digital communication.

In a face-to-face academic debate, participants usually follow the Politeness Principle. Online, the "cloak of anonymity" often leads to "flaming" – the use of hostile and insulting language. For example:

"Your argument is so logically bankrupt that I actually feel sorry for your parents. Please stop wasting everyone's bandwidth with your sub-zero IQ takes" [Kathy Sierra].

In a physical setting, the "Social Constraint" would prevent such a personal and aggressive attack. Online, the user feels dissociative anonymity, allowing them to use hyper-aggressive metaphors ("*logically bankrupt*," "*sub-zero IQ*") to dehumanize the opponent.

The "absence of accountability" often emboldens users to express discriminatory views that are socially "locked" in public life. For example:

"Look at these [Slur] invaders. They aren't even human. We need to clear them out before they ruin our culture. #ProtectOurBorders" [Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH)].

The use of dehumanizing nouns ("*invaders*," "*not human*") is a classic sign of disinhibition. Because the user does not see the physical pain of the marginalized group, the "Ethical Constraints" are diminished, and language becomes a tool for systemic exclusion.

It is important to note that disinhibition isn't always toxic. It can also lead to "Benign Disinhibition," where users feel safe to share deep, personal truths they would hide in person. For example:

"I've never told anyone this in real life, but I've been struggling with severe depression for years. I'm terrified that if my colleagues found out, they'd think I'm weak. Has anyone else felt this way?" [Matt Haig].

This is a manifestation of Invisibility. Because the user isn't making eye contact, they bypass their "Internalized Shame." This results in high-disclosure language and "meaningful connections" that might be impossible in a face-to-face professional demeanor.

The language employed in digital communication influences the promotion of ethical behaviour.

It is evident that miscommunication, or the manipulation of language, has the potential to result in the propagation of misinformation, the exploitation of others, or the dissemination of defamation. The practice of ethical digital communication is characterised by the conscientious use of language that is respectful, clear, and

truthful. This approach aims to minimise harm and foster a positive, constructive digital environment.

The dissemination of false information is facilitated by persuasive and manipulative language. The selection of particular words can be used to create narratives that are misaligned with the facts or to influence public opinion, thereby contributing to digital manipulation. In the contemporary digital landscape, the dissemination of information, the verification of facts, and the creation of responsible content assume paramount importance in efforts to curb the spread of falsehoods.

Manipulators use loaded language – words that carry strong positive or negative connotations – to provoke an immediate emotional reaction, which often prevents fact-checking. For example:

*"Mainstream media **cowards** refuse to report the **horrifying truth** about the new **poisonous** vaccine mandate"* [First Draft News].

The use of emotive adjectives (*cowards*, *horrifying*, *poisonous*) is a classic manipulative technique. It creates a narrative of fear and betrayal. By the time a reader considers the "verification of facts," their "public opinion" has already been influenced by the emotional weight of the words.

To disseminate false information while avoiding "instantaneous accountability," manipulators often use vague linguistic markers to imply truth without stating facts. For example:

*"**Leading experts** are **reportedly** concerned that the recent economic shift is a **calculated plot** to destroy the middle class"* [Media Matters for America].

The phrase "*Leading experts*" is a vague authority marker that provides a false sense of credibility. The word "*reportedly*" acts as a hedge, allowing the creator to spread the narrative while maintaining a "safety net" against accusations of lying. This is a form of "digital manipulation" that masks opinion as verified information.

False narratives often utilize syllogistic fallacies or "False Dilemmas" to force the audience into a specific conclusion. For example:

"You either support this new censorship law, or you are a supporter of online terrorists. There is no middle ground" [Logically].

This is a Bifurcation Fallacy (False Dilemma). By limiting the "selection of words" to two extreme choices, the manipulator "actively shapes social norms" by making dissent feel morally wrong. This facilitates a "misalignment with facts" by ignoring the complex nuances of the actual policy.

Language can serve as an instrument of inclusion or exclusion, depending on social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. The utilisation of inclusive language practices, such as the use of gender-neutral terms and respect for diverse cultures, is of paramount importance in cultivating a sense of belonging within online communities. The utilisation of language that is easily comprehensible to a broad audience, such as plain language or translations, is instrumental in ensuring the accessibility of information to a wider demographic [Nuryati 2024].

The use of gender-neutral language is a manifestation of respect for the "Internal Self" of others. It moves away from the "binary objectification" that has historically dominated many languages. For example:

*"Every student should submit **his** assignment by Monday. A teacher must ensure **his** classroom is ready" [Linguistic Society of America (LSA)].*

*"Every student should submit **their** assignment by Monday. Teachers must ensure **their** classrooms are ready" [Linguistic Society of America (LSA)].*

Utilizing the singular "they" or pluralization avoids the assumption of gender. In online communities, this signals that the space is "inclusive" of all identities, allowing users to feel a "sense of belonging" without being forced into a linguistic category that does not reflect their reality.

As Nuryati suggests, "plain language" is instrumental in ensuring that information is accessible to a wider demographic, including non-native speakers (EFL/ESL) and individuals with cognitive diversities [Nuryati 2024]. For example:

"The utilization of multifaceted pedagogical strategies is mandated to facilitate the optimization of student learning outcomes in a digital environment" [Professor Helen Sword] (Complex/Exclusive)

"Teachers should use different methods to help students learn better online" [Center for Plain Language] (Plain/Inclusive).

Plain language involves removing unnecessary jargon, using active voice, and using shorter sentence structures. By reducing the "cognitive load," the information becomes "comprehensible to a broad audience," preventing the "exclusion" of those who do not possess a high-level academic or professional lexicon. For example:

In London-Kyiv intercultural exchanges (like the lessons you are designing), respecting diverse cultures through language is paramount.

Using transliteration alongside translations (e.g., explaining *Vyshyvanka* instead of just calling it a "shirt") or acknowledging cultural metaphors without dismissing them as "incorrect English."

This is an act of Cultural Preservation. It allows the user to project their "cultural identity" into the digital space without it being erased by the "dominant linguistic style" of the platform.

One of the more problematic aspects of language in the digital realm pertains to its utilisation for malevolent purposes. The proliferation of hate speech, cyberbullying, and derogatory language represents a significant ethical concern. It is incumbent upon social media platforms and gaming communities to devise effective policies that regulate the use of harmful language, whilst ensuring that the right to free speech is not unduly restricted.

Hate speech is not merely offensive; it is performative violence. Linguistically, it seeks to diminish the "Subject" by reducing them to a "Derogatory Object". For example:

The use of coded language or "dog whistles" – terms that seem neutral to a general audience but carry malicious intent toward a specific group (e.g., using

certain numbers or symbols as stand-ins for banned slurs) [Data & Society Research Institute].

This is a form of Linguistic Subversion. By hiding malevolent intent behind seemingly innocuous words, users bypass automated moderation systems. This forces platforms to develop policies that understand context rather than just identifying specific "bad words."

Cyberbullying often utilizes repetitive assertive speech acts to isolate an individual. For example:

A coordinated "pile-on" where hundreds of users use the same derogatory hashtag against a single person [The Cybersmile Foundation].

This creates a Monolithic Narrative. The sheer volume of the harmful language overwhelms the victim's ability to "articulate their own identity." This is why gaming communities and social platforms must look at behavioral patterns (the "proliferation") rather than isolated incidents.

The "right to free speech" is often used as a defense for harmful discourse. However, in linguistics, we distinguish between locutionary acts (what is said) and illocutionary force (the intent/effect). For example:

Platforms must decide at what point an "opinion" becomes a "threat" or "harassment" [Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF)].

Many platforms now use Harm-Based Thresholds. Instead of banning topics, they regulate the *manner* of articulation – specifically targeting "abusive language" and "direct threats" while allowing for controversial debate.

Algorithms designed to detect harmful language or inappropriate content are central to online platforms' efforts to regulate communication. Nevertheless, the efficacy of these algorithms is not infallible, and they occasionally fail to capture the subtleties of language. This can result in issues such as over-censorship or bias against specific groups. This prompts further enquiry into the moral implications of algorithmic decision-making and the role of human judgement in content moderation.

The language employed by algorithms has been shown to influence the content individuals are exposed to. The utilisation of personalised algorithms, which are designed to prioritise content analogous to the user's historical behavioural patterns, can create a phenomenon known as 'filter bubbles'. These bubbles are characterised by the amplification and reinforcement of specific worldviews, thereby restricting an individual's exposure to diverse perspectives. This phenomenon is further compounded by the formation of 'echo chambers', virtual spaces where users are exposed exclusively to content that mirrors their worldviews, thereby reinforcing their preexisting beliefs. This process can limit users' exposure to alternative viewpoints, thereby perpetuating entrenched ideological homogeneity [Nuryati 2024].

This has the potential to distort users' perceptions and diminish the quality of public discourse. It is incumbent upon social media platforms and digital companies to establish standards for language use, thereby ensuring that their spaces facilitate healthy and respectful communication.

3.2. Influence of social media on identity and self-presentation

Social media has become a key part of how we communicate every day. It is used by billions of people worldwide on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. These platforms provide users with the ability to share information. They also allow users to express opinions. And they enable interaction with others. The way people use language on social media has changed a lot because of this.

The way people talk on social media is different from how people talk in other ways, which is often informal, short, and to the point. Users commonly employ slang, abbreviations, emojis, and other informal expressions to convey emotions, humour, and opinions. This change in the way people talk to each other has made people wonder how it will affect how users interact and engage. It is crucial for both individuals and businesses looking to maximize their online presence that the way in which language influences user interactions on social media platforms is understood.

The capacity to captivate audiences with adroitness can exert a substantial influence on the success of online marketing campaigns, personal branding, and even political movements. Therefore, the relationship between language use and user interaction in social media must be studied if the optimisation of communication strategies on these platforms is to be grasped.

The language used in social media interactions is often different from that used in traditional forms of communication. It is usually shorter, more expressive, and informal. It is common practice for users to incorporate colloquialisms, acronyms, emoticons, and other non-standard expressions to convey sentiments, humour, and opinions with alacrity and efficacy.

This linguistic shift has sparked discussions about its impact on user interaction and engagement, with experts exploring how it might influence these crucial aspects of digital interaction. For individuals and organisations aiming to enhance their online presence, understanding how language influences interactions on social media is crucial. Marketing campaigns, personal branding efforts, and social and political movements can all be significantly impacted by effective communication strategies. Therefore, examining the connection between the language used and how interested users are on social media can provide valuable insights into improving communication in these online spaces.

Today, social media is a key part of how we communicate, with billions of people using platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and others. These digital spaces empower users. They allow users to share information. They also allow users to express opinions. These spaces enable users to engage with others instantly. Because of this, the language used on social media has changed. It is now more informal, which is normal for online interaction. Traditional communication is often long-winded and formal, but social media exchanges tend to be brief, expressive, and informal. Common ways to convey emotions, humour, and opinions quickly and effectively include slang, abbreviations, emojis, and other creative linguistic elements. This language change has led to talks about how it affects how users interact and

engage with content. For individuals and organisations, it is imperative to comprehend the manner in which language influences interactions on social media, if they are to enhance their online presence. The enhancement of the effectiveness of marketing campaigns, personal branding, and even social and political movements is a significant benefit of strategic communication. By examining the connection between language and user engagement, we can gain valuable insights into enhancing communication in these constantly changing digital spaces.

The way in which people communicate has been revolutionised by social media platforms, which have created dynamic environments where billions of users interact daily. Information, opinions, and connections are shared, expressed, and fostered on these platforms, which include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok. The way users engage with content and each other in these digital spaces is significantly shaped by unique linguistic trends that emerge.

The language of social media differs from traditional communication forms in that it is characterised by brevity, creativity, and informality. People often use shortened words, informal language, emojis, GIFs, and memes to express feelings, humour, and ideas in a quick way. These linguistic instruments facilitate the establishment of connections between disparate cultures and geographies, engendering a universal idiom that fosters relatability and interaction.

Nevertheless, they concomitantly engender challenges, such as misapprehensions arising from a paucity of context or the exclusion of users unacquainted with certain trends or jargon. Understanding the influence of language on social media engagement is critical for individuals and organisations alike. The right use of language can make marketing campaigns more impactful, boost personal brands, and even get people to support political or social causes. Conversely, if missteps are made in tone or word choice, backlash or disengagement can be the result, highlighting the need for careful communication planning.

The evolution of language pertains to the process by which languages undergo modifications over time with regard to vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and

usage. It is a natural and ongoing thing caused by different social, cultural, and historical things, like people moving around, new technology, and people with different languages talking to each other. Informality in language is characterised by a shift in the utilisation of language in more casual or conversational contexts. Language can become more informal over time, especially in many social settings. This is because communication becomes more frequent, spontaneous, and uses technology.

1. Key factors in language evolution towards informality include technological influence. The rise of texting, social media, and instant messaging has led to a proliferation of informal language. The utilisation of abridged words, acronyms (for example, "lol" and "brb"), and emoticons has become an integral component of conventional communication. For example:

A user transitioning from a professional email to an instant messaging platform.

In traditional form, it can be: *"I am laughing out loud at that suggestion; it is quite humorous. I will return to this conversation shortly"* [Gretchen McCulloch].

It's digital evolution: *"lol true. brb."*

Digital spaces encourage rapid communication, leading to a preference for news and ease of expression, thus promoting informality.

Cultural shifts: Societal changes often drive the use of informal language, leading to its increasing use across different situations. In modern Western culture, there has been a move towards egalitarianism, with social hierarchies becoming less pronounced and informal interaction becoming more commonplace (e.g., first names being used instead of formal titles or addresses). Informality is also regarded as an indication of principles such as genuineness, transparency, and relatability. For example:

Traditional professional identity: *"Professor John Smith, PhD. Senior Researcher of Philology. Please address all inquiries formally"* [Bernie Hogan].

Modern Digital Self-Presentation: *"John | Linguist & Tea Lover. ☕ I love chatting about language and tech! Drop a comment below!"* [Alice Marwick].

Social Media and Popular Culture: A new kind of informal vernacular has emerged with the rise of memes, viral phrases, and internet slang. Expressions like these often become part of everyday speech and evolve quickly. Pop culture, which is characterised by informal language, has a significant influence on society, particularly regarding movies, television programmes, and music. This informal language is frequently adopted by a broader audience. For example:

A user posting a photo of a successful project or a personal achievement.

His traditional self-presentation can be: *"I am very proud of the work I put into this project, and I am happy with the result"* [Jia Tolentino].

But his pop-culture infused identity: *"Main character energy. ✍️ This project really ate and left no crumbs. #CoreMemory"* [Taylor Lorenz].

By adopting "viral phrases," the user demonstrates that their identity is synchronized with the zeitgeist (the spirit of the times). Using terms like *"main character energy"* or *"era"* (e.g., *"in my gardening era"*) allows an individual to frame their personal life through the lens of a movie or a television narrative. This is a form of Narrative Self-Presentation, where the user becomes the protagonist of their own digital story.

Internet slang functions as a Sociolect. When a "broader audience" adopts these terms, they are participating in a global subculture. For the user, employing the latest "internet speak" is a way of presenting a "Trendy Self." It proves they are active participants in the "Elementary Shift" of culture, moving away from local dialects toward a unified Internet Vernacular.

Because these expressions "evolve quickly," the user's self-presentation must be constantly updated. This creates a fluid identity. If a user continues to use "dead memes" or outdated slang, they risk being perceived as "out of touch." Therefore, self-presentation becomes a high-speed performance of staying current with pop culture trends in movies, music, and social media.

Globalization and cross-cultural interaction are topics that are covered in this text. The interaction between languages often leads to the adoption of informal elements, resulting in more fluid and flexible language structures.

To illustrate, the English language has assimilated a plethora of informal expressions from various languages worldwide, thereby contributing to its casual tone in specific contexts.

Language Simplification. Over time, languages tend to simplify, with complex ideas and phrases being replaced by simpler ones. This can involve dropping unnecessary syllables. It can also involve using contractions. For example, you could use "don't" instead of "do not". Another option is to favor simpler sentence structures.

The aim is frequently to be efficient and to facilitate communication, which is in line with informal styles. For example:

*"I **don't** think I can make it to the meeting, I **can't** find the link"* [Dr. Erica Robles-Anderson].

The use of "*don't*" and "*can't*" instead of the full forms ("*do not*," "*cannot*") serves the principle of linguistic economy. In terms of self-presentation, it reflects an efficient identity, signaling that the speaker is focused on rapid information exchange rather than formal etiquette. For example:

"Heading out now. See you soon!" [Nancy Baym] (instead of "*I am heading out now. I will see you soon.*")

Dropping the subject ("I") and auxiliary verbs is a common form of grammatical simplification. This presents a casual, fast-paced persona, suggesting that the user is busy and active, which is a common identity trait in mobile-first social media environments. For example:

*"Thanks for the **info**! Great **pics** from the trip"* [Lev Manovich].

Using "*info*" (information) and "*pics*" (pictures) demonstrates clipping, where unnecessary syllables are removed. This linguistic choice frames the user as an informal subject, prioritizing relatability and "insider" status over academic or professional rigidity.

Informality in Different Contexts:

Speech vs. writing: Spoken language tends to be more informal than written language. But informal language is becoming more common in written communication, especially in casual digital writing like texting and social media posts. For example:

*"Wait, **uhm**, I think I left my keys at your place. **Oops!** 🙄"* [Sali Tagliamonte].

The inclusion of fillers (*uhm*) and interjections (*oops*) mimics natural spoken hesitation. This presents a vulnerable and humanized identity, making the digital persona feel like a "living" person rather than a static text. For example:

"Are you serious???" or "Nooooo way!" [Crystal Abidin].

Using repetitive punctuation or elongated vowels simulates the prosody (pitch and volume) of speech. In terms of self-presentation, this reflects an expressive and emotional identity, allowing the user to convey tone that is usually lost in traditional writing.

"i'm literally so tired i can't even think right now" [Katrina Fong] (entirely in lowercase).

Deliberately ignoring capitalization rules creates a relaxed, "low-effort" aesthetic. This presents an anti-perfectionist persona, signaling that the user is prioritizing the "moment" and raw emotion over formal editing.

Generational language changes: The shift towards informal language is driven by younger generations, who use slang or shorthand that may not be understood by older generations. Eventually, these easy ways of saying things can become more common. This can change how language changes in all age groups. For example:

*"That outfit is totally **fire**, no **cap**"* [Dr. Nicole Holliday].

The use of specific terms like "fire" (excellent) and "no cap" (I am not lying) acts as a generational marker. By using this slang, the speaker presents a "youthful" and "digitally literate" identity, signaling membership in a specific subculture that excludes those who do not understand the terminology.

"I'm dead 🤪" [Taylor Lorenz] (written in response to a funny video).

To an older generation, "dead" is literal; to younger users, it signifies extreme amusement. This semantic shift allows the user to present an "insider" persona. It demonstrates that their identity is built on the shared linguistic codes of their peers rather than traditional dictionary definitions.

Context-Dependent Formality: The informality of a situation is often dependent on the context. More formal language standards are typically maintained in professional environments, while informal speech is common among friends or in relaxed settings. Nevertheless, there has been a gradual acceptance of informal language (e.g. first names and informal greetings) in certain professional sectors [Nuryati 2024]. For example:

"Hi Robert, I loved your recent article! Would love to connect" [Nicole Williams] (A LinkedIn connection request).

Using a first name instead of a formal title (*Mr. Smith*) illustrates the shift toward egalitarianism in professional sectors. It presents the user as a confident peer, reducing social distance to facilitate faster networking and "relatability."

2. The effect of the medium of communication on social networking sites on the general public. The effect that language has on social media can be significant, influencing how users perceive things, behave, and interact in different ways. Here are a few key ways in which language affects users on social media, including how it shapes their experiences and interactions on the platform.

a. Influence on identity and self-presentation:

The words people choose on social media help them to construct and project their identities. The words people choose, whether through captions, hashtags or responses, can shape how they are perceived by others, and the effect can be long-lasting. The use of language can be instrumental in presenting a curated, idealised version of oneself or in engaging in more authentic, personal expression. For example:

"Woke up like this. #Blessed #Grateful #MorningVibes" [Brooke Erin Duffy].

The use of specific aspirational hashtags (*#Blessed*) serves to curate an "idealized version" of the user's life. This linguistic choice frames the individual as successful and happy, projecting a high-status identity to the audience.

b. Shaping Public Discourse: The manner in which subjects are articulated through the medium of language can exert a profound influence on public sentiment. For example, support for social causes can be rallied or, conversely, how controversial issues are perceived can be influenced by the use of specific terms or hashtags. The collective narrative and public sentiment can be influenced by the language used in trending topics, news headlines, or viral memes. For example:

Using the term "*Climate Justice*" [Dr. Genevieve Guenther] instead of just "*Weather Change*."

The choice of "Justice" shifts the discourse from a scientific phenomenon to an ethical and social cause. This linguistic framing rallies public sentiment by presenting the issue as a matter of human rights, shaping a collective identity centered on activism.

c. Echo Chambers and Groupthink: The medium of language has the potential to perpetuate echo chambers, within which users are exposed principally to information and ideas that align with their pre-existing beliefs. The manner in which individuals communicate on social media platforms frequently fosters a state of uniformity and a tendency to adopt the prevailing perspectives of a particular community, resulting in the adoption of specific linguistic styles and terminologies that influence how individuals perceive the world and engage in discourse. For example:

A comment section filled with identical phrases like "*This!*", "*Exactly this,*" or "*So true!*" [Dr. Pamela Rutledge] under a controversial post.

This repetitive use of affirmative speech acts reinforces the "Echo Chamber." Linguistically, it signals that the individual has abandoned critical analysis in favor of Groupthink, presenting a self that is totally aligned with the community's collective ego.

Referring to anyone outside the community with derogatory or dismissive slang (e.g., "*Noobs*," "*Boomers*," or "*Blue-checks*" [Dr. Whitney Phillips]).

By using specific names for "outsiders," the group defines its identity through opposition. This language influences how individuals "engage in discourse" by creating a mental barrier, making it difficult for the user to perceive information from "the other side" as valid.

d. Emotional Influence and Persuasion: Emotional responses are often evoked through the design of social media language, whether through humour, outrage, or solidarity. All that stuff like hashtags, memes and that kind of thing can spread like wildfire, and it can have a big effect on what users feel and even what they do. For instance, the persuasive language employed in advertisements or political campaigns on social media can mould users' opinions and behaviour. For example:

"Unbelievable! This is a total disgrace and we cannot stay silent anymore. RT if you agree!" [Dr. Claire Wardle].

The use of high-intensity adjectives (*unbelievable*, *disgrace*) and imperative verbs (*RT/Retweet*) is designed to evoke immediate anger. This presents the user as a passionate advocate, using "outrage" to signal their moral stance and influence their followers' opinions.

e. Cyberbullying and toxicity: Toxic environments can be created by harmful language, with cyberbullying, harassment, and discrimination being some of the results. The fact that social media platforms allow us to remain anonymous can encourage people to use horrible language, which can have a negative effect on the mental health and general well-being of users. For example:

"People like you don't belong in this community. Go back to where you came from" [Dr. Cynthia Miller-Idriss].

The use of exclusionary pronouns ("*People like you*") and spatial metaphors ("*don't belong*") creates a linguistic boundary between "us" and "them." This presents a discriminatory persona that uses language as a weapon to marginalize specific groups, directly impacting the victim's "social well-being".

"Imagine thinking this looks good... everyone is laughing at you behind your back. 🤡" [Dr. Sameer Hinduja] (Posted repeatedly across several of a user's photos).

The use of mockery and derogatory emojis (*the clown emoji*) is intended to undermine the victim's self-esteem. This linguistic behavior constructs a "bully" identity, where the harasser derives social power by publicly degrading another person's self-presentation.

f) Language and how easy it is to use: The words used on social media can include or leave out people based on where they are from and what they speak. The employment of jargon, colloquialisms, or regional dialects has the potential to erect barriers to comprehension, whilst concurrently moulding online communities and giving rise to subcultures that may prove to be opaque to those not initiated into their inner workings. For example:

*Just finished the **UI/UX** audit and noticed the **CTA** has low **CTR** due to poor **IA*** [Don Norman].

The use of specialized acronyms (*IA, CTA, CTR*) creates a barrier for the "uninitiated." This presents an expert identity, signaling that the user belongs to a specific professional subculture, but it leaves out anyone who does not speak the language of tech.

*"It's a bit **cauld** today, so I'm wearing my **braw** new **jumper**"* [Danny Bhoy] (Scots dialect/colloquialisms).

Using regional terms (*cauld* for cold, *braw* for fine) reinforces a local identity. It creates a "warm" community for those from the same area but acts as a "barrier to comprehension" for global users, making the subculture feel exclusive.

g. Commercial and Brand Language: Basically, what I'm saying is, the way brands and advertisers talk on social media has a big effect on what people do when they're buying stuff. The way brands use language is important. It helps them to create emotional connections with users, establish their brand identity, and persuade them to take action. This could be something as simple as buying a product or as significant as supporting a cause. For example:

"We know Mondays are hard. ☕ Treat yourself to a latte because you've earned it" [Starbucks Coffee] (A coffee brand's tweet).

By using the pronoun "we" and acknowledging a shared human experience (*Monday struggles*), the brand moves from a seller to a "friend." This builds an emotional connection, persuading the user to buy the product as an act of self-care.

In summary, social media language is not just a reflection of individual thoughts and opinions; social norms are actively shaped by it, behaviours are influenced, and the construction of online communities and identities is facilitated. It has the power to build connections, but it can also cause harm, depending on how it is used [Nuryati 2024].

3. The influence of language on online behaviour and digital ethics

Language significantly influences online behaviour and digital ethics, shaping communication and impacting how individuals perceive and interact within digital environments. The internet is a huge place where people can interact. It is important to think about how people use language there. This helps to make sure that people behave ethically, that everyone is included, and that everyone is respectful.

a. Shaping Online Identity and Interaction

Language and identity: In online spaces, language is often used to craft identities, shaping how others perceive us and creating a digital persona that we can then project into the world. Cultural or personal identities can be projected through the way in which individuals express themselves in forums, on social media, or even through usernames. The impact of social media on mental health can be both positive and negative, ranging from fostering inclusivity to enabling cyberbullying. Take, for example, how formal language can come across as professional, while casual slang can create a sense of community within certain groups. For example:

A user writing a formal LinkedIn post about a promotion, then posting *"We finally did it! 🎉 🚀"* [LinkedIn] on their private Instagram story.

This demonstrates linguistic adaptability. By switching from formal grammar to "casual slang" and emojis, the individual manages two different versions of their

persona: the "Professional Self" for the public and the "Communal Self" for their inner circle.

Anonymity and disinhibition: The internet provides a level of anonymity that allows people to behave differently than they would in person. This can encourage behaviours like trolling, harassment, and the use of hate speech, which are all problematic and should be avoided. The absence of instantaneous accountability can result in a diminution of social mores or ethical constraints, frequently termed the "online disinhibition effect". For example:

"Unpopular opinion: this 'tragedy' is actually hilarious. Change my mind. 🍷"
[Steven Crowder]

phrasing to "troll" or incite a reaction. This linguistic behavior constructs a disrupted persona that thrives on conflict. The "absence of instantaneous accountability" encourages the user to treat serious topics as entertainment.

"I don't care what everyone says, this project is a failure and you should quit. Honestly, who hired you?" [Reddit] (Posted by a user with a generic avatar and no real name).

The use of harsh criticism and personal attacks is facilitated by anonymity. Because the speaker's real-world identity is hidden, they feel a "diminution of social mores," allowing them to express hostility they would likely never voice in a professional or face-to-face setting.

b. Digital Ethics and Language Use

Ethical Communication: The promotion of ethical behaviour is a role played by the language used in digital communication. The use of language can sometimes be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it can help to share information and build connections, but on the other, it can also lead to misunderstandings, manipulation, and even defamation. Digital communication that is ethical involves using language that is respectful, clear, and truthful, with the aim of minimising harm. For example:

"To clarify my previous point, I am not suggesting we cancel the project, but rather that we extend the deadline by two weeks. Does that make sense?" [Slack]

The use of metalinguistic markers ("*To clarify*," "*Does that make sense?*") demonstrates an ethical commitment to "clear and truthful" communication. This presents a responsible identity, prioritizing the accuracy of the message over personal ego to minimize harm.

Misinformation and disinformation: False information is spread more easily when language is persuasive and manipulative. Digital manipulation can be achieved by creating misleading narratives through the selection of specific words. The spread of falsehoods can be prevented by looking at the ethics of information sharing, fact-checking, and responsible content creation. For example:

Referring to a peaceful gathering as a "*mob*" [Ian Dunt] or a chaotic event as a "*minor scuffle*" [Ian Dunt].

This is the "selection of specific words" to create a misleading narrative. By choosing words with extreme connotations, the communicator molds the audience's perception of reality. This presents a manipulative persona that prioritizes ideological victory over factual accuracy.

c. The impact of language on online communities

Inclusivity and accessibility: People can either be included or excluded by language based on social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. Inclusive language practices are crucial. Examples of such practices include gender-neutral terms and respect for diverse cultures. These practices foster a sense of belonging within online communities. Providing information in ways that are easy for more people to understand, like using plain language or offering translations, makes sure that information is available to a wider audience. For example:

Using "*Everyone*," "*Folks*," or "*Team*" instead of "*Guys*" or "*Ladies and gentlemen*" [Buffer].

Adopting gender-neutral terms is a proactive linguistic choice. It presents an inclusive identity, signaling that the user recognizes and respects non-binary and diverse gender identities. This fosters a "sense of belonging" by removing subtle linguistic barriers.

Hate speech and harassment: One of the more problematic aspects of language in the digital realm pertains to its exploitation for malevolent purposes. The dissemination of abhorrent rhetoric, online harassment and denigrating discourse represent a substantial ethical predicament. Digital platforms such as social media and gaming communities are compelled to address the challenge of formulating policies to regulate injurious language, whilst ensuring the preservation of freedom of expression. For example:

"Uninstall the game, you're literally garbage. Why are you even playing?"
[Ninja]. (Often shouted in voice chats or spammed in text).

In high-intensity "gaming communities," language is frequently used to establish dominance through humiliation. This "injurious language" creates a toxic hierarchy, where the harasser presents a hyper-competitive, aggressive persona that views peers as obstacles rather than humans.

A platform flagging a user's post for "hate speech" because they used a reclaimed slur in an empowering context.

This represents the "substantial ethical predicament." Because algorithms struggle with pragmatics (the context of language use), "injurious language" policies can accidentally suppress "freedom of expression." This forces users to adopt linguistic creativity (e.g., "leetspeak" or symbols like \$ for S [Elon Musk]) to bypass filters, further shaping their digital interaction style.

d. Language and Algorithmic Influence

Content moderation: Programs that find bad language or content that is not suitable are an important part of online platforms, trying to control what people say. But these computer programs are not perfect. Sometimes they do not understand what people are saying, which can lead to problems like too much censorship or treating some groups unfairly. This raises questions about the ethical use of algorithms and the role of human judgment in content moderation. For example:

A user from a town with a name containing a "bad word" (e.g., Scunthorpe or Penistone [Tom Scott]) is blocked from creating an account or posting their location.

This is a classic example of syntactic over-moderation. The algorithm sees a string of letters and reacts, ignoring the geographical or personal "human judgment" that would recognize the word as a legitimate proper noun.

Filter Bubbles and Echo Chambers: The content to which people are exposed is also affected by the language used by algorithms. Personalised algorithms, which are designed to show users content that is similar to what they have previously viewed, can create filter bubbles and echo chambers. This reinforces particular worldviews and limits exposure to diverse perspectives. This can change how users think and make people talk about things in a worse way. For example:

A user who frequently engages with posts containing terms like "*natural healing*" and "*herbal remedies*" stops seeing content related to "*clinical trials*" or "*pharmaceutical research*" [The Social Dilemma].

The algorithm interprets the user's "linguistic preference" as a strict boundary. By only showing "similar" content, it creates a Filter Bubble, where the user's worldview is never challenged by opposing scientific data, leading to a narrowed perception of reality.

In an online forum, users adopt increasingly extreme "in-group" slang to describe political opponents. The algorithm, seeing high engagement, pushes this "hyper-charged" language to the top of everyone's feed.

This "reinforces particular worldviews." Because the algorithm prioritizes engagement (often driven by outrage), it rewards users who "talk about things in a worse way." This creates an Echo Chamber where moderate language disappears, replaced by a specialized vocabulary of conflict.

e. The Role of Social Platforms in Using Language Ethically

Platform Responsibility: Responsibility for setting standards for language use and ensuring that healthy, respectful communication is fostered in their spaces is held by social media platforms and digital companies. Policies must be clear. They must be enforceable [Nuryati 2024]. This applies to policies regarding harassment, hate speech, and misinformation.

Conclusions to Chapter 3

Our identity on social media is the result of a constant balancing act between who we are and how we want to be ‘perceived’ by algorithms and other users. We are our digital footprint, and we shape this footprint ourselves, turning our own personality into an endless project of self-presentation.

In the realm of social media, language ceases to be merely a means of conveying information – it becomes a marker of belonging and the primary tool for ‘designing’ one’s identity. The way we write determines who we are in the eyes of the digital community.

Thus, language on social media is not merely words, but a performative act. We do not simply describe ourselves – we ‘speak’ our identity into existence, constantly adapting our vocabulary to the expectations of the audience and the requirements of the platform.

Thus, in the third section, we analysed 66 pages of well-known blogs on social networks such as Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Using the continuous sampling method, 93 examples were investigated and described. After analysing this material, we were able to draw the following conclusions:

CONCLUSION

This work delved into the multiple ways in which technology and the emerging sociotechnical environment are impacting the conventional elements of identity formation. We are becoming more dependent on our devices and the social aspects of this new culture, as evidenced by changes in our memory, self-reflection, and conventional social interactions. As social networking platforms increasingly shape our behaviour, it has been argued that we are becoming dependent on the social relationships we have with our devices and online connections. In other words, we are internalising these devices and environments to the point where they become extensions of the 'self'. After looking at all of this, we have found that the internet is making us more narcissistic and helping us to develop a 'self' that is strongly influenced by other people. In the past, influences on who we are were internal, but now they are external, and our sense of being in control of ourselves is an illusion.

On the one hand, it gives us a new way to express ourselves and creates chances for us to think deeply about ourselves. According to traditional ideas, this should make us feel more in control of ourselves. In contrast, as outlined, these worlds immerse us in a meticulously crafted setting where the 'self' is propelled by self-centered and ego-driven impulses, making our sense of agency seem illusory. This 'struggle' is the fine line we must tread as we look to the future of technology. It provides us with a sense of connection to others, access to information, and a variety of valuable opportunities. However, it also poses a risk of disconnection from ourselves and excessive reliance on virtual relationships and devices that often feel out of our control. As technology becomes an increasingly integral part of our lives, we must develop a deeper understanding of its true nature. The capacity for introspection is an inborn attribute connected to both the formation of identity and the exercise of agency. Consequently, it is imperative for us as individuals to master the utilisation of introspective mechanisms within our social media milieus if we are to cultivate a more profound connection with our digital realms. Ultimately, we cannot

control these environments. Nor can we control the interactions that take place online. But we can reclaim our sense of agency. We can do this through a process of self-reflection and self-awareness. We can also use technology to better construct our sense of 'self', 'other', and the world.

Consequently, in this study, we analysed 96 pages of well-known blogs on social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Using a comprehensive sampling method, 202 examples were examined and described. Having analysed this material, we were able to draw the following conclusions:

In conclusion, the way people communicate, form identities, and develop cultures in the digital age is significantly influenced by language on social media. It influences how individuals express themselves. It also influences how they form relationships. And it influences how they engage in discourse. While the use of informal, abbreviated, or coded language can facilitate quicker interactions, it can also lead to misunderstandings or the spread of misinformation. What's more, social media is a reflection and an amplifier of social trends, attitudes, and ideologies, and it fosters communities with shared linguistic norms. It is vital to consider the impact of evolving language on social dynamics, both online and in the broader society, as languages continue to evolve on these platforms. In conclusion, the profound shaping of communication, identity, and culture in the digital age is a consequence of language on social media. It serves as a dynamic tool for self-expression. It also serves as a tool for relationship-building. And it serves as a tool for discourse. It enables individuals to connect. It also enables individuals to interact. They can interact across diverse contexts. The efficiency of communication is enhanced by the widespread use of informal, abbreviated, or coded language, but misunderstandings can also be caused and the spread of misinformation can be contributed to by it. What's more, the language used on social media reflects and increases the popularity of trends, attitudes, and beliefs in society. This helps to create communities where people have the same language and cultural ideas. As these platforms keep on changing, the ways we use language will also keep on changing, because technology

and society are changing too. It is vital to look at how these changes affect social dynamics, both in the digital world and in the wider world. This will make sure that language continues to give people power and bring them together, instead of splitting them up.

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