

Social Media Jargon in the Context of Digitalization, Education and Language


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ABSTRACT

This study examines social media jargon in the context of digitalization and its impact on education and language. Digitalization refers to using digital technologies, transferring data to the digital space, and conducting business and transactions online. Digitalization, which affects almost every field, especially communication, both in daily life and corporate life, affects many issues, especially the use of language. Digitalization impacts every aspect of everyday life, especially with the active use of social media tools. Digitalization offers many advantages with its structure that makes business and transactions faster and less costly, provides easier access to resources, and makes it easier to reach more people. On the other hand, deficiencies in social media law, problems in protecting privacy and cyber security, and similar disadvantages are also experienced with digitalization. Social media use is one of the most important reflections of digitalization. The use of language on social media is related to how individuals express themselves. The lack of sufficient supervision on social media platforms also causes problems in complying with grammar rules in the use of the language. This situation also causes a structure in the use of language in social media that can be expressed as jargon. When foreign words, abbreviations, and symbols used in social media are viewed as a whole, it is observed that they do not comply with the rules of the language. Still, at the same time, they have become widespread as social media jargon. Using the language correctly strengthens the development of culture and language, as well as the understandability and dignity of the speech. Efforts to communicate quickly on social media platforms also lead to misuse of language. In the first part of this study, digitalization and its impact on education and language are evaluated. In the second part, social media jargon is considered, and various examples are given.

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INTRODUCTION

Thanks to digital technologies, many daily tasks and corporate life issues have been moved to the internet. The digitalization and digital transformation process, accelerated by the fourth industrial revolution, referred to as Industry 4.0, increased the use of digital technologies with the pandemic that affected the whole world in 2019.

Rapidly developing technology, scientific studies, and changing living conditions have introduced the concept of “digital” into our lives (Babacan & Cömert, 2023: 13). Internet-based digital technologies, which have emerged in recent years, replace analog technologies and innovate all communication processes. New communication technologies, especially the development of the Internet, affect societies’ social, economic, and cultural shaping (Ergüney, 2017: 1477).

The digital transformation process, accelerating with Industry 4.0, covers many areas such as education, production, marketing, health, and so on, with many technologies such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and metaverse influenced (Demir, 2024: 281). The digital tools that have emerged and developed rapidly in the last two decades have transformed the lesson process, where only books and blackboards are used for boring time frames that do not help students learn and pass exams (Sur, 2022: 542). With digitalization, corporate and commercial applications and communication applications have increased. With digitalization, social media applications have emerged as the most widely used communication, interaction, and sharing tools. The language used in social media tools or platforms has almost taken a new shape with digitalization.

Social media is a platform where many people communicate simultaneously, share content called posts or posts, and share quickly. Since the law of social media control on this platform needs to be clarified, problems are also observed in the use of language in this area. Apart from grammar rules, the language is used in social media jargon. Social media jargon includes a range of abbreviations, symbols, and signs. In this case, people use social media jargon as a common language, regardless of nationality and language, and this language becomes established over

time. Especially considering the younger generations, Turkish, English, or any other language rules can be deemed violated. This can be understood when we consider the reality of social media, the benefits of communication, and its advantages. However, it should be remembered that language is not only a means of communication or interaction but also an identity and culture and the security of a nation. It means that people, especially the new generations, know and use their language and know their identity and culture. Every aspect of life must begin to be carried out through the digital environment, which brings about inclusive change in the public, private, and non-governmental sectors (Hamut, 2021: 600). For this reason, although social media has its jargon, correct use of the language should be encouraged and it is essential to develop some regulations, training, and awareness-raising practices.

Social media networks are areas where people can share content in the digital environment, receive various information, spend time, and receive language education or training in different fields. In addition, the opportunity to establish large-scale social relationships in these networks has caused social media to spread at an unprecedented rate in a very short time (Uluç & Yarıcı, 2017: 88). Especially with the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of digital technologies has increased in all areas and social media has developed as the most widely used communication and interaction area. Of course, social media is one of the leading digital platforms that bring people together, inform them, enable active participation, and have beneficial aspects of their educational role. Despite all these positive features, social media are areas where elements of violence are present, false and misleading information is shared, social isolation and security problems are experienced, and especially misuse of language is frequently experienced. Due to the nature of social media, content is shared very quickly; it is interactive, and a situation occurs where many people interact, and language control is insufficient. In a sense, a new jargon has emerged in social media.

Social media jargon is used in social media and all digital areas where users communicate using this language. Symbols convey sadness, anger, happiness, congratulation, warning, or emotion. Acronyms are

used for formulaic expressions, and in social media spaces, people interact predominantly using symbols and abbreviations.

Within the scope of this study, digitalization is primarily focused on the relationship between digitalization and language, the importance of language, its use, and what kind of language is developing with digitalization are emphasized. It is stated that the tools or platforms we call social media, which are among the most used digital areas with digitalization, have developed a language of their own. Users mainly communicate and interact through this language. The other part of the study also discusses the rapid development of social media jargon, which includes signs, abbreviations, various expressions, and symbols used in social media. The importance of paying attention to the use of social media jargon that does not comply with the language's own rules and taking some precautions regarding the use of language on social media is also emphasized in this section.

DIGITALIZATION, EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE

In the digital world, language is an essential means of communication and plays a vital role in education and training, as well as cultural interaction and access to information. In particular, the Industry 4.0 process, which constitutes the fourth phase of the industry, has brought digital technologies to almost all areas, from daily life to corporate life, and digital transformation-oriented initiatives have accelerated. With the use of digital technologies, access to information and different resources on a global scale has increased, and language has become even more critical in this process.

From the moment they are born, individuals use language to communicate with the environment, understand the situations, events, and phenomena developing around them, and participate as individuals in their society. When language is considered a tool that meets the communication needs of the individuals who make up the society, it fulfills an essential task in transferring the beliefs, values, and behavioral patterns, which are the cultural heritage of the society, to future generations (Arıklı, 2023: 35).

On the other hand, digitalization and language exhibit a development worth examining in many aspects. The use of language has a unique feature, especially in social media, which is one of the most essential digitalization platforms. First, communication on social media is high-speed; instant interactions occur, topics change rapidly, and social media posts suddenly reach many people simultaneously. These rapid shares on social media have also affected the use of language. Inevitably, a language has emerged on social media. This language includes abbreviations and signs, especially English words and abbreviations. A structure that we can describe as social media jargon has also emerged. Undoubtedly, it cannot be said that social media jargon complies with the rules of the language itself. The language used on social media does not comply with the rules of Turkish, English, or any other language. The situation here is that, on the one hand, there is rapid sharing and interaction in social media. On the other hand, the control of the use of language in digital spaces is not sufficiently developed.

Digitalization and language, especially communication, have a feature that makes it easier for different cultures to get to know each other and to access a lot of information and resources in different fields. The relationship between digitalization and language offers a beneficial situation: it accelerates people's interactions, facilitates getting to know each other, and accesses numerous resources. People can reach different cultures and distant geographical areas mainly thanks to social media. It can be considered an application where many people and topics can come together simultaneously. In addition to the feature of social media that enables rapid content sharing and facilitates communication by bringing together a large number of people and cultures simultaneously, it can also create situations that may negatively affect the development and use of language. Although digitalization ensures communication and interaction through mutual agreement through the use of a common language, it can also result in a use that fails to comply with the rules of the relevant language regarding the preservation, development, and use of the language. At the same time, it can lead to the development and adoption of a language that

can be expressed uniformly over time by people who have different languages and belong to languages that have their own rules. This may negatively affect the development of cultural identities. On the other hand, it may also disrupt linguistic diversity and richness. Therefore, despite all its positive features, digitalization negatively affects language development, use, structure, and function.

We are faced with digitalization, and its impact on language creates opportunities and threats. Digitalization, which has turned into a “life space” with its multi-layered structure (Kuçuradi, 2021: 565), has popularized the use of social media among the Z generation or the young generation, also referred to as the digital generation. In addition to sentences written half in Turkish and half in English, transcribing the spoken language into writing is becoming increasingly common among Generation Z. Even those who can make proper sentences remain in the minority (Karahisar, 2013: 71). Although digitalization negatively affects the language, it is undeniably becoming more widespread, especially in social media, even though usage patterns that can be defined as unique social media jargon have been created. Digitalization is a reality of the digital age. The language should be supported to preserve its structure and develop and use it correctly in situations created by technology. For this purpose, awareness should be raised both in the field of education and in all areas, and the correct use of the language should be encouraged as much as possible. Language is not just a means of communication and interaction; it is a component of identity and culture and must be protected. Digitalization may not be stopped, but responsible, conscious, and determined regulations must be made on some fundamental issues to preserve and develop the language.

Digitalization melts all the dialectical elements of human existence and daily life in its pot. Time, space, identity, self, communication, consumption, production processes, and phenomena are no longer independent values. They are reconstructed through digitalization (Çiftçi & Karakaş, 2019: 9). Digitalization and its impact on language, social media, and the use of language, and the unique identity and cultural components of different languages should

be supported globally. Not only a person or a group but also international organizations should evaluate the power of language, which contains identity and culture, and in another sense, makes a nation a nation, and should prioritize the issue of language. First, it encourages the correct use of language as much as possible on social media. Spell checks can be used in data sharing to ensure the correct use of language on social media. If necessary, disallowing sharing if the language is misused can be preferred. Introducing spell check every time teaches the correct use of the language and makes it a habit to reduce or prevent incorrect usage.

DIGITALIZATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA JARGON

Today, we know that technology is an essential tool that can change and transform society; its social and psychological effects on individuals are undeniable, and most importantly, it directly affects individuals’ lifestyles and mindsets (Koç, 2022: 501). Social media, in particular, is widely used in all areas, from daily life to corporate life. The language used in social media, with its characteristics, has led to the development of a usage that we can describe as social media language or jargon.

Jargon, abbreviations, symbols, terms, and signs created in social media may affect the language used in daily life and writing over time. When viewed from this perspective, while digitalization and language contribute to the development and functionality of language, communication, interaction, and language learning tools, they can also lead to the degeneration and degradation of language. However, although it has both positive and negative effects on language, digitalization is becoming more widespread daily, an undeniable fact.

Although the jargon used in social media is understandable within its limits, it also has adverse effects on the development of the language, its use by the rules of the language, and, therefore, its cultural development. Social media jargon is also shaped depending on the nature of social media, its rapid data sharing, and its interaction-oriented structure. In a sense, although it is natural for each field to develop and use its jargon over time, it should

be noticed that it may negatively affect the rules and development of the national language. It is especially considering that the younger generation is very active on social media and their habit of using social media as a way of life rather than just communication; the importance of some regulations that will prevent them from moving away from their language is an indisputable fact. Considering that supervision in social media needs to be sufficiently developed and has gained more importance, especially in the last decade, it is essential to meet the need for supervision.

Social media jargon refers to the set of various symbols, terms, voice messages, and abbreviations that emerge with the use of language in social media areas. Abbreviations, symbols, and terms are frequently used in social media. Most of the time, these uses occur in a way that does not comply with the valid language rules of Turkish, English, or any other language. Combined with the lack of adequate control over the use of language in social media and the unique fast communication and interaction feature, the language used here is becoming more widespread over time. Jargon or social media jargon that has formed on social media over time inevitably continues to be used in many different languages. For example, the word post is English and refers to the content or post shared in that area. Posts can be reshared or liked by others with their content, such as photos and videos. As these processes continue, the expression “post” becomes embedded in the language, regardless of the language. On the other hand, it is one of many language features used in social media, such as repost, which is a shared post shared by others, various short stories, hashtags for posts made by placing a # sign in front of the subject headings, DM (direct message) for direct messages, PM (private message) for private messages. Although all these uses do not comply with the rules of the language, it is a fact that sharing, reading, understanding, and searching are done through all these uses while communicating and interacting on social media.

If social media is used to carry cultural elements further than they are or if virtual literature is fed by real literature, our national cultural elements will

be protected from corruption (Avcı & Topçu, 2021: 7). At the same time, it is helpful in terms of mass communication, allowing communication with more people. In this respect, it will also contribute to developing national cultural elements. While social media, with its positive aspects and increasing use, is described as a part of human life, it has also brought along problems regarding more effective and conscious use (Dinç & Dinçer, 2019: 90). It also creates some drawbacks, especially in the correct use of the language. Language is an essential tool that provides everyday communication. It is seen that this tool creates its own, albeit different, communication channel in every era (Batur, 2010: 63). Social media creates its jargon within its nature.

The abbreviations, symbols, terms, and signs used in social media have created a common language, enabling users to communicate and interact faster. The language, or jargon, used in social media consists mainly of abbreviations of English words. Abbreviations of Turkish and other languages are also used on social media. Some of the most commonly used examples of social media jargon or language are:

411: Information
AFAIK: As Far as I Know
AMA: Ask Me Anything
ASL: Age/Sex/Location
B/C, BC: Because
B4: Before
BAE: Before Anyone Else
BFF: Best Friends Forever
BRB: Be Right Back
BTAM: Be That as It May
BTS: Behind the Scenes
DM: Direct Message
DR: Didn't Read
FOMO: Fear of Missing Out
LOL: Laughing Out Loud
NSFW: Not Safe for Work
PM: Private Message
RT: Retweet
TBT: Throwback Thursday
TL: Too Long

Phones, computers, and tablets have become widespread in our age. Along with technological innovations, digitalization has also entered education

life. With technological developments, digital tools have begun to be used to acquire reading and writing skills (Türe, 2021: 165). In addition to all these usage purposes, it is observed that the language used, especially in social media, has spread some new patterns in this field. Despite all its positive features, the language rules are violated in its use. This convenience, whose center, producer, and user are human-oriented, also brings risks (Olçay, 2018. 90). Although the language or social media jargon used on social media helps to ensure faster communication and interaction, it is necessary to raise awareness and implement regulatory solutions to prevent the abuse of language. It is essential to implement various regulations to protect and prevent the misuse of language, which is not only communication and interaction but also an element of thought and, in a sense, national security and power, as well as its structure that includes culture and identity.

CONCLUSION

Social media jargon is the language specific to that field, consisting of abbreviations, terms, symbols, and signs that emerge with the use of language in the digitalizing world. Even though the language or social media jargon used on social media does not comply with the rules of Turkish, English, or other languages, it displays a structure used by millions of people today. Social media is very different from traditional media. First, while providing fast sharing and communication that allows many people to come together and understand simultaneously, using a unique language has inevitably become established in social media. In this context, social media creates and shapes popular culture. This popular culture also shapes its own social media language or jargon.

Digitalization and language, especially communication, have a feature that makes it easier for different cultures to get to know each other and to access a lot of information and resources in different fields. The relationship between digitalization and language offers a beneficial situation. It accelerates people's interactions and makes it easier for them to get to know each other and access many resources. People can reach different cultures and distant geographical areas mainly thanks to social media. It

can be considered an application where many people and topics can come together simultaneously. In addition to the function of social media that enables rapid content sharing and facilitates communication by bringing together a large number of people and cultures simultaneously, it can also create situations that may negatively affect the development and use of language.

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We are faced with digitalization, and its impact on language creates opportunities and threats. Although digitalization negatively affects the language, it is undeniably becoming more widespread, especially in social media, even though usage patterns that can be defined as unique social media jargon have been created. Digitalization is a reality of the digital age. The language should be supported to preserve its structure and develop and use it correctly in situations created by technology. For this purpose,

the correct use of the language should be encouraged in all areas, especially in education. Language is not just a means of communication and interaction; it is a component of identity and culture and must be protected. Digitalization may continue, but responsible, conscious, and determined regulations must be made on some fundamental issues to preserve and develop the language.

Digitalization and its impact on language, social media, the use of language, and the unique identity and cultural components of different languages should be supported globally. Not only a person or a group but also international organizations should evaluate the power of language, which contains identity and culture, and in another sense, makes a nation a nation, and should prioritize the issue of language. First, it encourages the correct use of language as much as possible on social media. Spell checks can be used in data sharing to ensure the correct use of language on social media. If necessary, disallowing sharing if the language is misused can be preferred. Introducing spell check every time teaches the correct use of the language and makes it a habit to reduce or prevent incorrect usage.

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